

## THE SPEECHES IN ACTS\*

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About half of the Book of Acts consists of speeches, discourses, and letters. Counting both the short and the long addresses, we number at least 26 speeches that are made by either apostles and Christian leaders or by non-Christians (Jews and Gentiles). Classifying these speeches, we have eight addresses delivered by Peter,<sup>1</sup> a lengthy sermon of Stephen before the Sanhedrin (7:2-53), a brief explanation by Cornelius (10:30-33), a short address by James at the Jerusalem Council (15:13-21), the advice to Paul by James and the elders in Jerusalem (21:20-25), and nine sermons and speeches by Paul.<sup>2</sup> The rest of the discourses were given by Gamaliel the Pharisee (5:35-39), Demetrius the silver-smith (19:25-27), the city clerk in Ephesus (19:35-40), Tertullus the lawyer (24:2-8), and Festus the governor (25:24-27).<sup>3</sup> In addition, Luke relays the text of two letters: one from the Jerusalem Council to the Gentile churches (15:23-29), and the other written by Claudius Lysias addressed to Governor Felix (23:27-30).

### I. Sources

The speeches in Acts make the book interesting, because when people talk we learn something about their personalities. Luke gives

\* A few paragraphs in this article have been taken from my commentary *An Exposition of Acts* (New Testament Commentary; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990).

<sup>1</sup> See Acts 1:16-22; 2:14-36, 38-39; 3:12-26; 4:8-12, 19-20; 5:29-32; 10:34-43; 11:5-17; 15:7-11.

<sup>2</sup> See Acts 13:16-41; 14:15-17; 17:22-31; 20:18-35; 22:1-21; 24:10-21; 26:2-~ , 25-27; 27:21-26; 28:17-20.

<sup>3</sup> H. J. Cadbury, "The Speeches in Acts," *The Beginnings of Christianity: The Acts of the Apostles* (repr. ed.; 5 vols.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979) 5.403. See also J. Navonne, "Speeches in Acts," *The Bible Today* 65 (1973) 1114-17.

the reader an opportunity to listen to the speakers and by listening to come to know their personalities. Luke was personally present when Paul addressed the Ephesian elders, spoke in Jerusalem, defended himself before Felix, and delivered speeches before Festus and Agrippa. We presume that Luke received from Paul the wording of Paul's sermon in Pisidian Antioch and his Areopagus address. Perhaps Paul and other witnesses provided information on Stephen's speech before the Sanhedrin. From Peter, Luke gathered material on the addresses of Peter in the upper room, at Pentecost, near Solomon's Colonnade, before the Sanhedrin, and at the Jerusalem Council. And from James he received the details concerning the Jerusalem Council.

If Luke collected his information from eyewitnesses, does he faithfully reproduce the speeches which they and others made? As can be expected, the context reveals that Luke presents the addresses in summary form. But are these summaries true to fact or have they been placed in the mouths of speakers? Some scholars are of the opinion that the speeches are the creation of the writer of Acts. By comparison, they point to the Greek historian Thucydides and claim that Luke adopted the methodology of Thucydides. This historian declared that in composing his speeches he "adhered as closely as possible to the general sense of what was actually said."<sup>4</sup> The apparent intention of this ancient writer was to state that the speeches he wrote were historically accurate and not based on his own imagination.<sup>5</sup> Even though the words of Thucydides have been a topic of much debate, the inclination to take his saying at face value prevails. The task which the ancient historian assumed was to give an account of the events just as they happened. He reported facts not fiction.

If we listen to Luke's own words in the preface to his Gospel, we learn that he gives an account of the things that have happened and which people have accepted as true (Luke 1:1; cf. Acts 1:1). Thus at the beginning of his writings, Luke informs the reader that his reporting as a historian is true to fact.

## II. *History*

The question that concerns the student of Acts is whether Luke is giving a truthful presentation in this historical account. Does he accurately report the speeches he himself did not hear?

<sup>4</sup> Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, 1.22.1.

<sup>5</sup> M. Dibelius, *Studies in the Acts of the Apostles* (London: SCM, 1956) 141, expresses doubt; but W. W. Gasque accepts the statement as true, in "The Speeches of Acts: Dibelius Reconsidered," *New Dimensions in New Testament Study* (ed. by R. N. Longenecker and M. C. Tenney; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974) 243-44. Compare T. F. Glasson, "Speeches in Acts and Thucydides," *Exp Tim* 76 (1964-65) 165.

Before we examine some of the speeches in Acts, let us first note that Luke's reporting reflects linguistic peculiarities that show the area and setting in which a dialogue took place. In many sections of his Gospel and Acts, Luke expresses himself in excellent Greek. This is evident, for instance, from the Greek in the introduction to his Gospel (Luke 1:1-4). But throughout the birth narratives (Luke 1 and 2), his diction and word choice bear a distinct Aramaic stamp. It is as if Mary herself relates to Luke the accounts of Jesus' conception and birth in Aramaic Greek. Indeed, so Luke reports, Mary kept all these things in her heart (2:19, 51).

Also in Acts, Luke varies the choice of words with reference to the locale. He reflects the diction, vocabulary, and culture of the area he describes. In the chapters that depict Palestine (1-15), Luke's Greek has an Aramaic coloring. The second half of the book (16-28) reflects a Gentile setting and is written in fluent Greek that, at times, rivals classical Greek. To illustrate, of the 67 times that the optative mood occurs in the NT, 17 of these are in Acts. These 17 instances appear mostly in the second half of the book and often come from speakers who know Greek well.<sup>6</sup> Another aspect of a Jewish backdrop that Luke portrays in Acts is the use of Semitisms. For instance, Jesus addresses Paul on the way to Damascus with the Hebrew name **Σαούλ** instead of the Grecized form **Σαῦλος** (9:4; 22:7; 26:14; and see 9:17; 22:13). By contrast, when Governor Festus alludes to Emperor Nero as **ὁ Σεβαστός** and **ὁ κύριος** (25:25,26), he exposes a typical Roman setting.

Is Luke composing speeches that he places on the lips of the speakers, or does he present more or less the exact words the speakers uttered in summarized form? If we say that Luke is the source for these speeches, he proves to be an exceptionally skilled artist who writes a masterful book with all the possible nuances of speech and word choice.<sup>7</sup> His work, then, is closer to fiction than history. But if we contend that Luke's source material comes directly from the speakers or the community that heard them, he mirrors people as they are with their own peculiarities and characteristics. "The question of the historicity of the speeches is not beside the point in the study of a work which claims to be a historical narrative."<sup>8</sup> Luke, then, is both a writer and a historian.

<sup>6</sup> These include the Greek philosophers in Athens (17:18), Paul at the Areopagus (17:27 [twice]), Governor Festus (25:16 [twice], 20), and Paul addressing King Agrippa (26:29). The other instances are: 5:24; 8:20, 31; 10:17; 17:11; 20:16; 21:33; 24:19; 27:12, 39.

<sup>7</sup> Concludes J. T. Townsend, "There is therefore, no reason to suppose that the speeches in Acts which are found in the mouths of Christians reflect any other mind than the mind of the man who wrote them, the author of Luke-Acts." "The Speeches in Acts," *ATR* 42 (1960) 159.

<sup>8</sup> F. F. Bruce. "The Speeches in Acts-Thirty Years After," in *Reconciliation and Hope* (ed. by R. Banks; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974) 57.

Space does not permit examination of all the discourses in Acts. We must be selective and refer to only a few, namely, those of Stephen, Peter, and Paul, with a passing reference to the ones of Tertullus and Festus. In the last part of Acts (20-28), Luke discloses that he himself was present and, therefore, he speaks as an eyewitness.

### III. *Stephen*

The most extensive speech in Acts is the one Stephen delivered before the members of the Sanhedrin (7:2-53). Stephen traces the history of the people of Israel from the time of Abraham to that of Solomon's temple. But the speech is much more than a chronicle of historical events. Stephen imparts that he is an expert theologian who is thoroughly acquainted with the Scriptures. He is knowledgeable in drawing implicit conclusions and displays the same theological acumen as the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews unveils.

Stephen directly quotes no less than 15 OT passages, of which 13 are from the Pentateuch and two from the Prophets. Of the 40 OT quotations cited in Acts, 15 are in Stephen's speech.<sup>9</sup> The repeated appeal to the OT is not a characteristic of Luke's style but rather points to a theologian of Stephen's stature (6:9-10). Moreover, Stephen has selected considerable detail from the primary events of Israel's early history. "The major events and details which are included are carefully chosen and presented to indicate convincingly the accuracy of Stephen's interpretation of Israel's past history."<sup>10</sup>

In his speech, Stephen shows that God is not bound to an earthly temple built by human hands: God revealed himself to Abraham in Mesopotamia, to Joseph in Egypt, and to Moses in the flames of the burning bush. Stephen proves that the Jews are unable to confine God's dwelling place to the temple in Jerusalem. He develops the theological themes of God, worship, the Law, the covenant, and the person and message of the Messiah. Through the work of the Messiah, the house of Israel is able to worship God in truth and justice. Stephen avoids mentioning the name of Jesus but teaches that God has raised up a Savior for the house of Israel.

<sup>9</sup> Gen 12:1 = v 3; Gen 48:4 = v 5; Gen 15:13-15 = vv 6-7; Exod 3:12 = v 7; Exod 1:8 = v 18; Exod 2:14 = vv 27-28; Exod 3:2 = v 30; Exod 3:6 = v 32; Exod 3:5 = v 33; Exod 3:7, 8, 10 = v 34; Exod 2:14 = v 35; Deut 18:15 = v 37; Exod 32:1, 23 = v 40; Amos 5: 25-27 (LXX) = vv 42-43; Isa 66:1-2 = vv 49-50.

<sup>10</sup> J. J. Scott, Jr., "Stephen's Speech: A Possible Model for Luke's Historical Method?" *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 17 (1974) 93. Consult A. F. J. Klijn, "Stephen's Speech-Acts VII. 2-53," *NTS* 4 (1957) 25-31. C. H. H. Scobie thinks that Luke used a Christian tract as source material in "The Use of Source Material in the Speeches of Acts III and VII," *NTS* 25 (1979) 399-421.

We are unable to ascertain from whom Luke received the substance of Stephen's speech. We surmise that Luke gained access to the speech that Stephen delivered before the Sanhedrin from Paul and those members of the Sanhedrin who later became Christians. The speech came to Luke's attention through a fixed tradition either in oral or written form. With reference to Acts 7--a study of word choice, references to the temple and to Moses, and the absence of typical Lucan constructions--all these facts indicate that Stephen's speech did not originate in the mind of Luke.

Thus, the words *promise* and *affliction* have their own significance in the context of Acts 7 and do not correspond to their usages in the rest of Acts. Next, Stephen's manner of speaking about Moses and the temple is confined to this particular discourse. Luke writes nowhere else in Acts in a similar manner. And last, in Stephen's speech are at least 23 words that do not occur again either in Acts or in any other book of the NT; also, numerous literary forms, peculiar to both the Gospel of Luke and Acts, are absent from Stephen's speech.<sup>11</sup> We cannot assume that Luke has presented a verbatim account of Stephen's speech, but we confidently assert that he allows the original speaker to be heard in words and concepts that belong to Stephen, the first Christian martyr.

We infer that as a faithful historian Luke has incorporated the discourse of Stephen at this juncture of Acts to prepare the reader for the persecution subsequent to Stephen's death and for extending the church beyond the confines of Jerusalem. It was Stephen, and not Luke, who provided the impetus to further the church's development. Luke, therefore, is reporting factual information based on historical events.<sup>12</sup> He is a historian who, in the manner of Thucydides, reports speeches as closely as possible to the general sense of what the speakers actually said.

#### IV. Peter

Peter's Pentecost sermon is the first of the three major addresses Peter delivered (2:14-36; 3:12-26; 10:34-43). Some scholars are of the opinion that Peter's Pentecost sermon is much more a theological

<sup>11</sup> M. H. Scharlemann, "Stephen's Speech: A Lucan Creation?" *Concordia Journal* 4 (1978) 57. See also L. W. Barnard, "Saint Stephen and Early Alexandrian Christianity," *NTS* 7 (1960-61) 31.

<sup>12</sup> Compare M. H. Scharlemann, *Stephen: A Singular Saint* (Analecta Biblica 34; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1968) 52-56; J. Kilgallen, *The Stephen Speech: A Literary and Redactional Study of Acts 7, 2-53* (Analecta Biblica 67; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1976) 113.

discourse written by Luke than a historical report of the apostle's speech.<sup>13</sup> We know that Luke himself was not present in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost, but that he received his information from "eye-witnesses and servants of the word" (Luke 1:2). We presume that Peter served as Luke's informant who gave him the pattern and wording of the sermon. In fact, "Both the pattern and the basic theology are older than Luke and probably reach back into the early days of the church."<sup>14</sup> Luke presents a summary of Peter's sermon, which is also the case in the other discourses. Luke indicates that much more was said, for Peter warned the people with many other words (2:40).

In his speeches, Peter employs concepts that have an echo in his epistles. He even exhibits similarities in his word choice. Comparing these similarities in both his speeches and letters, we find some instances that are striking not only in the Greek but even in translation.

Acts by the set purpose and foreknowledge of God (2:23)	1 Peter according to the foreknowledge of God (1:2)
silver or gold I do not have (3:6)	such as silver or gold that you were redeemed (1:18)
the faith that comes through him (3:16)	you believe in God through him (1:21)
as judge of the living and the dead (10:42)	to judge the living and the dead (4:5)

When Peter addresses the household of Cornelius, he tells the Gentile audience that "God shows no favoritism" (10:34). Next, he repeats this thought in slightly different wording when he speaks at the Jerusalem Council in favor of admitting the Gentiles to membership in the church. He says that God "made no distinction between us and them" (15:9). Third, in 1 Peter he writes that God "impartially judges each man's work" (1:17). And last, when Peter proclaims the good news to the crowd at Solomon's Colonnade, he instructs the people to repent in order to hasten the coming of Christ (3:19-21). He expresses the same sentiment in a brief sentence in 2 Peter. He writes, "You ought

<sup>13</sup> Among others, R. F. Zehnle, *Peter's Pentecost Discourse: Tradition and Lukan Reinterpretation in Peter's Speeches in Acts 2 and 3* (SBLMS 15; ed. by R. A. Kraft; Nashville, New York: Abingdon, 1971) 136-38.

<sup>14</sup> I. H. Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Tyndale New Testament Commentaries; ed. by R. V. G. Tasker; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980) 72. Compare C. H. Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1936) 72-74.

to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming" (3:11b-12a, NIV).

We admit that all these resemblances are no more than proverbial straws in the wind. Nevertheless, these similarities point in the same direction and lend verbal support to the historicity of Peter's discourses.<sup>15</sup> In these speeches, Peter clearly teaches both the humanity and divinity of Jesus Christ (e.g., 2:22, 33-36). Also throughout his writings, Peter refers to Jesus as God and man (e.g., 1 Pet 1:2, 3; 2:21, 24; 3:15; 2 Pet 1:1). In brief, Peter presents Jesus Christ as God and man in both his addresses and epistles.

### V. Paul

Luke has recorded three of Paul's missionary discourses: the synagogue sermon in Pisidian Antioch (13:16-41), the Areopagus speech in Athens (17:22-31), and the farewell address to the Ephesian elders (20:18-35). Of these three, Luke personally heard the third one; he appears to have received information for the first two discourses from Paul and his travel companions.

The Pisidian Antioch sermon is a type that Paul delivered throughout Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Greece (cf. 14:15-17; 17:22-31). Paul's sermon basically consists of three parts: (1) a survey of Israel's history; (2) the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus; and (3) the application of the gospel message.<sup>16</sup> Many aspects of this sermon resemble features in the sermons delivered by Peter in Jerusalem (2:14-36; 3:12-26) and the one Stephen preached before the Sanhedrin (7:2-53).

Paul's sermon in Pisidian Antioch discloses aspects of his epistolary teaching. When Paul preached in the synagogue at Antioch, he ended his sermon by mentioning the doctrine of justification. He said, "Everyone who believes in [Jesus] is justified from all things from which you could not be justified through the law of Moses" (13:39). There is a discernible link between his sermon and his epistles, for Paul expresses the doctrine of justification in his Epistles to the Romans, the Galatians, and the Ephesians.<sup>17</sup> This fundamental tenet he taught both in sermons and letters.

<sup>15</sup> Cadbury is skeptical of these similarities and parallels, for he points to comparable word choices in other NT writers. "The Speeches in Acts," *Beginnings*, 5.413.

<sup>16</sup> Refer to J. W. Bowker, "Speeches in Acts: A Study in Proem and *Yelammedenu* Form," *NTS* 14 (1967-68) 101-2.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Rom 3:20,21,28; Gal 3:16; and Eph 2:9. Rejecting that Luke wrote Acts, J. Roloff says that in general the speeches which the writer places on the lips of Paul have nothing in common with the Pauline theology and characteristics known from his epistles. *Die Apostelgeschichte* (NTD 5; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1981) 3.

Strictly speaking, Paul's Areopagus address in Athens is not a defense of the Christian faith. Rather, his speech is both a challenge to the pagan religion and a proclamation of the gospel. When Paul stood before members of the Areopagus Council, he faced an audience that was different from that of the synagogue worship services. In the presence of the Athenian philosophers, he could not assume that they had any knowledge of the Scripture or of Jesus who fulfilled Scripture's prophecies. Paul had to begin his speech by teaching his audience the doctrines of God and creation. He continued his teaching with the doctrine of man, for man is God's offspring. And he concluded his oration with the doctrines of judgment and the resurrection.

We affirm the historicity of Paul's visit to the Council of the Areopagus. In that meeting, Paul the apostle to the Gentiles introduced a pagan audience to the teachings of the Christian faith. He commented that God created man, appointed a day for judgment, and overlooked man's sins of the past. Paul's speech and writing reveal similarity. In his letter to the Romans, Paul mentions that God has made himself known in creation, that God judges men's secrets through Jesus Christ, and that God has shown his forbearance by leaving sins unpunished (Rom 1:19-21; 2:16; 3:21-26). Comparing these comments with his Areopagus address, we assert that Paul himself addressed the council members of the Areopagus.<sup>18</sup> We assume that at a later time he gave Luke the wording of this speech.

Even though Paul alludes to an altar inscription ("to an unknown God") and quotes some lines from pagan sources, he nowhere indicates that the gospel occupies common ground with pagan religion and philosophy.<sup>19</sup> Paul uses these pagan aspects as points of contact with his audience but refuses to accommodate and compromise the gospel message. In this respect he is true to his God, who gives man the law not to have any gods before him. When Paul refers to pagan gods, he skillfully employs the neuter gender: "What [ὃ], therefore, you worship in ignorance, this [τοῦτο] I am proclaiming to you" (17:23); and "We ought not to think that the divine being [τὸ θεῖον] is like an image" (17:29). He refrains from calling an idol "God," but classifies it with impersonal objects. Conclusively, Luke indicates that Paul carefully chose his words when he addressed the Athenian philosophers.

<sup>18</sup> F. F. Bruce, "Paul and the Athenians," *Exp Tim* 88 (1976) 11. H. Conzelmann calls Paul's speech "not an extract from a missionary address, but a purely literary creation." See his "The Address of Paul on the Areopagus," *Studies in Luke-Acts* (ed. by L. E. Keck and J. L. Martyn; Nashville/New York: Abingdon, 1966) 218. Consult C. J. Hemer, "The Speeches of Acts: II. The Areopagus Address," *Tyndale Bulletin* 40/2 (1989) 239-59.

<sup>19</sup> T. L. Wilkinson, "Acts 17: The Gospel Related to Paganism," *Vox Reformata* 35 (1980) 12.

Paul's farewell address to the Ephesian elders on the beach of Miletus has a number of phrases that occur also in his epistles. These are a few illustrations:

serving the Lord with all humility (20:19)	serving the Lord (Rom 12:11) with all humility (Eph 4:2)
that I may finish the race (20:24)	I have finished the race (2 Tim 4:7)
complete the task I received from the Lord (20:24)	complete the task you received in the Lord (Col 4:17)

Examining the diction of Paul's farewell speech, R. H. Charles concludes:

There is every ground for accepting this speech as a trustworthy record of Paul's speech. Some of the phrases are exclusively Pauline as *πλήν ὅτι, καὶ νῦν ἰδοῦ, δεσμὰ καὶ θλίψεις, νουθετεῖν*; others are characteristically Pauline and non-Lucan as *μὴ φείδεσθαι, ταπεινοφρονσύνης, ὑποστέλλεσθαι, νύκτα καὶ ἡμέραν, τὸ συμφέρον*.<sup>20</sup>

In view of Luke's presence, we confidently affirm the historicity of Paul's speech recorded by his friend Luke. C. K. Barrett pointedly asks why Luke would write fiction and attach the story to Miletus instead of "the great city and Pauline centre Ephesus."<sup>21</sup> If Luke records a historical event, then the address is an eyewitness report that reflects the words Paul spoke.

The speeches which Paul the prisoner delivered before the Jews in Jerusalem (22:1-21) and before King Agrippa (26:2-29) exhibit remarkable differences even though both contain the account of Paul's conversion experience. For one thing, the audiences are different. In his Jerusalem address, Paul never mentions the name Jesus with the exception of Jesus' self-identification (22:8). Paul purposely circumscribes the name to avoid giving offense to his Jewish audience. But when he

<sup>20</sup> P. Gardner, "The Speeches of St. Paul in Acts," *Essays on Some Biblical Questions of the Day* (ed. by H. B. Sweet; London: Macmillan, 1909) 418. In an addendum he includes the investigations of R. H. Charles.

<sup>21</sup> C. K. Barrett, "Paul's Address to the Ephesian Elders," *God's Christ and His People: Studies in Honour of N. A. Dahl* (ed. by J. Jervell and W. A. Meeks; Oslo/Bergen/Tromsø: Universitetsforlaget, 1977) 109. Consult G. A. Kennedy, "The Speeches in Acts," *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill/London: University of North Carolina Press, 1984) 139. Consult C. J. Hemer, "The Speeches of Acts: I. The Ephesian Elders at Miletus," *Tyndale Bulletin* 40 (1989) 77-85.

addresses King Agrippa and tries to persuade him to believe in Jesus, he explicitly mentions Jesus' name (26:9).

Further, addressing the Jews in Jerusalem, Paul features Ananias as a devout man according to the law and respected by all the Jews living in Damascus (22:12). In his speech before Agrippa, Paul overlooks the entire encounter with Ananias because it detracts from his purpose to acquaint the king with the gospel. He delivers his Jerusalem address in Hebrew or Aramaic (21:40) but his discourse before Agrippa and Festus in excellent Greek. In the presence of these government officials, military commanders, and prominent citizens of Caesarea, Paul's diction compares with that of classical Greek. To illustrate, he employs an Attic verb form ἴσασι instead of the third person plural οἶδασι (26:4); he ingeniously quotes the words "Nothing was done secretly in a corner" (26:26), which philosophers pejoratively used for uneducated teachers;<sup>22</sup> and he uses the optative mood in his closing remark to Agrippa: Εὐξάμην ἄν (26:29).

What are the characteristics that support the historicity of Paul's speech before King Agrippa? In summary, here are the highlights:

First, no speech either of Paul or any other speaker in Acts is as personal in tone as Paul's address before Agrippa (see especially v 27). This speech sparkles in the beauty of its direct gospel appeal. Paul speaks engagingly to King Agrippa throughout his discourse by addressing him by title, name, and personal pronoun *you*.<sup>23</sup>

Next, Paul fits his choice of words to the class of his audience. That is, his diction and syntax are approaching classical Greek and equal that of his Areopagus address (17:22-31). At the same time, we hear in his Agrippa speech the same tone and tenor of Paul's other discourses.

Third, in his speech before Agrippa, Paul repeats his conversion experience (cf. 22:1-21; and see 9:1-19). Although the three conversion accounts reveal differences, Paul freely selects from his own recollection those elements that suit his present purposes. And because Paul is the speaker, he is free to choose his own wording to describe the event.

Last, Paul addresses Agrippa, who is of Jewish descent and, as curator of the Jerusalem temple, as "an expert in all the customs and disputes of the Jews" (26:3). Yet Paul's speech is not a one-sided gospel appeal directed only to Agrippa (see, for instance v 8); he presents the doctrine of Christ's resurrection as a light both to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles (v 23).<sup>24</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Consult A. J. Malherbe, "Not in a Corner": Early Christian Apologetic in Acts 26:26," *The Second Century* 5 (1985-86) 193-210.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. vv 2, 3, 7, 13, 19, 27.

<sup>24</sup> Compare K. Haacker, "Das Bekenntnis des Paulus zur Hoffnung Israels nach der Apostelgeschichte des Lukas," *NTS* 31 (1985) 437-51; J. J. Kilgallen, "Paul Before Agrippa (Acts 26,2-23): Some Considerations," *Bib* 69 (1988) 170-95.

VI. *Conclusion*

The speeches in Acts accurately portray the speakers and reflect their individual traits. The syntax in some of Peter's speeches is awkward and in some verses disjointed. For example, before Cornelius and his household Peter literally said: "The word which he sent to the sons of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ, this one is Lord of all, you yourselves know the thing which took place throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee, after the baptism which John proclaimed" (10:36-37). Tertullus the lawyer attempts to influence Governor Felix with flattery. Luke, who was present at the hearing, records Tertullus's grammatical errors with journalistic accuracy. The orator utters a participle ("finding this man to be a troublemaker" [24:2]) instead of a main verb, and thus he disrupts the flow of the sentence. The letter from the hand of commander Claudius Lysias is written in military style (23:26-30), while the diction and syntax of Governor Festus characterize him as an educated Roman official who is able to speak excellent Greek (25:24-27).

Although Luke is the writer of the speeches in Acts, he is not their composer. That is, he does not create discourses which he places in the mouths of speakers. He himself asserts, "I myself have accurately investigated everything from the beginning" (Luke 1:3; see also Acts 1:1). Hence, we are assured that Luke's presentations are based on factual and faithful research. Luke presented the people as they were, precisely because he was personally acquainted with most of them. As a travel companion of Paul, he recorded the historical events relating to Paul's words and deeds.

A close examination of Paul's speeches to the Jews shows that "there is much in the content that is not essentially Lukan."<sup>25</sup> As he addressed Jewish audiences, Paul regularly appealed to the OT Scriptures. But this characteristic does not fit Luke's style. Also, much of the content and the vocabulary of Stephen's speech is not repeated in the rest of Acts; this feature indicates that Luke is reporting and not composing Stephen's address. We conclude, then, that the speeches in Acts do not appear to be Lucan creations.

<sup>25</sup> F. F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles: The Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary* (3d rev. and enlarged ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990) 62.

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