

PAUL'S SERMON IN ANTIOCH OF PISIDIA

David A. deSilva

Acts 13 occupies a privileged place in Luke's narrative. Beginning in chapter 13 Paul's ministry dominates the narrative to the end of the book. The mission of the church begun in the first half of the book has now reached a new stage; no longer is Palestine the central geographical focus. While Jerusalem remains important for the remainder of Acts, the reader's attention is turned to "the Gentiles over whom My name [the Lord's] has been called" (15:17).¹ This change was prepared for in the citation from Joel in Acts 2:21, the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham in 3:25, and the conversion of Cornelius recorded in Acts 10-11. As at other important junctures in Acts,² so here Luke marked and illuminated the significance of the turning of this corner with a speech.

What is the significance of Paul's review of God's saving acts toward Israel recorded in Acts 13:17-22? How does the topic of promise and fulfillment work in this sermon? What argument is being developed through the three citations of Scripture in 13:33-35 (Ps. 2:7; Isa. 55:3; Ps. 16:10)? What place does Acts 13:38-39 have in the argument? What "work" is referred to in verse 41? Through the answers to these questions a picture emerges of what Luke sought to accomplish through recording this sermon.

SETTING

Paul and Barnabas had been set apart by the Holy Spirit for "the work (τὸ ἔργον) to which I have called them" (13:2). The

David A. deSilva is a Ph.D. candidate in religion, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia.

¹ Scripture references are from the New Revised Standard Version.

² Martin Dibelius, *Studies in the Acts of the Apostles*, trans. Mary Ling (New York: Scribner, 1956), 175.

grammatical definiteness of the work causes one to look back to the ascended Lord's description of the work He had in mind for Paul, as stated in 9:15: "he is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before Gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel." The double reference to their being "sent off" (13:3-4) makes clear that their work was considered a mission.

The missionaries, having left Cyprus and reached Antioch, entered the synagogue, a frequent place of preaching for Paul and his companions. Paul went first to the synagogue in almost every city in which he preached the gospel (Iconium, 14:1; Thessalonica, 17:1-3; Berea, 17:10-12; Athens, 17:17; Corinth, 18:4; Ephesus, 18:19 and 19:8). Luke provided some summary statements about the content of these discussions or homilies in the synagogues. For example in 17:2-3 Paul "argued with them from the Scriptures, explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Messiah to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying, 'This is the Messiah, Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you.'" In 13:16-41 this preaching is expanded into a full address. Luke also gave details about the proceedings of the service. This included a reading from the Law, a reading from the prophets, and an address, a (λόγος παρακλήσεως, "a word of exhortation," v. 15), which the leaders of the synagogue invited Paul and Barnabas to give.

The sermon that follows, then, is a "word of exhortation" (cf. the description of the homilylike Epistle to the Hebrews in Heb. 13:22). Pillai, however, identifies λόγος παρακλήσεως as a technical term for a unit of tradition, consisting of a liturgical credo which recites the saving acts of God, and which is transmitted from rabbi to student.³ The "word of exhortation" would then be limited to the words recorded in Acts 13:17-22. Pillai, however, offers no evidence for this view, and the one other occurrence of the phrase in the New Testament (in Heb. 13:22) is against this view. Other scholars see Paul's entire sermon (Acts 13:17-41) as the "word of encouragement," particularly Kilgallen, who sees the argument as a whole leading up to verses 38-39.⁴ Buss notes further that the λόγος παρακλήσεως is called a λόγος σωτηρίας in verse 26.⁵

³ C. A. Joachim Pillai, *Early Missionary Preaching* (New York: Exposition University Press, 1979), 55.

⁴ John J. Kilgallen, "Acts 13, 38-39: Culmination of Paul's Speech in Pisidia," *Biblica* 69 (1988): 482.

⁵ Matthaus F.-J. Buss, *Die Missionspredigt des Apostels Paulus im Pisidischen Antiochien* (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1980), 142.

STRUCTURE

Carrez and Schneider say the threefold address in verses 16, 26, and 38 introduces three divisions of the speech.⁶ The content of the speech supports this in that verses 16-25 treat the period leading up to Christ, verses 26-37 develop the thesis that the times of fulfillment have come through the presentation of the kerygma and argumentation from Scripture, and verses 38-41 provide the conclusion and exhortation.

On the other hand Buss and Pillai' follow a topical division of the speech.⁷ Verses 16-23 comprise the introduction, verses 24-26 relate to John the Baptist, verses 27-31 present the kerygma, verses 32-37 give scriptural proofs, and verses 38-41 present a call to repentance. The difficulties with this scheme are that it does violence to the natural division of the speech by the three apostrophes and does not associate clearly enough the "message" or "word of salvation" (v. 26) with the kerygma (vv. 27-31). While the phrase "message of this salvation" does not occur elsewhere in Acts, one might most naturally associate it with the "message about this life" (5:20), "the word of God" (6:2, 7), or "the word of the Lord" (16:32; 19:10), all of which pertain to the proclamation of the gospel and the benefits associated with it. Buss and Pillai's division, however, does highlight the Lucan division of time elsewhere between the Law and the Prophets and the appearance of John. (Cf. Luke 16:16, as well as proclamations of the kerygma which began with John the Baptist's ministry, including Acts 1:22 and 10:37.) Syntactically, however, the words about John the Baptist in 13:24 are connected with what precedes, which one's proposed structure should reflect.

A third alternative in recent scholarship is to approach the structure of the speech through its movement from the past of history into the present. Thus Carrez divides the speech into past time (vv. 17-25) and "the present time of realization and accomplishment,"⁸ and Kilgallen places only verses 38-41 at the time of the hearers.⁹ This achieves their primary goal of searching out the

⁶ Maurice Carrez, "Presence et Fonctionnement de L'Ancien Testament Bans L'Annonce de L'Evangile," *Recherches de Science religieuse* 63 (1975): 336; and Gerhard Schneider, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, II. Tell (Freiburg: Herder, 1982), 130.

⁷ Buss, *Die Missionspredigt des Apostels Paulus im Pisidischen .Antiochien*, 91; and C. A. Joachim Pillai, *Apostolic Interpretation of History* (New York: Exposition University Press, 1980), 8.

⁸ Carrez, "Presence et Fonctionnement de L'Ancien Testament dans L'Annonce de L'Evangile," 337.

⁹ Kilgallen, "Acts 13, 38-39: Culmination of Paul's Speech in Pisidia," 488.

climax of the speech, but does not in itself open up the structure of the speech as units of argumentation.

The present writer follows the structure suggested by the repetition of the apostrophe (vv. 16, 26, 38). The announcement in verse 32 ("we bring you" the good news about the promise given to the ancestors) suggests a subdivision of the second section of the speech. Content would support a division here, as verses 26-31 provide the complete kerygma (by analogy with 1 Cor. 15:3-7) and Acts 13:32-37 develops an argument from Scripture that proves the truth of the thesis stated in verses 32-33.

EXPOSITION

THE HISTORICAL NARRATION (13:16-25)

In verse 16 Paul addressed his hearers as "you Israelites" and "others who fear God," indicating the mixed congregation in Antioch. This double address was repeated in verse 26 as "you descendants of Abraham's family, and others who fear God." Paul was conscious of his mission to the Gentiles even when preaching in the synagogue. In the synagogue Gentiles were prepared for the kerygma and arguments from Scripture concerning Jesus. The tension in Paul's multiple announcement that he was turning to the Gentiles (13:46; 18:6; 28:28) is therefore not to be resolved by supposing that in each town he must first preach to and be rejected by Jews before he could turn to the Gentiles.

Paul opened the speech with a summary of God's mighty acts in Israel's history, moving from the election of the patriarchs and Israel's deliverance from Egypt (13:17) to their taking possession of the land of Canaan (v. 19), the giving of judges to lead them (v. 20), the establishment of a kingdom under Saul (v. 21), and the raising up of David to be king over Israel in Saul's place (v. 22). The language is highly influenced by the Septuagint, as commentaries and the marginal notes in the Nestle-Aland text amply document. The sense of the verses is straightforward, except for the difficulty posed in verse 20 as to when the 450 years began. Bruce counts them as referring to the 400 years of sojourning in Egypt, the 40 years in the wilderness, and the time (about 10 years) taken to conquer the land.¹⁰ Conzelmann suggests as the probable meaning that "he gave them the land for 450 years, and after the conquest, he gave them judges."¹¹ Given the grammar of the text,

¹⁰ F. F. Bruce, *Commentary on the Book of Acts* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1960), 272.

¹¹ Hans Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, trans. James Limberg, A. T. Kraalbel, and D. H. Juel (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 104.

this makes the clearest sense. Since the ὥς in verse 18 points to an extent of time, namely, the period of wandering in the wilderness, the ὥς in verse 20 should also refer to an extent of time, namely, the dispossession of the nations and the inheritance of Canaan. The event to which it is syntactically connected is the inheritance of the land. The phrase "after that" (v. 20b), then, refers not to the passing of the 450 years (v. 20a) but to the dispossession of the seven nations and the inheritance of the land (v. 19). Once the rule passed to a king, it could be said that he became the possessor of the land.

The passage recounts a steady climax from the election of the patriarchs to the raising up of David as king (the oppression in Egypt is passed over, as is the rebellion of the people, which was so much the focus of Stephen's speech in Acts 7). David's reign is lauded in many psalms and prophetic texts as the zenith of Israelite history. For Paul, however, the zenith is reached in the appearance of the "Savior Jesus" (13:23). While Second Temple Judaism longed for the appearance of the scion of David who would restore Israel's former glory (cf. Ps. Sol. 17:21-24), Paul proclaimed this One as having come, in accord with the promise (κατ' ἐπαγγελίαν, Acts 13:23).

Buss warns against seeing this promise solely against the background of the Davidic promise. He says Luke "has the whole OT before his eyes as a single ἐπαγγελία."¹² Others, however, argue persuasively that in this verse the promise made to David is in view.¹³ The reference to the "posterity" (Acts 13:23) of David whom God will raise up echoes the promise in 2 Samuel 7:16 (LXX). (Cf. Rom. 1:3, where Jesus is presented as "descended from David according to the flesh.")

The introduction of John the Baptist in Acts 13:24 occurs in a genitive absolute construction, making it syntactically dependent on verse 23. Here John is not presented, as in Luke 16:16 or Acts 10:37, as introducing the beginning of a new stage in salvation history, but as the forerunner of the One whose coming constituted the climax of the past history of salvation. "He belongs to the time before Jesus, in the time of the prophets."¹⁴ John's testimony points to Jesus in the same manner as the prophets who are cited in Luke and Acts; he and they were witnesses to the ministry of the Savior.

Here, as Buss argues, one need not see the mention of John the

¹² Buss, *Die Missionspredigt des Apostels Paulus im Pisidischen Antiochien*, 49.

¹³ Kilgallen, "Acts 13, 38-39: Culmination of Paul's Speech in Pisidia," 490.

¹⁴ Schneider, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, 134.

Baptist as apologetically motivated as an attempt to distance him from Jesus.¹⁵ One might, rather, understand 19:4 in that way. The emphasis in 13:24, however, is on John's role as herald or as "Elijah *redivivus*."¹⁶ The phrase *πρὸ προσώπου* recalls the prophecy of Malachi 3:1 that a forerunner would come to Israel to prepare the way (*ὁδός*, Mal. 3:1, LXX; cf. *ἑξόδος*, Acts 13:24) before the eschatological "day of the Lord." The fulfillment of the prophecy of the forerunner is associated here with John the Baptist's ministry (cf. Mark 1:2). The testimony of John in Acts 13:25 (preserved also in Mark 1:7; Luke 3:16; and John 1:27) stresses the significance of the One who appeared after the forerunner.

What, then, does this first section in Paul's speech accomplish? Pillai is correct in rejecting Dibelius's position with regard to the opening summary of history in Acts 13:17-22: "the first section has no connection with the missionary—and there is certainly none with the content of the missionary sermon. All that is given is a survey of the history of Israel."¹⁷ It is also more than a supplement to Stephen's speech, even though Luke did present here "other scenes."¹⁸ Bruce and Carrez correctly see these verses as a sort of Old Testament "kerygma" or "credo of Israel," to which one may attach the New Testament message.¹⁹ In its positive and lofty portrayal of the history of Israel, it may also be described as a *captatio benevolentiae* ("the securing of the hearer's goodwill") suitable for the synagogue setting.²⁰ (Pillai uses this as an argument in favor of the generally unfavored variant *ἐτροφοφόρησεν*, "tenderly cared for" in verse 18,²¹ rather than *ἐτροποφόρησεν*, "put up with.") Conzelmann inappropriately calls verses 17-22 a "proof from Scripture,"²² yet this rightly throws into relief the continuity between these verses and verses 23-25. Verse 23 presents the goal of what was presented in verses 17-22. This exordium takes the rhetorical form of a narration. The purpose of this form is to lead to the point to be adjudicated or developed

¹⁵ Buss, *Die Missionspredigt des Apostels Paulus im Pisidischen Antiochien*, 65.

¹⁶ Pillai, *Apostolic Interpretation of History*, 27.

¹⁷ Pillai, *Early Missionary Preaching*, 84.

¹⁸ Ernst Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles*, trans. Basil Blackwell (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1971), 415.

¹⁹ Bruce, *Commentary on the Book of Acts*, 272; Carrez, "Presence et Fonctionnement de L'Ancien Testament dans L'Annonce de L'Evangile," 337.

²⁰ Buss, *Die Missionspredigt des Apostels Paulus im Pisidischen Antiochien*, 48.

²¹ Pillai, *Early Missionary Preaching*, 85.

²² Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 104.

(depending on the type of speech). Here the narration of the highlights of Israel's history lead up to the coming of Jesus, the Savior, to Israel, the significance of which is to be developed in the sections that follow. The subject of most of the verbs in these verses is God.²³ This underscores the connection between God's initiative in Israel's history and His initiative in the present initiation of the fulfillment of the Davidic, messianic promise.

Luke has provided in this opening section a fitting response to the request of the synagogue leaders for a "word of exhortation" (v. 15). Read against the background of the apocryphal Psalm of Solomon 17 and 18, this message is a word of the greatest encouragement. That section describes the hope of the coming of the Davidic Messiah and the anticipated blessedness of His future reign: "See, Lord, and raise up for them their king, the Son of David, to rule over your servant Israel in the time known to you, O God. Undergird him with the strength to destroy the unrighteous rulers, . . . To smash the arrogance of sinners like a potter's jar; To shatter all their substance with an iron rod. . . . Blessed are those born in those days to see the good fortune of Israel which God will bring to pass in the assembly of the tribes" (17:21-24, 44). "Blessed are those born in those days, to see the good things of the Lord which he will do for the coming generation [which will be] under the rod of discipline of the Lord Messiah" (18:6-7).

The "word of exhortation" is that the God who acted in Israel's past has also acted in the most recent past to fulfill the promise of the coming of One in whom the promises of future blessing would become present possibilities, clearly visible on the horizon, having first sent His herald, John the Baptist. The content of these promises becomes clear as Paul's sermon progresses.

THE PRESENTATION OF THE KERYGMA (13:26-31)

This second section of Paul's message opens with the declaration to the "descendants of Abraham's family" and "others who fear God" that "to us the message of this salvation has been sent:" The "message of this salvation" is the kerygma, the proclamation of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus, the events on which salvation is founded, or which have made salvation ("repentance that leads to life," Acts 11:18) a present possibility for the hearers.

The kerygma is a central element in the sermons of the first half of Acts (2:22-24; 3:13-15; 5:30-31; 10:37-41). Textual variants in the statement of this kerygma in 13:27-31 are largely intelligible as attempts by the Western text tradition (D*) to overcome the

²³ Pillai, *Early Missionary Preaching*, 86.

difficulties created by Luke's compression of the kerygma,²⁴ particularly in verse 27. What stands out in verses 27-29 is the phrase that "the residents of Jerusalem and their leaders" did not know or recognize "the words of the prophets that are read every Sabbath." This calls to mind the note in verse 15 about the reading in this, as in every, Sabbath service from the Law and the Prophets, and relates to the larger theme in Luke about the correct reading of the Hebrew Scriptures.

Luke often emphasized the "reading" and "interpretation" of the sacred books. For example the story of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch focuses on the correct interpretation of Isaiah 53. "About whom . . . does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?" (Acts 8:34). The answer of course is "about someone else," namely, Jesus. Earlier, on the road to Emmaus the risen Lord opened the minds of two disciples to the meaning of "the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms" (Luke 24:44). In Peter's first sermon, as in the sermon presently under consideration, it is "proven" that David the psalmist could not have been speaking about himself, since his corpse decomposed in its tomb (Acts 2:29; cf. 13:36), and so he too had to be speaking "about someone else." Later in Acts 17:10-11 Luke presented a model for reading and exegeting the Hebrew Scriptures, as such an endeavor led the members of the Berean synagogue to believe in Jesus as the Messiah. Second Corinthians 3:14-16 gives a clear parallel statement of this concept which runs throughout Luke-Acts: "To this very day, when they hear the reading of the old covenant, that same veil is still there, since only in Christ is it set aside. Indeed, to this day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their minds; but when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed."

The reading and interpreting continues, however, beyond the earthly ministry of Jesus into the life of the early Christian movement. The Psalms must be fulfilled in the election of Matthias (Acts 1:20); Joel illuminated its experience of the Holy Spirit, showing it to be a sign of the dawning of the end times (Acts 2:16-17); and Paul's mission to the Gentiles began to fulfill the prophecy that "the nations shall come to your light" (Isa. 60:3).

Another important aspect of the kerygma in Acts 13:27-31 is the ignorance or lack of recognition on the part of the Jewish people with respect to their promised Messiah (cf. 3:17-18; 4:27-28). This is stressed twice in Paul's sermon, in 13:27 and 29. The suffering Messiah still presented a stumbling block to Israel.²⁵ Luke

²⁴ C. S. C. Williams, *A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957), 163.

²⁵ Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 416.

appealed to the Hebrew Scriptures to demonstrate that it was necessary for the Messiah to suffer (Luke 24:25-27, 44-47; Acts 8:32-35; 17:2-3). The Jews' rejection of the Messiah is explained by their failure to recognize Him as such (Acts 3:17-18; 13:27). This rejection nevertheless fulfilled the purpose of God for the Messiah (4:27-28; 13:27, 29).

The fact of the resurrection is boldly stated in 13:30 (and also later in vv. 34, 37) as an act of God, in the same way as in 3:15. The proof of this is to be found in 13:31, which mentions witnesses of the resurrection. The verb ὤφθη ("was seen") appears also as the introduction to the witness clauses in 1 Corinthians 15:5-6, indicating perhaps Luke's own dependence on traditional material.²⁶ Some see it as a problem that Paul did not include himself in Acts 13:31 as a witness to Jesus' resurrection.²⁷ However, he did so present himself in 1 Corinthians 15:8. Schneider explicitly confronts this problem from the perspective of Lucan composition: "Paul cannot reckon himself as a witness according to the Lucan conception of a witness."²⁸ The Lucan definition of the "witness to the resurrection" had been set out as early as Acts 1:21-22: "one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us." To this is added the further description or perhaps qualification: they were chosen by God as witnesses "who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead" (10:41). These would have been, then, also among those who "came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem" (13:31), a brief retrospect to the Lucan travel narrative of Luke 9:51-19:45. The appearance of the Risen Lord had a different value for Paul than for Luke.

In the second part of the sermon, Acts 13:26-31, one finds connections, or at least consistency, with some of the concerns of Luke: the proper key to the interpretation of the Hebrew Scriptures, the explanation of the crucified Messiah, and the concept of the "witness to the resurrection." The history of the Savior, Jesus, is now added to the record of God's saving events and God's plan to make for Himself a people. The death and resurrection of Jesus, which were confirmed by witnesses (the valuable "inartificial" proofs, Acts 1:3), provide the foundation for the conviction that the promises given long ago had now reached the dawning of their fulfillment (cf. 13:32-33a, 34, 38-39).

²⁶ Ibid., 410.

²⁷ Carrez, "Presence et Fonctionnement de L'Ancien Testament dans l'Annonce de l'Évangile," 338.

²⁸ Schneider, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, 136.

THE ARGUMENT FROM SCRIPTURE (13:32-37)

The promise. What promise was Paul referring to when he said, "We bring you the good news that what God promised to our ancestors he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus" (vv. 32-33)?

The words ἐπαγγελία ("promise") and ἐπαγγελίζω ("to promise") occur frequently in Acts. In 1:4, recalling Luke 24:49, the verb refers to the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which is itself connected with the power to witness (Acts 1:8). The pouring out of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2) is interpreted as a fulfillment of the prophecy in Joel 2:28-32, though these verses from Joel are not limited to the Holy Spirit's outpouring. Joel's prophecy speaks about the coming of the day of the Lord (Acts 2:20) and the promise of salvation to "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord" (2:21). The "promise" appears again in 2:39, indicating the universal intention of the promise, but here too it is not simply the eschatological gift of the Spirit which is intended; it also seems to include the "forgiveness of sins" (ἄφεσιν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν, 2:38; cf. 13:38). At Paul's defense before Agrippa the "promise" again was an important *topos*. Paul claimed to be on trial "on account of my hope in the promise made by God to our ancestors, a promise that our twelve tribes hope to attain" (26:6-7). This is related in 26:8 to the resurrection of the dead by God. However, this verse does not specify whether Jesus' resurrection is in view, or whether it is the resurrection of the last day, which indeed had become a much discussed hope since Daniel 12 and 2 Maccabees 7. Kepple points out, however, that in Acts (as in Paul's epistles) these two eschatological events are intimately linked.²⁹ In Acts 26:23, for example, Jesus is referred to as the "first to rise from the dead." In 4:2 one sees more clearly the connection between Jesus and the hope of future resurrection, as the disciples were "proclaiming that in Jesus there is the resurrection of the dead." When Paul stated in 23:6 that he was on trial for the "resurrection of the dead," this is more than just a clever way of referring to Jesus' resurrection, which caused a division between the Pharisees and Sadducees. Paul also said before Felix that he had "a hope in God—a hope that they themselves also accept—that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous" (24:15). This hope is based on God "raising up Jesus" (13:33).

Psalm 2:7. Is the phrase "raising Jesus" (Acts 13:33) used in the sense of verse 34, "raising Him from the dead," or as in 3:22 or

²⁹ Robert J. Kepple, "The Hope of Israel, the Resurrection of the Dead, and Jesus," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 20 (1977): 238.

7:37 (cf. Deut. 18:18) in the sense of "raising up" or "sending" a prophet? Related to this is the question of what the citation of Psalm 2:7 refers to. Bruce argues that, by analogy with 3:22 and 7:37, Paul here referred to the sending of Jesus to Israel. "The day of the king's anointing in Israel of old was ideally the day in which he, the nation's representative, was born into a new relation of sonship towards Jehovah."³⁰ Bruce says the psalm refers to the anointing of Jesus with the Holy Spirit when He was baptized by John (cf. Luke 3:22). Bruce notes that the Western textual tradition related the baptism event to Psalm 2:7 by its quotation at the baptism scene.

However, several factors suggest that Luke did not refer here to the anointing of Jesus at His baptism. As Schweizer points out, from Acts 13:26 onward Paul spoke about the death and resurrection of Jesus, and verse 34, "using the same verb ['raised'] speaks unambiguously of the resurrection from the dead."³¹ O'Toole points out that the thought of verses 30-37 would be broken if the baptism or sending of Jesus is referred to in verse 33.³² Schmitt discerns a chiasmic structure in verses 30-37 of the verbs that refer to the resurrection, which would be disturbed if verse 33 referred to something other than the resurrection.³³ Moreover, Schweizer argues that since no title such as "Prophet" or "Savior" is mentioned in this context, as in 3:22 and even 13:23, it is more reasonable to read it in the sense of the verses that precede and follow.³⁴

Psalm 2:7, then, is taken as a prophecy referring to the resurrection of Christ. For Luke, as already seen in Luke 24:44, the psalms are valued as prophetic,³⁵ and David's words are frequently appealed to as prophecies foretold by the Holy Spirit and fulfilled in the early church (cf. Acts 1:16; 4:25). In Acts 4:25-26, Psalm 2:1-2 is quoted and then interpreted in Acts 4:27-28 as fulfilled in the actions of Herod, Pilate, the Gentiles, and people of Israel against Jesus at His trial and crucifixion. In the psalm the

³⁰ Bruce, *Commentary on the Book of Acts*, 275.

³¹ Eduard Schweizer, "The Concept of the Davidic 'Son of God' in Acts and Its Old Testament Background," in *Studies in Luke-Acts*, ed. Leander Keck and J. Louis Martyn (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), 186.

³² R. F. O'Toole, "Christ's Resurrection in Acts 13, 13-52," *Biblica* 60 (1979): 336.

³³ J. Schmitt, "Kerygme pascal et lecture scripturaire dans l'instruction d'Antioche," in *Les Acts des Apôtres*, ed. J. Kremer (Leuven: University Press, 1979), 161.

³⁴ Schweizer, "The Concept of the Davidic 'Son of God' in Acts and Its Old Testament Background," 186.

³⁵ Schneider, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, 137.

response of God was to establish His regent, who is presented as the begotten of God. In Acts 13 this is understood as being realized in the resurrection of Jesus. (In Hebrews 1:5 and 5:5, Psalm 2:7 appears again as a Christological topic).

Isaiah 55:3. How does Paul's argument from *Isaiah 55:3* and *Psalm 16:10*, presented in Acts 13:34-37, develop or prove the thesis of verses 32-33 regarding Jesus' resurrection from the dead and other promises?

Most commentators view 13:34-37 as presenting part of the scriptural proof for the resurrection of Jesus. As in Acts 2:25-35, *Psalm 16:10* is here offered as proof that the Messiah was to rise from the dead, never again to see corruption. *Isaiah 55:3* and *Psalm 16:10* appear together as the proof is developed in accord with rabbinic exegetical practice. *Isaiah 55:3* is cited and then is interpreted "by analogy" with *Psalm 16:10*. The correspondence between τὰ ὄσια ("holy blessings," Acts 13:34) and τὸν ὅσιον ("Holy One," v. 35) brings these passages together for the reading of one in light of the other.³⁶ "Both testimonies are meant to prove that Jesus was 'no more to return to corruption.'"³⁷

Introducing an alternative reading, Dupont holds that Paul's citation of *Isaiah 55:3* brings into focus the benefits of the resurrection of Christ.³⁸ Buss, Kilgallen, and Carrez agree with this view.³⁹ The logic of the passage supports such a reading, if one is careful about what value is given to the words ὅτι, οὕτως, and δι-οτι. The first of these may carry a causal sense, and Kilgallen translates it "because."⁴⁰ The second word would then draw an inference from the phrase that precedes it., The sense of verses 34-35 would then be, "Because God raised Jesus from the dead, no more to return to corruption, he therefore was able to say, 'I will give to you the holy and sure things of David.' For this reason it says in another place, 'You will not give your Holy One to see corruption'" (italics added).

³⁶ Cf. Schmitt, "Kerygme pascal et lecture scripturaire dans l'instruction d'Antioche," 162; Williams, *A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, 164; and Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., "The Promise to David in Psalm 16 and Its Application in Acts 2:25-33 and 13:32-37," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 23 (1980): 227.

³⁷ Piilai, *Apostolic Interpretation of History*, 83.

³⁸ Jacques Dupont, "Ta Hosia Dauid Ta Pista (Ac XIII 34 = Is LV 3)," *Revue Biblique* 68 (1961): 111.

³⁹ Buss, *Die Missionspredigt des Apostels Paulus im Pisidischen Antiochien*, 10; Kilgallen, "Acts 13, 38-39: Culmination of Paul's Speech in Pisidia," 489-90; and Carrez, "Presence et Fonctionnement de l'Ancien Testament dans l'Annonce de l'Évangile," 338.

⁴⁰ Kilgallen, "Acts 13, 38-39: Culmination of Paul's Speech in Pisidia," 491.

A further point in favor of the latter reading is that the Isaiah citation preserves the plural ὑμῖν. In English translation it is possible to misread the citation as referring to a singular recipient of the "holy and sure things," but not in Greek. Luke's emphasis has been on the promises of salvation to the ancestors, as in 2:39, where Peter said that "the promise is for you (ὑμῖν)." One should not therefore do violence to the Greek citation by insisting that a single recipient is intended where plural recipients are indicated. As Kilgallen explains,

The words of Isaiah do not speak of the incorruptibility of Jesus . . . but the words of Isaiah, if they are to be fulfilled, are best fulfilled by the fact that Jesus, once raised, is incorruptible. . . . Jesus' incorruptibility, then, is a presupposition, Paul argues, by which God could make a promise of the τὰ ὄσια to "you."⁴¹

Psalm 16:10. The Book of Acts underscores the importance of Psalm 16 for the early church. It is quoted at length in Acts 2:25-28, and again here at 13:35. In both places it is developed further by the preacher (2:29-32; 13:36-37).

Schmitt has demonstrated that such a reading of the psalm could only have developed from the Septuagint. He notes that the Hebrew text of Psalm 16:9b, which declares that the psalmist's "body will dwell in security," has been transformed in the Septuagint, the concept of "hope" replacing that of "security." He concludes that the Septuagint allows for the possibility of reading this verse as a ground for the hope of the resurrection.⁴² Similarly the "concrete" concept of the Hebrew תפֿשׁ, ("grave") is rendered more abstractly in the Septuagint as διαφθορά, "corruption, decay." This translation opens up the possibility of interpreting the passage in terms of a "deliverance from the grave."⁴³ In both places where it is cited in Acts, Psalm 16 is understood as referring to God's deliverance of His Holy One from the bonds of death through a begetting to eternal life.

The development of this citation in Acts 13:35-37 is in many ways parallel to its development in 2:29-32. There the body of David, the supposed speaker, is said to have decomposed in his grave, so that the statement refers prophetically to someone else, namely, Jesus the One "whom God has raised." Acts 13:35-37, however, advances beyond what was argued in chapter 2. The fact of Jesus' resurrection and the testimony that Jesus is now incor-

⁴¹ Ibid., 491-92.

⁴² Armin Schmitt, "Ps 16. 8-11 als Zeugnis der Auferstehung in der Apg," *Biblische Zeitschrift* 17 (1973): 237.

⁴³ Ibid., 238.

ruptible indicate that Jesus as Messiah is enabled by God to continue His saving work,⁴⁴ thereby securing the promises to the ancestors for their descendants.

Still another advance over the discussion of 2:25-32 is made. In 13:36, which syntactically admits of three possible readings, Paul said David "served the purpose of God in his own generation" and then slept with his ancestors (2 Sam. 7:12; cf Schweizer⁴⁵) and saw corruption. Likewise, Jesus "served the plan of God" but did not see corruption.

The argument of Acts 13:32-37, then, does not merely reproduce a scriptural proof for the resurrection of Jesus. Through the citation of Isaiah 55:3, Luke began to bring out the significance of the resurrection of Jesus for those who believe in His name. Because Jesus has been begotten (Ps. 2:7) to an incorruptible life (Ps. 16:10), He is able to guarantee for the present generation of believers the promises given to their ancestors. The argument from Scripture proves the thesis stated in Acts 13:32-33 that the fulfillment of those promises has come on the generation of Paul's audience. The promises include the resurrection of Christ and of the righteous dead. They also include, the evangelization of the Gentiles, as the contexts of both Psalm 2:7 and Isaiah 55:3 refer to the Gentiles coming into the possession of the Lord's anointed or coming to join themselves to God's chosen people. This promise began to be fulfilled in the mission to the Gentiles.

THE CONCLUSION OF THE SPEECH (13:38-41)

Kilgallen argues that verses 38-39 form the culmination or climax of the speech. The particle οὖν suggests that Paul reached his conclusion and that these words constitute the "word of encouragement to the people," namely, the blessings now available to them and hopes secured for them through the risen Christ.⁴⁶ Dupont also indicated that these verses are more than an afterthought.⁴⁷ The question remains as to how these verses relate to the foregoing argument. Also of concern is the identification of the "work" of which verse 41, which cites Habakkuk 1:5, speaks.

Verses 38-39 and the content of the speech. Kilgallen connects the blessings described in verses 38-39 (forgiveness of sins and

⁴⁴ Buss, *Die Missionspredigt des Apostels Paulus im Pisidischen Antiochien*, 114.

⁴⁵ Schweizer, "The Concept of the Davidic 'Son of God' in Acts and Its Old Testament Background," 189.

⁴⁶ Kilgallen, "Acts 13, 38-39: Culmination of Paul's Speech in Pisidia," 482-83.

⁴⁷ Dupont, "Ta Hosia Daid Ta Pista (Ac XIII 34 = Is LV 3)," 114.

justification) with the "holy promises made to David" in verse 34.⁴⁸ Forgiveness is frequently mentioned in Acts as a benefit of the saving work of Jesus (2:38; 5:31; 10:43; 26:18). Acts 10:43 even cites the "forgiveness of sins" as a benefit to which "all the prophets testify." Kilgallen sees a connection between "justification" here in 13:38-39 and the Benedictus in Luke 1:74-75. According to that text, the Savior from the house of David will bring holiness and justice to Israel so that they may worship properly. "The making of Israel into a forgiven and justified [holy] people is also an effect of the saving action of the Savior described in the Benedictus. Τά ἁγία, then, is [sic] that forgiveness and justification brought to Israel—by God's holy one."⁴⁹

Verses 38-39 relate more broadly as well to everything that has been said, about Jesus. Forgiveness and justification are available through "Him whom God raised from the dead." Verses 38-39 and Pauline theology. The relationship of these verses to the concepts of Paul with regard to forgiveness of sins and justification and the Law in the Epistles is a much debated issue. Conzelmann and Kayama reject them as non-Pauline expressions.⁵⁰ Kilgallen adds that the expression "being justified from sins" or the equivalent never appears in the Pauline letters.⁵¹ Similarly Schneider, says these verses are "ein schwacher Nachklang" ("a faint echo")⁵² of Paul, and Williams says Luke used distinctive terminology to adapt the speech to the speaker.⁵³ Pillai, on the other hand, contends at length for Pauline authenticity of the speech, and therefore of these verses.⁵⁴

Conzelmann and Schneider point out that in Acts 15 the "insufficiency" of the Mosaic Law is its difficulty or burdensomeness. This, it is true, is not the Pauline concept of the insufficiency of the Law. For Paul, the Law was "unable" to justify (Rom. 8:3); if a law "capable of making alive" had been given, then justification would have been accomplished by the Law (Gal. 3:21). In Acts 13:38, it is true, the incapability appears to rest with people rather than the Law, but this is not opposed to Paul's posi-

⁴⁸ Kilgallen, "Acts 13, 38-39: Culmination of Paul's Speech in Pisidia," 498.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 501.

⁵⁰ Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 106; Kisao Kayama, "The Image of Paul in the Book of Acts" (Ph.D. diss., Claremont Graduate School, Claremont, CA, 1971), 175.

⁵¹ Kilgallen, "Acts 13, 38-39: Culmination of Paul's Speech in Pisidia," 503.

⁵² Schneider, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, 140.

⁵³ Williams, *A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, 165.

⁵⁴ Pillai, *Early Missionary Preaching*, 77-111.

tion. The point is still that one is unable to attain justification by means of the Law of Moses.

Similarly Kilgallen's point about the non-Pauline nature of the phrase "justified from sins" is negated by the occurrence of this phrase in Romans 6:7. True, it is a "rare formulation,"⁵⁵ but it is not non-Pauline. Verse 39 is even more strongly Pauline in its flavor: the phrase "everyone who believes" occurs throughout Romans, and the passive phrase "is justified in him" has a close parallel in Galatians 2:17: "in our effort to be justified in Christ."⁵⁶

The ἔργον ("work") of verse 41. Following Paul's announcement about forgiveness and justification being available in Christ, the apostle gave a warning by citing Habakkuk 1:5. Even the negative response to the gospel is seen as a fulfillment of the plan of God. The citation from Habakkuk follows the Septuagint, which in the first phrase renders the Hebrew "among the Gentiles" as "scoffers."

What, however, is this ἔργον which God announced, which will not be believed, "even if it were declared" to the hearers? Pillai identifies it with the resurrection of Christ. His reasons are that (a) the temporal indicator, "in your days," indicates an event in the recent past, (b) the "work" is also presented as an object of Christian faith (πιστεύσητε), and (c) Paul's speech has been devoted to confirming the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.⁵⁷

Pillai's arguments, however, cannot hold up to criticism. First, "in your days" may indicate a contemporaneous event or an event in the near future, and not simply one in the recent past. Also the work is not necessarily an object of "faith" in a soteriological sense. Ἄπιστον occurs in connection with the resurrection in Acts 26:8, where it seems to be free of theological weight, meaning simply "incredible" or "unbelievable." As already discussed, the argumentation in 13:32-37 does not concern simply the resurrection of Jesus. Instead the verses move to a new level—the discussion of the benefits or consequences of that resurrection, which are made certain by the incorruptible One. As Jesus' resurrection is a fact on which something else can be built or from which something else may be deduced, it is not the goal of the speech. The "work" more likely relates to the goal of the speech, the work which is to be accepted and not despised. The "work in your days," then, relates to God's promises to the ancestors, which

⁵⁵ Ibid., 106.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Pillai, *Apostolic Interpretation of History*, 72-73.

had come to the dawn of their fulfillment in the present time of the hearers.

More specifically, in light of the context of Psalm 2:7 and Isaiah 55:3, which are quoted in Acts 13:33-34, this "work" is the mission to the Gentiles.⁵⁸ Support for this view is seen in the rejection of Paul's message by the Jews (v. 45) and Paul's words about turning to the Gentiles (vv. 46-47). This "work" is in fact not "told" to the hearers of the sermon in verses 16-41. Yet it is "told" to the reader, first in Luke 2:32, and later in Acts 26:22-23. The reader is aware that part of the function of the Messiah was to fulfill the promise made concerning Gentiles joining themselves to the chosen people of God, or, as in the promise made to Abraham, being blessed through his offspring (Gen. 12:3).

Acts 13:47 seems to relate Isaiah 49:6 to Paul and Barnabas, whereas the prophecy in Luke 2:32 and Acts 16:23 relates directly to Christ. They said the Lord's command was given "to us," but the quotation preserves the singular pronoun "you." Grelot explains that whereas Paul and Barnabas were to proclaim the Word of God, the efficacy of this Word, the gospel, is in Christ Himself.⁵⁹ Paul and Barnabas continued the work of Christ by presenting Him as the "light" to both Jews and Gentiles.

The opposition of "the Jews" (13:45, 50) to Paul's message was part of a pattern that occurred nearly everywhere he preached (14:2-7, 19-20; 17:5, 13; 18:6, 12; 20:3; 21:28; 28:25b-28). The first half of Acts, similarly, notes the growing opposition of the Jews, including Saul, and particularly the opposition of the Jewish leaders. This establishes a continuity with Jesus' ministry, for the opposition of "the residents of Jerusalem and their leaders" (13:27) against Him also was in fulfillment of "the words of the prophets."

SUMMARY

Paul's sermon at Antioch develops several themes that are central to Luke's interests in his historiographical endeavor. The historical exordium emphasizes the continuity of the present work of God with the history of God's mighty acts on behalf of Israel. The theme of promise and fulfillment, which dominates the speech, further develops and refines this point. Highlighted here are the promise to David, fulfilled in the raising up of Jesus from among David's offspring, and the announcement of the forerun-

⁵⁸ Schneider, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, 141.

⁵⁹ Pierre Grelot, "Note sur Actes, XIII, 47," *Revue Biblique* 88 (1981): 371.

ner, John the Baptist, who gave testimony to Jesus.

The sermon highlights the broader Lucan themes of the ignorance of those who opposed Jesus and the fulfillment of God's plan in spite of, or rather through, that very lack of recognition. Paul's mention of the weekly reading of the Old Testament Scriptures in the synagogue (v. 27) relates to the emphasis in Luke-Acts on reading and properly interpreting the Old Testament. Paul's reference to witnesses to the resurrection is in accord with the concept of "witness" developed in the first half of Acts.

Rather than simply demonstrate again the reality of Jesus' resurrection, Paul set forth the consequences of the resurrection and the continued work of the incorruptible One (vv. 32-41). Promises made to the ancestors, which were then being fulfilled, include the provision of the forgiveness of sins and justification. The contexts of the Old Testament citations employed in this section and the context of the speech in the development of Acts suggest that a promise of keen interest to Luke that is being fulfilled and the "work" that is being effected is the incorporation of the Gentiles through the promised Messiah, the "light to the Gentiles" (Isa. 49:6; Acts 13:47; 26:23). This work has been prepared for in the narrative from before the birth of Jesus (Luke 2:32) and in Acts as early as 1:8 and 2:21 (the conclusion of the Joel citation, which refers to the salvation of "everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord"). The fulfillment of prophecy occurs in the following narrative, as the Jews resisted Paul's message and expelled him and Barnabas from the city. The future hope of Israel and of the blessing of the nations are assured by Jesus, who as the resurrected One beyond the reach of death and decay, provides salvation for all who believe.

The sermon in Pisidian Antioch stands at an important juncture in Acts. Paul was set apart for the work (Acts 13:2) described in verses 46-47 as proclaiming Christ, the Light of the Gentiles. That work is seen in the context of the saving acts of God, stretching from the election of the patriarchs to the very day of Paul's sermon. Paul's break with the Jews and his turning to the Gentiles (vv. 46-47) occurred frequently in Paul's ministry. Even at the end of the Book of Acts many Jews in Rome rejected his message of salvation (a rejection that Paul said [Acts 28:25-27] was in accord with Isaiah's words in Isa. 6:9-10) and so the Word of God was sent to the Gentiles, for "they will hear" (Acts 28:28).

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Dallas Theological Seminary

3909 Swiss Ave.

Dallas, TX 75204

www.dts.edu

Please report any errors to Ted Hildebrandt at: thildebrandt@gordon.edu