



UNIVERSIDADE CATÓLICA PORTUGUESA
FACULDADE DE TEOLOGIA

MESTRADO INTEGRADO EM TEOLOGIA (1.º grau canónico)

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**The First Missionary Speeches of Peter and
Paul in Acts: A Contrast**

Dissertação Final
sob orientação de:
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Lisboa
2013

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

“Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you” (1 Thess 5:18).

Thesis writing is a painful and demanding journey. I cannot claim that this is solely my exclusive *opus*. I wish to express my deepest thanks to a number of people who accompanied me along the way in this journey of thesis writing. Firstly, I thank God for his divine guidance throughout this year. Secondly, I express my gratitude to the Dominican community in Macau for providing me a family away from home and for giving me the opportunity to study at the Faculty of Christian Studies, University of St. Joseph-Macau. My gratitude extends also to all my Dominican confreres for their camaraderie, prayers, and constant encouragement.

Lastly, I would like to express my special thanks to Professor Monera, my supervisor, for his concern, patient guidance, especially his particular care in helping me with my English language and other suggestions. Without the help of the above-mentioned persons, this thesis would not have been possible.

From the bottom of my heart, I say: “I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers” (Eph 1:16).

Soli Deo gloria!

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ABBREVIATIONS

Gen	Genesis
Exod	Exodus
Lev	Leviticus
Num	Numbers
Deut	Deuteronomy
1Sam	Samuel
2 Sam	Samuel
Ps	Psalms
Wis	Wisdom
Sir	Sirach [Ecclesiasticus]
Isa	Isaiah
Ezek	Ezekiel
Hab	Habakkuk

Mt	Matthew
Mk	Mark
Lk	Luke
Jn	John
Acts	Acts of the Apostles
Rom	Romans
1 Cor	1 Corinthians
Eph	Ephesians
Col	Colossians
Heb	Hebrews

B.C.E.	Before Common Era
ca.	circa, about, approximately
C.E.	Common Era
cf.	<i>confer</i> , compare
ed.	edition; edited by; editor (pl. eds.)
e.g.	<i>exempli gratia</i> , for example
etc	<i>et cetera</i> , and other things, or and so forth
<i>EvQ</i>	<i>Evangelical Quarterly</i>
Gk.	Greek

i.e.	id est
ibid.	ibidem
LXX	The Septuagint (pre-Christian Greek version of the Old Testament).
MT	Masoretic Text
NT	New Testament
<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
OT	Old Testament
TNTC	Tyndale New Testament Commentaries
trans.	Translator; translated by
Vol.	volume
V(v.)	verse(s)
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament

All the biblical citation in this paper are taken from the NRSV *New Revised Standard Version*

INTRODUCTION

One may certainly have noticed that the book of Acts contains many speeches. It can be said that speeches are one of the characteristic features in the Book of Acts. The main bulk of them are addressed either to Jews or Gentiles. What role do the speeches play in the Acts of the Apostles? Luke, like other historians of his time, followed the practice of composing speeches as a literary form. Among the many speeches in Acts, I choose the first two speeches delivered by Peter and Paul: Peter's first missionary speech (Acts 2:14-41), and Paul's first missionary speech (Acts 13:14-41). From these two speeches, Peter and Paul are portrayed as true witnesses, not only with their words but also with the testimony of their very lives. I choose these two speeches as my dissertation's title because, as a Christian, I believe I should know how to give witness to Christ. Many times we find it difficult to witness because we do not know where to start. In this case, the speeches of Peter and Paul can serve as model and guide for witnessing to the risen Christ.

The dissertation is entitled as "Peter's First Missionary Speech and Paul's First Missionary Speech at Pentecost: A Contrast." The study attempts to highlight both the similarities and contrasts between the speeches of Peter (Acts 2:14-41) and Paul (Acts 13:26-41). The dissertation is divided into four parts:

Chapter One introduces us to the "world behind" the Acts of the Apostles in general, and to the speeches in particular. It tackles the preliminary information about the author, sources, purpose, historical setting of the speeches. Also this chapter situates the two speeches within the larger context.

Chapter Two focuses on the speeches of Peter and Paul by closely looking at their specific audiences, particular situation that gave rise for the speech to be delivered, and the sources used by both Peter and Paul to show how in the risen Christ the OT promises had been fulfilled.

Chapter Three concentrates on the similarities and contrasts between the two speeches. Is there an identifiable common structure that Luke is using in both the speeches?

Chapter Four is aimed at discussing the theological implications of the two speeches. This chapter will discuss how the two speeches could have repercussions in the way we do evangelization in the twenty-first century.

CHAPTER ONE

A GLIMPSE AT SPEECHES IN ACTS

The Book of Acts has “a number of characteristics that make it a unique and fascinating part of the New Testament.”¹ One of the most characteristic features is “the presence of many speeches.”² Thus it could be said that the speeches are the trademark of the Book of Acts. Acts is the only book of New Testament where one can find “one-third of its total text as speeches.”³ There are different kinds of speeches in Acts although composed by the same author, i.e., Luke. Some are missionary speeches addressed to both Jews and Gentiles. There are also defense speeches delivered by Paul and Stephen. In general, the speeches tell something about Luke’s view of the nature of the early Christian church.⁴ In the first half of the twentieth century “these speeches came to be considered the most important part of the book of Acts because they were taught to represent the real content of the gospel proclaimed by the apostles.”⁵ In addition, the speeches provide help to understand the purpose, direction, and the meaning of the events narrated in Acts.

¹ Walter L. Liefeld, *Interpreting the Book of Acts* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1995), 15.

² W. G. Kuimmel, *Introduction to the New Testament*. Nashville, 17th Edition. Revised Edition, trans. H. C. Kee (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1975), 167. For a similar view see John B. Polhill, *Acts*, The New American Commentary, 26 (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1992), 43.

³ Polhill, *Acts*, 20.

⁴ Edwin D. Freed, *The New Testament: A Critical Introduction*, Third Edition (Stamford, CT: Wadsworth Thomas Learning, 2001), 132.

⁵ Mark Allan Powell, *What Are They Saying about Acts?* (New York/Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1991), 30.

1. The Question of the Historicity in Acts

Attitudes and perceptions of scholars on the historical reliability of Acts vary widely in different countries. German scholarship, on the one hand, has evaluated negatively on the historical worth of Acts, from Baur to Dibelius, Conzelmann, and Haenchen. British scholarship, on the other hand, has been relatively positive about Acts' historicity, from Lightfoot and Ramsay, to W. L. Knox and F. F. Bruce. North American scholars show a range of opinions.⁶ Most scholars understand Luke's works to be in the tradition of "Hellenistic historiography, a kind of history writing that had its roots in Thucydides (ca. 460-400 B.C.E.) and flourished during the Hellenistic period (ca. 300 B.C.E. -400 C.E.)."⁷ The purpose for writing such history "was not ... simply to keep records or to chronicle the past", but "rather it was written *both* to encourage or entertain (i.e., to be good reading) *and* to inform, moralize, or offer an apologetic."⁸ In other words, it is aimed at arousing the desired feeling in the audience or reader.⁹ Martin Hengel classifies Acts as a 'historical monograph' as accurate as the work of any other ancient historian; while Henry J. Cadbury opines that Luke is closest to being a historian, but writing on a popular level.¹⁰ Indeed, the question on the historical nature of the Book of Acts has been and still is approached from many different viewpoints. One thing that stands out clearly is the

⁶ Claudia Setzer, *Jewish Responses to Early Christians: History and Polemics, 30-150 C.E.* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 94.

⁷ See Gordon D. Fee & Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, Second Edition (Manila, Philippines: OMF Publishers, 2002), 96. See also C. K. Barrett, *Luke the Historian in Recent Study* (London: Epworth Press, 1961).

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ James M. Robinson, "Acts," in *The Literary Guide to the Bible*, eds. Robert Alter & Frank Kermode (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987): 467-478, esp. 471.

¹⁰ Henry J. Cadbury, *The Book of Acts in History* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1955).

observation that Acts is moving “beyond the framework of a Hellenistic biography into that of a properly historical account.”¹¹ No one can deny that Acts is “unprecedented and unparalleled in its attempt to provide a sequential account of the nascent Christian movement.”¹² Whenever anyone wants to learn about the history of primitive Christianity, he invariably has recourse to the information provided by this book. This in itself is an implicit acknowledgement of the importance and value of the historical data that Acts contains.¹³ In this sense, William S. Kurz is apt when he states, “Acts of the Apostles is the only book in the New Testament which continues the story of Jesus into the early church (a vital sequel to the story of the life of Jesus found in the Gospels).”¹⁴ Hence, according to Kurz, the gospel of Luke and Acts ought to be read together since Acts completes the story began in the gospel. Without Acts, the gospel of Luke would be incomplete, and without the gospel, Acts would be misunderstood. Promises made in the gospel are fulfilled in the book of Acts (e.g., Luke 21:15 with Acts 6:10).¹⁵ When Luke wrote Acts, he was definitely well aware that any proclamation of the Gospel must also be to some degree an

¹¹ Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, Sacra Pagina, 5 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992), 3.

¹² *Ibid.* It is a type of history book, the first history of Christianity. It cannot and should not be separated from the Gospel of Luke, with which it is in total continuity as history. It is a book dominated by a religious purpose to report events which under the impulse of the Holy Spirit, reveal God’s saving plan for humanity. See José Maria Casciaro, *The Gospels & Acts of the Apostles*. The Navarre Bible (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000), 689.

¹³ See L. Cerfaux, “The Acts of Apostles,” in *Introduction to the New Testament*, ed. A. Robert and A. Feuillet (New York: Desclee Company, 1965): 329-368, esp. 331.

¹⁴ William S. Kurz, *The Acts of the Apostles*. Collegeville Bible Commentary-New Testament, 5 (Bandra: St. Paul Press, 1991), 5. Also Bart D. Ehrman asserts that Acts is concerned with historical development of the Christian church (*The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings*, Second Edition [Oxford University Press, 2000], 122). According to Joseph A. Fitzmyer (*The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Bible Series Vol. 31 [New York: Doubleday, 1998], 55), the Book of Acts is the continuation of the Lucan gospel, not in the sense that it relates to what Jesus continued to do, but how his followers carried out his commission under the guidance of his Spirit.

¹⁵ See Robert C. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts*, Vol. II (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1986 and 1990); and Mark Allan Powell, *What are they Saying about Acts?* (New York: Paulist Press, 1991), 8.

account of historical events which truly happened. Luke, however, is not writing a history in a modern sense. As Robinson explains, Luke “was more interested in influencing history in his own day than in giving a faithful account of past history.”¹⁶ Luke was a pastoral leader wanting to provide his Christians readers with models to follow.¹⁷

Another cluster of scholars (e.g. Haenchen, Marshall, Fitzmyer) think that Luke wrote with a theological purpose, “the edification of Christian believers by recounting how God’s plan, coming to fulfillment in Jesus, had continued to unfold in the history of the early church.”¹⁸ So Acts of the Apostles, in relating to the beginnings of the Church, aims primarily at strengthening the faith of Christians, assuring them as to the origin and basis of that faith.¹⁹ Luke’s Acts is seen as a faith account, full of belief in God’s action within the events he narrates.²⁰ Thus the manner in which Luke writes his historical narrative is from a theological point of view.²¹

¹⁶ Robinson, “Acts,” 468.

¹⁷ Kurz, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 5.

¹⁸ D. A. Carson and Douglas J. Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, Second Edition (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 305.

¹⁹ Luke’s purpose is to enable his readers to meet challenges that might cause them to doubt. For example, many Christians in Luke’s day may have wondered why, if Jesus was the Messiah, the Jewish people had not recognized him as the one who fulfills their ancient prophecies. Thus Luke writes to reassure these Christians’ faith in Jesus and offer them as pastoral guidance. See Powell, *What Are They Saying about Acts*, 17.

²⁰ Kurz, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 5.

²¹ Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 21. According to I. H. Marshall, (*Luke: Historian and Theologian* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan], 1970), “Luke is a theologian as well as a historian. It is Luke’s view of the theology that leads him to write history. For Luke, faith must be rooted in history, even though it involves more than mere acceptance of historical facts. For example, a central statement of faith for Luke would be, ‘God raised Jesus from the dead’ (Acts 2:32; 3:15, 22; 4:10; 10:40; 13:30). There are two elements here, the historical fact that Jesus rose from the dead and the theological interpretation that his was an act of God. If the event of the resurrection was not historical, then for Luke, theological reflection on it would be impossible and faith would be reduced to obstinate and irrational fantasy. For Luke, the historical basis of the resurrection is significant (Acts 1:3, 22).” See Mark Allan Powell, *What Are They Saying about Luke?* (New York: Paulist Press, 1989), 6-7.

Although Luke is writing a historical narrative about the beginnings of Christianity, there is no doubt that Luke sees the story as having theological significance and that he brings out its significance in the way in which he tells it.²² This is very much defended by Ernst Haenchen who views the Book of Acts as written with a decided theological purpose in order to present the continuity of God's activity in Christ.²³ Hans Conzelmann in his book *The Theology of St. Luke* made it clear that Luke was less interested in history in the modern sense than in a theology of history.²⁴ Leon Morris likewise admits that the purpose of Luke is theological.²⁵

To sum up, it is safe to say that in Acts Luke was writing a historical narrative with a theological interest of inspiring and building up the faith of the Christian community. Borrowing the words of Robinson, Luke's primary purpose was to "give a convincing account of the opinions that he thought important."²⁶

²² I. Howard Marshall, *The Book of Acts: An Introduction and Commentary*, TNTC, 5 (Downers Grove/Nottingham: InterVarsity Press, 1980), 23.

²³ According to Haenchen, "Luke has worked up a number of his narrative to serve the most effective theological purpose, and has smoothed over the conflicts which flared up in the primitive period." See Donald Guthrie, "Recent Literature on the Acts of the Apostles," *Vox Evangelica* 2 (1963): 33-49, esp. 33.

²⁴ Hans Conzelmann, *The Theology of St. Luke*, trans. Geoffrey Buswell (New York: Harper & Row, 1960).

²⁵ Leon Morris, *New Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986), 144-45.

²⁶ Robinson, "Acts," 470.

2. Speeches in Acts of the Apostles

Edwin D. Freed observes that speeches are an inherent part of ancient history writing. He states:

It was customary for ancient historical writers to embellish their works with speeches of the characters involved. Although one writer might follow another's work rather closely, he always reworked it into his own style and composed the speeches himself.²⁷

The Greek historian Thucydides, for example, describes his own method of composing speeches:

As to the speeches that were made by different men, either when they were about to begin the war or when they were already engaged therein, it has been difficult to recall with strict accuracy the words actually spoken, both for me as regards that which I myself heard, and for those who from various other sources have brought me reports. Therefore the speeches are given in the language which, as it seemed to me, the several speakers would express, on the subjects under consideration, the sentiments most befitting the occasion, though at the same time I have adhered as closely as possible to the general sense of what was actually said.²⁸

Speeches comprise a fifth of the history by Thucydides and about a third of that of Dionysius of Halicarnassus. Joseph Fitzmyer claims that a “speech” is an address directed to a

²⁷ Edwin D. Freed, *The New Testament: A Critical Introduction*, Third Edition (Belmont, CT: Wadsworth Thomas Learning, 2001), 212. It was the accepted custom of ancient historians to put speeches into the mouths of the main figures, and sometimes these had no basis of fact but were imaginative creation of the historians. See C. H. Rieu, *The Acts of the Apostles by Saint Luke* (Edinburgh: Clark, 1957), 23-24. According to the discovery made by Willem van Unnik, there were ten basic features that characterized the writings of Greco-Roman historians: 1) choosing a noble topic; 2) choosing a topic that would be useful to the audience; 3) independence and impartiality; 4) a well structured narrative, especially at the beginning and the end; 5) collection of preparatory material; 6) selection and variety in presentation of the narration; 7) correct disposition and ordering of the narrative; 8) liveliness in the narration; 9) moderation of the topographical details; and 10) composition of speeches well suited to the orator and situation. Based on the listing above, the French NT scholar Daniel Marguerat concludes, “Luke follows eight of the ten rules” (*The First Christian Historian* [Cambridge: University Press, 2002], 16). See also Christopher Price, “A Discussion of the Genre, Historicity, Date, and Authorship of the Acts of the Apostles,” in <http://www.christiancadre.org/Acts%20Article.DOC>. Accessed on 4 March 2013.

²⁸ Thucydides, *History* 1.22.1. See F. F. Bruce, “The Significance of the Speeches for Interpreting Acts,” *Southwestern Journal Theology* 33/1 (1990): 20-28, esp. 20.

group or an individual in a non-private setting, usually involving the attention of a number of people.²⁹ Speeches make a narrative more vivid and dramatic. They are meant to be editorial comment that reveals the author's viewpoint. Let us now apply these characteristics to Acts.

Almost a third of Acts of the Apostles consists of speeches.³⁰ According to the calculation made by Mark Allan Powell, over 300 of the approximate 1000 verses in Acts constitute speeches by various characters in Acts.³¹ As speeches are usually placed within the narrative to indicate that the author felt them to be essential to his story, Luke too must have composed the speeches in Acts on the basis of what he felt was appropriate to the occasion.³²

From his study of ancient historiography, Martin Dibelius concludes concerning the speeches in Acts that Luke "follows the great tradition of historical writing in antiquity in that he freely fixes the occasion of the speech and fashions its contents himself."³³ Moreover, Dibelius believes that the speeches in Acts reflect Luke's own theological concerns. In similar vein, Henry J. Cadbury also indicates that Luke apparently conformed to what he saw as the custom of

²⁹ Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 103.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Powell, *What Are They Saying about Acts?*, 30. Similarly, based on the calculation made by Haenchen, some three hundred of the approximately one thousand verses within Acts are found in the speeches. Haenchen's calculations are reported in W. G. Kuimmel, *Introduction to the New Testament* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1975; 19th printing 1990): 167. See Merle Bland Dudley, "The Speeches in Acts," *The Evangelical Quarterly* 50/3 (1978): 147-155, esp. 147.

³² In certain instances, however, Luke has made the speaker say something that could not have been said at the time. For example, in Acts 5:36, the rabbi Gamaliel mentions the revolt of a man named Theudas, although Theudas' revolt did not occur until about ten years after the time Gamaliel was supposedly speaking. See Delbert Burkett, *An Introduction to the New Testament and the Origins of Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 274.

³³ Martin Dibelius, *Studies in the Acts of the Apostles*, ed., Heinrich Greeven (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1956), 155, as cited by Bowen Ward, "The Speeches of Acts in Recent Study," *Restoration Quarterly* 4/4 (1960): 189-198, esp. 190.

his day and age (by which he seems to mean, the invention of what the speakers might have said).³⁴ This means, as most scholars say, that the speeches in Acts are composed by Luke. Luke *either* composed them according to what he thought would have been fitting on that occasion, *or* he closely rewrote speeches that he inherited.³⁵

The speeches, however, function somewhat differently in the work of Thucydides as compared to that of Luke: “In Thucydides speeches function as a commentary on events. There were no missionary speeches in Thucydides. In Luke-Acts, speeches are essential feature of the action itself, which is the spread of the word of God.”³⁶ They are witnesses to the life-transforming experiences which had come to the participants in the events. They are both a statement of experience and a call to faith.³⁷ Thus the speeches of Luke are essential part of the story itself, especially “the story of the proclamation of the Word of God.”³⁸ They add intellectual and religious content to the narrative and give it vigor and depth. Without them the Book of Acts would be a torso consisting chiefly of a miscellany of episodes and summaries.³⁹

³⁴ Henry J. Cadbury, *The Making of Luke-Acts* (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1927), 186-187.

³⁵ Ehrman, *The New Testament*, 133.

³⁶ David E. Aune, *The New Testament in Its Environment* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1979), 125.

³⁷ F. J. Foakes-Jackson concludes regarding the speeches: “Whatever these speeches may be, it cannot be disputed that they are wonderfully varied as to their character, and admirably suited to the occasion on which they were delivered. Luke seems to have been able to give an extraordinarily accurate picture of the undeveloped theology of the earliest Christians, and to enable his readers to determine the character of the most primitive presentation of the gospel (*The Acts of the Apostles* [London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1931], 16). According to Fitzmyer, “the speeches in Acts are clearly part of the way that Luke has introduced his own theological and missionary aims; in recounting his story, he is preaching to his readers” (*The Acts of the Apostles*, 107).

³⁸ Paul Schubert, “The Final Cycle of Speeches in the Book of Acts,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 87/1 (1968): 1-16, esp. 16.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

As Freed contends, “Acts without speeches would be like gospels without sayings of Jesus.”⁴⁰

Eight speeches in Acts are delivered by Peter, namely:

- (1) To the community members about the choice of Matthias (1:16-22)
- (2) To the Jews Gathered in Jerusalem on Pentecost (2:14-36; 38-39)
- (3) In the Temple after healing the Lame Man (3:12-26)
- (4) Before the Sanhedrin I (4:8-12,19-20)
- (5) Before the Sanhedrin II (5:29-32)
- (6) To Cornelius and his friends (Gentile God-fearers) at Caesarea (10:34-43)
- (7) To the Apostles and Brothers in Jerusalem (11:5-17)
- (8) At the “Council” in Jerusalem (15:7-11).⁴¹

Not counting Paul’s final speech to the Jews in Rome (28:17-20, 25-28), there are also eight speeches delivered by Paul.⁴²

- (1) In Synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia (13:16-41)
- (2) To the Gentiles at Lystra (14:15-17)
- (3) To the Athenians at the Areopagus (17:22-31)
- (4) To Ephesians Presbyters at Miletus (20:18-35)
- (5) To the Jerusalem Crowd at His Arrest (22:1, 3-21)
- (6) Before the Governor Felix (24:10-21)
- (7) Before King Agrippa (26:2-23, 25-27, 29)
- (8) To Fellow Travelers aboard Ship (27:21-26)

⁴⁰ Freed, *The New Testament*, 212.

⁴¹ Simon J. Kistemaker, “The Speeches in Acts,” *Criswell Theological Review* 5/1 (1990): 31-41, esp. 31.

⁴² See Freed, *The New Testament*, 212.

Besides the speeches of Peter and Paul, there is Stephen's long speech before the Sanhedrin (7:2-53) and two given by James: one to the council at Jerusalem (15:14-21) and one with the elders to advise Paul in Jerusalem (21:20-25).⁴³

Finally, there are also another four long speeches by non-Christians⁴⁴:

(1) Gamaliel before the Sanhedrin (5:20-25; 35-39)

(2) Town Clerk to the Ephesians (19:35-40)

(3) Tertullus before Governor Felix (24:2-8)

(4) Festus before King Agrippa (25:14-21; 24-27)

Just as J. G. Eichhorn notes, "the speeches themselves, even though have been placed in the mouths of different persons, follow one and the same type, are of the same character, make use of one form of proof, and thus have so much in common that they present themselves as speeches of one and the same author, Luke."⁴⁵ Each speech has unique elements of its own, but certain basic themes recur through them all.⁴⁶ Although there is a certain repetition of themes and structures, each speech has "its own justification and significance in the narrative and its own theological contribution."⁴⁷ As Kurz states, "most speeches explain some events which have taken place and give Luke a chance to tell his readers the real meaning of those events."⁴⁸

⁴³ Kistemaker, "The Speeches in Acts," 31; Freed, *The New Testament*, 212-213.

⁴⁴ Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 118; Freed, *The New Testament*, 213.

⁴⁵ J. G. Eichhorn, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament*, Vol. 2 (Leipzig: Weidmann, 1810), 33-43, esp. 36-43.

⁴⁶ Ehrman, *The New Testament*, 133

⁴⁷ Liefeld, *Interpreting the Book of Acts*, 73.

⁴⁸ In certain instances, the speech in Acts 2 explains the Pentecost event. As a result it leads to the conversion of three thousands. In addition, the speech in Acts 3 gives the meaning of the healing of the lame man and also leads to further conversion. See Kurz, *The Acts of Apostles*, 10-11.

By making use of speeches as an important literary device to develop his themes, Luke intended to give examples of early Christian preaching and to defend the truth of the early Christian proclamation of Jesus as the Christ to Jews as well as to Gentiles.⁴⁹

By way of concluding: Of all the Gospel writers, Luke is the only one who writes the story of Jesus with word of history by following the literary technique of ancient Hellenistic historiography to serve his purpose of writing. Luke's purpose was that he wanted to provide a historical record of the events of Jesus' life and the progress of the first century church. Another reason was that he wanted "a written record of the apostles' work in carrying on the ministry of Jesus."⁵⁰ Thus, one could say that Luke gives information about what happened in the church from its beginnings to the last decade of the first century. It would be very difficult to know about the Jerusalem church without Acts. Acts is more than mere history. It has a theological purpose as well. Luke viewed early Christian history through "the eyes of faith and saw constant traces of the divine providence."⁵¹ Then he wrote history from the perspective of faith. Book of Acts, therefore, expresses not only theology but also evangelistic message. This is particularly to be found in the speeches.

⁴⁹ Marion L. Soards, *The Speeches in Acts: Their Content, Context, and Concern* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994), 3.

⁵⁰ Dennis Gaertner, *Acts*, The College Press New International Version Commentary (Joplin, MN.: College Press Publishing Company, 3rd print. 1998), 20.

⁵¹ Polhill, *Acts*, 52.

CHAPTER TWO

SPEECHES OF PETER AND PAUL IN ACTS

Introduction

In this chapter, the study will be on the first missionary speeches of Peter (2:14-41) and Paul (13:16-41) in Acts. First, it will present the place, time, and audience of the two speeches of Peter and Paul. In the second part, the presentation of the elements of both speeches: the situation which causes the speech; the proclamation of Jesus' life, passion, and resurrection, emphasis on the disciples as witnesses, evidence from the Scriptures; and finally concluded with an exhortation to repentance.

A. Peter's First Speech (Acts 2:14-41)

The speech in Acts 2:14-41 is the first of four speeches of Peter. It is directed to the Jews on the Day of Pentecost. It serves to explain the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost as God's saving act. Such an event shows its significant meaning for his audience.

1. The Place, Time and Audience

The city of Jerusalem lies approximately 700 meters (2,599ft) above sea level in the Judean hills. With the surrounding hills, access to the city was difficult. Nonetheless, for most Jews, Jerusalem was "the centre of their affections and the navel of the earth."¹ As P. H. R. (Rob) Van Houwelingen states,

Jerusalem was called 'the holy city' because that is where the holy God of Israel chose to dwell in. It was the central point of divine presence,

¹ John Bowker, *The Complete Bible Handbook: An Illustration Companion* (New York: Dorling Kindersley Pub., 1998), 276.

not just in the Old Testament, but also in the New Testament: ‘the city of the great king’ (Ps 48:3; Mt 5:35).²

In Luke-Acts, Jerusalem plays a geographical importance.³ For Luke, “Jerusalem, the royal city of the Davidic dynasty, plays an important role in his geographical and theological perspective as the city where salvation for humanity was accomplished.”⁴ The paschal mystery has taken place in this holy city, “...because it is impossible for a prophet to be killed outside of Jerusalem” (Luke 13:33). Thus, Jerusalem was where Jesus fulfilled the divine plan announced by the Scriptures.⁵ It was the place where Jesus of Nazareth was crucified, died, and resurrected from the dead. Jerusalem was where the first Christian community came into being by the power of the Spirit promised by Jesus. This was where the 120 disciples received the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost and began to proclaim about the gospel of the Risen Lord. From Jerusalem the apostolic gospel reaches the “ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

Pentecost was one of the great three Jewish feasts, along with Passover and

² P. H. R. (Rob) Van Houwelingen, “Jerusalem, the Mother Church: The development of the apostolic church from the perspective of Jerusalem,” *sárospataki fu□zetek* 16/3-4 (2012): 11-22, esp.14.

³ Floyd V. Filson, “The Journey Motif in Luke-Acts,” in *Apostolic History and the Gospel: Biblical and Historical Essays Presented to F.F. Bruce on His Seventieth Birthday*, eds. W. Ward Gasque & Ralph P. Martin (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), 74. According to him, “Jerusalem has been the central city of the story in Acts. It has been mention far more often than any other city, and it has remained thus far the dominant city of the church. Antioch in Syria, Corinth, and Ephesus have been prominent, Antioch especially as a missionary centre founded by Hellenistic Jewish disciples but soon reaching out in a Gentile mission; but none of them has thus far rivaled Jerusalem in importance. Even Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, has recognized the importance of Jerusalem. He had lived there for a time; he has visited it more than once (Acts 9:26; 11:30; 15:2-4; 18:22).”

⁴ Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 204.

⁵ Etienne Charpentier, *How to Read the Bible: Two Volumes in One* (New York: Gramercy Publishing Co., 1991), 82.

Tabernacles.⁶ Pentecost (Gk. *pentekosthē* = ‘the fiftieth day’) was commemorated fifty days after the Passover. On this feast, the Jews celebrate the harvest feast called in Hebrew *hag sabbuot*, ‘Feast of Weeks’ (Exod 23:16; 34:22; Deut 16:9-10, 16; 2 Chr 8:13). Initially it was an agricultural feast, ‘day of the first-fruits’ (Num 28:26), of the wheat harvest (Exod 34:22), but it came eventually to be understood as the feast at the end of the harvest.”⁷ Later it was given the additional dimension as “the commemoration of God’s giving the covenant to Israel at Sinai.”⁸ Just as other festivals were associated with important events in Israel’s history (e.g., Passover with the exodus from Egypt), so Pentecost became associated with the giving of the Law on Sinai.⁹ The Feast of Weeks or Pentecost “was a pilgrimage feast where pious Jews travel from their homes to the Temple or central shrine in Jerusalem.”¹⁰

The audience of Peter’s speech on Pentecost consists of two groups. The first group represents Jews who live in Jerusalem: “Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem” (v.14b). The second group refers to Jews residing outside Israel, the Diaspora Jews: “You that are Israelites” (v.22a). All Jews who are living in Jerusalem and from all over the world have gathered in Jerusalem for the feast of Pentecost.¹¹ These Jews are called “pious men”

⁶ Xavier Leon-Dufour, *Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, Paperback, trans. E. M. Stewart (Pasay City: Saint Paul Publication 1990), 414.

⁷ Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 233.

⁸ Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, Anchor Bible Reference Library (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 283.

⁹ Marshall, *The Book of Acts*, 68.

¹⁰ Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 283.

¹¹ Luke gives a list of the nationalities represented in Acts 2:9-11: Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt, and the parts of Lybia belonging to Cyrene, and visitor from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans, and Arabs.

(eu jlabhv~) in v.5b. Eu jlabhv~ is a term used only by Luke to refer to devout Jews, not proselytes or God-fearers (cf. Luke 2:25; Acts 8:2; 22:12).¹²

2. The Elements of the Speech

There are three basic features in Peter's first speech: (a) the explanation of the pouring of the Holy Spirit; (b) the proclamation of Jesus' life, death and resurrection (*Kerygma*); (c) the exhortation to repentance and baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

2.1 The Explanation of the Outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:14-21)

After the election of Matthias as a replacement to Judas Iscariot (Acts 1:15-26) the followers of Jesus were gathered together in the Upper Room in Jerusalem (Acts 2:2-3):

And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind [pnohv],¹³ and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire [glw`ssai wJsei; puroi~], appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them.¹⁴

Filled with the Holy Spirit they began to speak in other languages (eJtevrαι~ glwvssai~)

¹² Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 135.

¹³ The word "(pnohv) is used in Acts 2:2, not the word (pneuma) (which of course can mean either breath, spirit, or wind). Thus this could be considered as a theophanic phenomenon that accompanied the coming of the Spirit, but was not the Spirit. The Spirit in Luke's theology is not just a force or power or a wind (this is surely why two different words for wind and for the spirit), but the living presence of a powerful God." See Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 112. Marshall further states that "a sound like that of wind has to do with a supernatural occurrence. This symbolism is reminiscent of Old Testament theophanies (2 Sam 22:16; Job 37:10; Ezek 13:13): the wind is a sign of God's presence as Spirit." See Marshall, *The Book of Acts*, 68.

¹⁴ The tongues like fire were "reminiscent of Old Testament theophanies, especially at Sinai (Exod 19:18), in depicting God's appearance at Sinai, (Exod 19) includes thunder and smoke; and the Jewish writer Philo (contemporary with the New Testament) describes angels taking what God said to Moses on the mountaintop and carrying it out on tongues to the people on the plain below. Acts with its description of the sound of a mighty wind and tongues as of fire echoes that imagery, and thus presents the Pentecost in Jerusalem as the renewal of God covenant, once more calling a people to be God's own." See Brown, *An Introduction to New Testament*, 283-284. According to Senior and Collins, "Tongues as of fire: see Exod 19:18 where fire symbolizes the presence of God to initiate the covenant on Sinai. Here the Holy Spirit acts upon the apostles, preparing them to proclaim the new covenant with its unique gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38)." See Donald Senior and John J. Collins (eds.), *The Catholic Study Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 187.

that none of them had previously learned. The Jerusalem visitors were shocked to hear Galileans speaking to them in their own native languages. People from various places assembled in Jerusalem understood Peter and his colleagues. Every visitor heard them speaking in his or her own languages, though the speakers were all Galileans. People were amazed and wondered what the event might mean. Some were impressed, while others thought the apostles were drunk (Acts 2:1-13). In behalf of the apostles, Peter argued on the contrary: “Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you and listen to what I say. Indeed, they are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o’clock in the morning” (Acts 2:14-15).¹⁵ Therefore, what is happening must be the work of the Spirit in the fulfillment of the plan of God as prophesied by Joel 2:28-29,¹⁶ which Peter quoted to respond to the questions and accusations of the crowd in Acts 2:17-18:

In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy.

To show how Pentecost fulfills the prophecy of Joel, Luke changes LXX Joel 3:1a, “then afterward,” to “in the last days” (Acts 2:17).¹⁷ This quotation from Joel makes it clear

¹⁵ It is the custom of the Jews not to take any wine until late in the day. It is now only nine o’clock in the morning, so it is impossible to think that the apostles are drunk. See George Ludington Wee, *A Life of St. Peter for the Young* (Philadelphia: George W. Jacobs & Co, 1901), 211.

¹⁶ Joel’s prophecy was “originally given after a locust plague had ravaged the land, creating a severe famine. Joel called the people to repent of their sins and to look expectantly for the restoration of prosperity and the coming of the Day of the Lord when the Spirit would be poured out upon everybody. Peter could not miss its applicability to Pentecost.” See Polhill, *Acts*, 109.

¹⁷ Luke reproduces this for his readers from the Greek translation of the Old Testament, the Septuagint. Thus Peter’s quotation follows the LXX “with a number of small alterations to adapt the prophecy to its context. It was natural for New Testament writers to adopt the forms of Old Testament text which best suited their purpose or to adapt the wording as necessary. The meaning was more important than reproduction of the exact wording.” See E. Earle Ellis, ‘Quotations (in the New Testament),’ *The New Bible Dictionary*, 1071, as cited by Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 73.

that the final stage of history has come since the outpouring of the Spirit is an attestation of the inauguration of the last days.¹⁸ Peter insists that the Spirit coming upon the believers has been sent by none other than Jesus.¹⁹ Thus Peter's speech is not derived from drunkenness, but from an outpouring of God's Spirit.²⁰ In the Old Testament, "the Spirit's coming upon someone was often overwhelming and caused quite different or unusual behavior" (e.g., Saul's in 1 Sam 10:5-13).²¹ Peter is acting as spokesman for the Twelve, explaining "the sign the people have just seen and heard."²² Peter interprets the action of the Spirit at Pentecost as the fulfillment of the signs of the last days when God will pour out his Spirit upon all flesh.²³ John J. Kilgallen claims: "For Luke, the outpouring of the Spirit means that now God is willing to save those who call on the Lord's name."²⁴ Thus Peter urges his Jewish audience: "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" (Acts 2:21). The "Lord" (κυριου) in the context of Peter's sermon refers to Jesus Christ. If anyone calls on the name of the Lord now, i.e. committing himself to the Lord, he or she will enjoy the fullness of salvation when the day of the Lord comes.

¹⁸ C. K. Barrett, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Shorter Commentary* (London: T & T Clark, 2002), 22.

¹⁹ Ehrman, *The New Testament*, 133.

²⁰ Johnson, *Acts of the Apostles*, 54.

²¹ Kurz, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 22.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Upon all flesh could mean "upon all kinds of people and not just upon the prophets, kings and priests, as had been the case in Old Testament times." See Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 73.

²⁴ John J. Kilgallen, *A Brief Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles* (New York: Paulist Press, 1988), 18.

2.2 The Proclamation of Jesus' Life, Death and Resurrection (Acts 2:22-36)

After giving an explanation as to why the miracle of the languages had occurred, Peter moved to the central theme of his message: the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Acts 2:22-36). This is indeed the heart of Peter's speech. Peter calls his Jewish audience's attention to the acts of God through Jesus of Nazareth. This Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah, the anointed (Xristov~), sent by God as promised in the Scriptures and foretold by the prophets. He did "deeds of power (dunavmei~), wonders (tevrata) and signs (shmei`a)" (v.22). Kurz affirms that these signs "showed God's approval of Jesus as Messiah."²⁵ People saw the mighty deeds of Christ and knew that they were from God. The Jews, however, failed to recognize Jesus as a man of God. They rejected him and gave him over to "lawless men"²⁶ to be crucified (v. 23). Peter announces to his audience that: "...this man, handed over to you according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of those outside the law. But God raised him up" (Acts 2:23-24). Jesus of Nazareth was Messiah, Christ, sent by God. But he was rejected by people and condemned by the authorities. He suffered, was crucified, died, and was buried. Yet God raised him up from the dead. As Barrett also states, "Jesus indeed rose, but he rose because he was raised."²⁷

Having proclaimed about Jesus as the resurrected one, Peter quotes LXX Psalm 15:8-11 [MT 16:8-11] to prove that Jesus is truly raised from the dead. Though Peter quotes

²⁵ Yet the people rejected the one God approved. See Kurz, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 23

²⁶ The phrase "lawless men" is a term used by Jews to designate Gentiles. See Polhill, *Acts*, 112.

²⁷ C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: Clark, 1994), 1: 148.

LXX Ps 15:8-11 [MT 16:8-11] in Acts 2:25-31, his focus was mainly on LXX Ps15:10 [MT 16:10].²⁸ This Ps 16:10b speaks of one whose soul would not be abandoned in Sheol (the place of death) and ‘one’ who would not see corruption. Originally this Ps 16:8-11 seems to have been a plea of the Psalmist that God would vindicate him and that he might escape death and Sheol. On the contrary, Peter argues: “... our ancestor David that he both died and was buried and his tomb is with us to this day” Acts (2:29-30). Hence, David could not have been speaking of his own physical resurrection as it is well known that he died and was buried.²⁹ In this way Peter argues that David cannot be the referent of Psalm 16:10b in Acts 2:27. This text must, therefore, refer to Jesus who has been raised and experienced the resurrection. Peter firmly affirms that the apostles are witnesses of Jesus’ resurrection: “This Jesus God raised up, and of that all us are witnesses” (Acts 2:32). Peter declares that Jesus is the one God raised up and the apostles are witnesses of his resurrection.

From Jesus’ resurrection Peter then proceeds to the exaltation of Christ. The resurrection here is to be understood as the exaltation of Jesus. Jesus now has become God’s right hand man.³⁰ As Peter asserts: “Being exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out his that you both see and hear” (Act 2:33). Once again, Peter quotes David LXX Ps 109:1[MT 110:1] to prove that David was not exalted at the right hand of God. As it is believed that David died, was buried, and never he ascended to God’s presence (Acts 2:34). But it is Jesus who God has exalted to the

²⁸ Gregory V. Trull, “Peter’s Interpretation of Psalm 16:8-11 in Acts 2:25-32,” *Biblioteca Sacra* 161/644 (2004): 432-48, esp. 446.

²⁹ For the Jews, “to be buried was the same thing as to suffer physical corruption and descend to Sheol or be abandoned to Hades (the Greek word for Hebrew Sheol).” See Marshall, *The Book of Acts*, 76.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 78.

right hand by raising him up from the dead. Peter argues that the invitation to sit at God's right hand cannot apply to David because he "did not ascend to heaven" (Acts 2:34). Thus Ps 110:1 in Acts 2:34 must refer to Jesus, who has ascended to the right hand of God (Acts 2:33). Peter makes it clear that "Jesus is not dead but alive as powerful Lord."³¹ Peter then calls for his Jewish audience's attention by saying: "Therefore let the whole house of Israel know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified" (Acts 2:36).

The challenge that Peter puts to his Jewish audience is to change their perception of Jesus. Moreover, he also challenges them "to share the meaning given by the conviction that Jesus is both Lord and Messiah."³²

2.3 The Exhortation to Repentance and for the Forgiveness of Sins (Acts 2:37-41)

Peter's speech is not only an attempt to defend the experience of his fellow disciples, but also a call to Jewish repentance, especially to those Jews most directly responsible for Jesus' death. As C. A. Evans puts it, "this call to Jews for repentance for the forgiveness of sins is an important repeated theme in Acts (cf. Acts 3:19; 10:43; 11:18; 17:30; 26:18, 20)."³³

After hearing Peter's sermon that they have crucified the Lord and Messiah, the Jews in Jerusalem were "cut to the heart,"³⁴ and asked Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what

³¹ Johnson, *Acts of the Apostles*, 55. See Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 148, notes, "The term 'Lord' appears 104 times in Acts, some 18 of which definitely refer to God, 47 definitely to Jesus, 4 to secular masters, owners, or rulers."

³² Johnson, *Acts of the Apostles*, 55.

³³ Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 141.

³⁴ The verb *katenughsan* with "the heart" as its object refers to strong emotion, and occurs only here in the New Testament. In the LXX its meaning ranges from "remorseful" (Gen 27:38) to "anger" (Gen 34:7) to "stung" (Sir 12:12) to "humbled" (Ps 108:16) to "struck silent" (Lev 10:3). Here the meaning is something like

shall we do?" (v. 37) Peter said to them: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that our sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38).³⁵ The dominant theme in Acts 2:38 is repentance. As John B. Polhill observes: "Repentance leads to baptism, the forgiveness of sins, and the gift of the Spirit."³⁶ Forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit are only for those who repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus. Thus Peter stresses that every one of his audience needs to "repent"³⁷ and be baptized in the name of Jesus for the forgiveness of sins. Peter announces to his audience that if they turn away from their sins and join the community of believers through receiving baptism in Jesus' name, they will be forgiven and granted salvation.³⁸ Acts 2:41 reported that about three thousands of those who heard Peter's sermons were converted to the one hundred and twenty of which the church in Jerusalem was composed when that Pentecostal day began. The speech of Peter does not only interpret what has happened, it also causes something to happen.

remorseful. See Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 153.

³⁵ It is interesting to note in Acts 2:39 that there are "four elements of Peter's answer to the question posed by his audience: They are to (1) reform their lives, (2) be baptized, (3) have their sins forgiven, and (4) receive the Holy Spirit. Here one has a glimpse of Luke's understanding of Christian baptism. Two of the elements call for personal cooperation, and two reveal the effects of Christian conversion." See Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 264.

³⁶ Polhill, *Acts*, 117.

³⁷ "Literally the Greek verb *metanoiein* (meta = 'across, over'; noein 'to think' means 'to change one's mind, way of thinking, outlook'; for sinners changing one's mind involves repentance" See Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 285. Furthermore, Fitzmyer demonstrates that "'repentance' literally means 'change of mind' and denoted in Greek philosophy the consciousness of one's own decline and consequent shame, which would make a person change one's life. This Greek notion entered into late OT writings and took on a religious sense of culpability toward someone, God or another human being; it came to mean a 'reform of life,' especially a change from sinful conduct (Wis 11:23;12:19)." See Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 265. The word "repent" indicates "a change of direction in a person's life rather than simply a mental change of attitude or a feeling of remorse." According to Marshall, it signifies "a turning away from a sinful and godless way of life" ("The Book of Acts," 79).

³⁸ Ehrman, *The New Testament*, 133.

Summary: Peter's first missionary speech explains the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit is the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy. The quotation of Joel begins with a reference to the coming of the Spirit and closes with the salvation is offered to those who call on the Lord (Acts 2:17-21). Based on the prophecies of David, Peter proves that Jesus is made both Lord and Messiah through his resurrection. Peter concludes by exhorting the crowd to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus so that they may receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

B. Paul's First Speech (Acts 13:16-41)

Paul delivers his first speech in the Jewish Synagogue in Antioch, in the province of Pisidia. His speech begins with a brief summary of God's mighty acts in Israel's salvation history. This story of Israel is told beginning from the election of their ancestors to the choice of David as their king. God made a promise to David that he would have offspring who would rule after him forever.³⁹ Here Paul shows how the promise made to David is fulfilled in Jesus, the Messiah, as son of David. This promise has been fulfilled by the resurrection of Jesus. Only through believing in the risen Christ that a person can experience the forgiveness of sins. Forgiveness and justification (righteousness) are available through Christ, not by the Law of Moses.⁴⁰

1. The Place, Time and Audience

Luke notes that Paul and Barnabas travelled from Perga to the Jewish synagogue in

³⁹ See 2 Sam 7:12, 16.

⁴⁰ Liefeld, *Interpreting the Book of Acts*, 75.

Pisidian Antioch (13:14). This Pisidian Antioch lays in a mountainous area west of the Taurus Mountains. Antioch of Pisidia itself was in the highlands, some 3,600 feet above sea level.⁴¹ It was one of the sixteen cities in the Roman Empire. It was named Antioch by Seleucus Nikator to honour his father Antiochus.⁴² Pisidia, notes Gendy, was “a large region in the southern part of Asia Minor, which belonged to the province of Galatia in the first century A.D. By 6 B.C Pisidian Antioch became a Roman colony and was later known as *Caesareia Antiochei*.”⁴³ Students of Biblical Studies ought not to confuse with Antioch in Syria, the place where the believers were first called Christians (cf. Acts 11:26). It must be borne in mind that “several Hellenistic cities were named Antioch after the Greek emperor Antiochus.”⁴⁴ Antioch of Pisidia, however, had a large number of Jewish populations. According to Polhill, “the Seleucid rulers had moved many Jews to the city, so there was a large Jewish population there.”⁴⁵ Residing in the Hellenic city of Pisidian Antioch they were hellenized Jews, still were they Jews in psyche and in rites. One thing that held them firmly in their national character was worshipping together in the synagogue.⁴⁶ The Diaspora synagogue, however, was more than

⁴¹ Polhill, *Acts*, 297.

⁴² Atef M. Gendy, “Style, Content and Culture: Distinctive Characteristics in the Missionary Speeches in Acts,” *Swedish Missiological Themes* 99/3 (2011): 247-265, esp. 249. Who was Seleucus Nikator? [He was one of the leading officers of Alexander the Great. After Alexander’s demise, Seleucus established the Seleucid dynasty and empire].

⁴³ *Ibid.* Antioch in Pisidia is known as part of the Roman province of Galatia in Asia Minor. According to Gendy, “Artemis was the most famous god for the Hellenistic people there. There was also a Jewish community in the city.”

⁴⁴ Kurz, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 62.

⁴⁵ Polhill, *Acts*, 297.

⁴⁶ Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 405.

just a house of worship. It was “a meeting place of the Jewish community, ...center of education, judicial center, social gathering place, general ‘civic center’ for the Jewish community.”⁴⁷ If one anyone who wants to get in touch with the Jews, the synagogue was the best place to begin. It was also “the most ideal place to share the Christian message.”⁴⁸ Thus, Paul made it his basic mission approach: first visit the synagogue on Sabbath and if invited preach, as did Jesus in the Gospel (Luke 4:16-21).⁴⁹

On the Sabbath day, Paul and Barnabas went into the synagogue in Antioch and sat down for the Sabbath service (Acts 13:14). They might have sat in seats particularly reserved for “distinguished strangers and visitors.”⁵⁰ In the first century after Christ the Diaspora synagogue service includes:

The recitation of the *Shema*’ based on Deut 6:49; 11:13-21; Num 15: 37-41, the prayer of eighteen petitions, the priestly benediction, reading from the law of Moses, reading from the prophets (not mandatory) and, finally, the synagogue leader offered a word of exhortation himself or invited a capable worshipper or a guest to do so.⁵¹

⁴⁷ Polhill, *Acts*, 297.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ Kurz, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 62. It was Paul’s custom to go into the synagogue in order to teach and proclaim the good news about Christ, see Acts 13:5; 14:1; 17:1, 2, 10, 17; 18:4, 19, 26; 19:8.

⁵⁰ Giuseppe Ricciotti, *The Acts of the Apostles*, trans. Laurence E. Byrne (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Company, 1958), 206. See also Greg Herrick, “Acts 13:13-41: Paul Sermon in Pisidian Antioch – The Realization of Long Awaited Davidic Hope,” in <http://bible.org/article/acts-1313-41-pauls-sermon-pisidian-antioch%E2%80%94realization-long-awaited-davidic-hope>. Accessed on 21 January 2013.

⁵¹ E. Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1971), 407-408. Daniel K. Falk, "Jewish Prayer Literature and the Jerusalem Church in Acts," in *The Book of Acts in Its First Century Setting*, Vol. 4: *The Book of Acts in Its Palestinian Setting*, ed. Richard Bauckham (Grand Rapids and Carlisle: W.B. Eerdmans and Paternoster Press, 1995): 261-301, esp. 277, has argued for the accuracy of Luke’s picture regarding worship in the synagogue pre-70 AD. See also Gendy, “Style, Content and Culture: Distinctive Characteristics in the Missionary Speeches in Acts,” 249.

It was part of the duties of the synagogue administrator(s) to appoint someone to deliver the address.⁵² Perhaps there was a previous arrangement already for Paul to speak a “word of exhortation” to the congregation gathered on that Sabbath day as the invitation from the ruler of the synagogue would suggest: “Brother, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, give it (v. 15b).” Bruce thinks that “the expression ‘a word of exhortation’ (λογο~ παρακλησεω~) was perhaps a synagogue term for the sermon which followed the Scripture readings (cf. Heb 13:22).”⁵³ It is a message to instruct, encourage, and exhort people to trust God.

The audience of Paul’s speech on the Sabbath day consists of two groups. The first group represents Jews by birth (the Diaspora Jews): “You Israelites,” (v.16), “Brothers and sons of the family of Abraham” (v.26). The second group was Gentile origin: “Others who fear God” (v.16). That may include both proselytes (Gentiles who had converted to Judaism) and other followers of the Jewish religion without having become proselytes.⁵⁴

2. The Elements of the Speech

Paul’s speech on this occasion involves three sections: (a) the story of God’s saving acts with Israel; (b) the proclamation of Jesus’ life, death and resurrection *kerygma*; and (c) the exhortation to repentance and for the forgiveness of sins through faith in Jesus.

⁵²“Among their other duties were to take charge of the building, and make arrangements for public worship. Sometimes there was one ruler in a synagogue; sometimes there were more than one as here.” See F.F. Bruce, *Commentary on the Book of the Acts: the English Text, with Introduction, Exposition, and Notes* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, repr. 1980), 267.

⁵³ Bruce, *Commentary on the Book of the Acts*, 267. See C. A. Joachim Pillai, *Early Missionary Preaching: A Study of Luke’s Report in Acts* (Hicksville, NY: Exposition Press, 1979), 55, who identifies ‘a word of exhortation’ as “a technical term for a unit of tradition, consisting of liturgical credo which recites the saving acts of God, and which is also a word of consolation, transmitted from rabbi to student, father to son.”

⁵⁴ Gendy, “Style, Content and Culture: Distinctive Characteristics in the Missionary Speeches in Acts,” 250.

2.1 The Story of God's Saving Acts with Israel (Acts 13:16-25)

On that Sabbath day after the reading of the Scriptures, the synagogue leaders (ajrcisunavgwgoi) invited Paul or Barnabas to give “a word of exhortation” (lovgo~paraklhvsew~) to the people.⁵⁵ In response to that invitation, Paul stood up and addressed to the congregation. Marshall states that Paul followed “what was probably the practice in Hellenistic synagogues by standing to teach, and he emphasized his message with gestures.”⁵⁶ In contrast, Atef M. Gendy maintains that “Jewish rabbis and teachers used to speak as they were sitting.”⁵⁷ This was common in Palestine at that time (cf. Luke 4:20). In the synagogue of Pisidian Antioch, Luke portrays Paul in the manner of standing and motioning with his hand. Luke wants to show the custom of preaching in Hellenistic synagogues. In order to make sense to the Hellenistic audience, Paul had to act with the practice of Hellenistic synagogues.⁵⁸

Paul was aware of two groups in his audience: Israelites and Gentiles, those who fear God (13:16b). Paul began his speech with facts that every Jew would have known and agreed with him. Paul started with a brief summary of Jewish salvation history. With his acts of mercy and loving-kindness, God chose Israel and delivered them out of Egypt (v. 17). “For about

⁵⁵ Here “λαο~ is used in the sense of the (Jewish) people of God, which is only appropriate on the lips of synagogue rulers. Cf. 2:47; 39. It is possible that the phrase ‘word of exhortation’ (or encouragement) had a somewhat technical meaning in the context of the synagogue to refer to a homily based on the interpretation of Scripture.” See Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 406.

⁵⁶ The gesture was a sign given for silence and attention. See Marshall, *The Book of Acts*, 223.

⁵⁷ Gendy, “Style, Content and Culture: Distinctive Characteristics in the Missionary Speeches in Acts,” 249.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

forty years he put up with (verb, τροφοφoρeυw) them in the wilderness” (v. 18).⁵⁹ All those years God tenderly cared for Israel like a mother nursing her son. In the words of Richard C. H. Lenski, “he fed the people with manna and kept them so that they did not perish. God put up with them in spite of their sins.”⁶⁰ Acts 13:19 reads, “God destroyed ‘seven nations’⁶¹ in the land of Canaan” as Israel could not conquer the land by their own strength. God then gave them “the land of Canaan as their inheritance for about four hundred fifty years” (Acts 13:19-20). Fitzmyer explains that the 450 years mention in 13:20 refers to “the 400 years of captivity in Egypt (Gen 15:13 [cf. Acts 7:6]), the 40 years in the wilderness (Num 14:33-34), and ten years of conquering most of Canaan (Joshua 14) before the rule of the judges.”⁶² Conzelmann suggests as the probable meaning that “God gave them land for 450 years, and after the conquest, he gave them judges.”⁶³ Finally, God gave them judges and a king (vv.21-22), including David who was a man after God’s own heart. With regard to David, God said: “I have found David, son of Jesse, to be a man after my heart, who will carry out all my wishes” (v.22). David is particularly highlighted here in Acts 13:22-23, because of his obedient service

⁵⁹ This is supported by the codices \aleph , B, C², D. In other ancient manuscripts (e.g., P⁷⁴, A, C* E) the verb used is τροφοφoρeυw (“care for,” “treat gently like a nurse”), hence, “For about forty years he [God] *carried* his people in his arms *like a nurse*” (i.e., he cherished and cared for them). See Nestle-Aland *Greek-English New Testament*, 17th edition (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994), 359; G. Haufe, art. τροφοφoρeυw, τροφοφoρeυw, in *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol. 3, eds. Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993), 371; R. P. Gordon, “Targumic Parallels to Acts xii, 18 and Didache xiv, 3” in *Novum Testamentum* 16 (1974): 285-89. See also Polhill, *Acts*, 300.

⁶⁰ Richard C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of the Acts of the Apostles* (Minneapolis, MI: Augsburg Fortress, 2008), 518.

⁶¹ The seven nations destroyed in the land of Canaan are enumerated in Deut 7: the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites.

⁶² Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 511. Similarly, Bruce, *Commentary on the Book of Acts*, 272.

⁶³ Hans Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, trans. James Limberg, A. T. Kraalbel, and D. H. Juel (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 104.

and the messianic promises linked with him.”⁶⁴ God made the promises to David that he would send a savior to Israel. Paul then proclaims Jesus as the savior that God had promised from David’s line. He pointed to John as the one who preached repentance and bore witness to the one who would come after him (v. 25). The importance of this reference to John is that he prepares the way for savior’s arrival. In other words, John’s message demonstrated that Israel was estranged from God and he challenged Israel to repent and be reconciled with God so that they might receive the forgiveness of sins.⁶⁵

2.2 The Proclamation of Jesus’ Life, Death and Resurrection (Acts 13:26-37)

Paul then turns to proclaim about the death and resurrection of Jesus. He does this in the context of showing how the people in Jerusalem and their leaders have put Jesus to death. His address was mainly to the Jews, the very one to whom the Messiah had first been sent and rejected. As Paul states:

Because the resident of Jerusalem and their leaders did not recognize him or understand the words of the prophets that are read every Sabbath, they fulfilled those words by condemning him. Even though they found no cause for a sentence of death, they asked Pilate to have him killed (Acts 13:27-28).

The Jews and their leaders did not recognize Jesus and the words of the prophets. Nevertheless, everything they did to Jesus fulfilled all the things written about him in the Scripture (Acts 13:29). They fulfilled the words of the prophets by putting Jesus to death. But it

⁶⁴ It was from David’s descendants that God could be expected to fulfill his promises to the people. God made the promises to David that he would have offspring who would rule after him forever (2 Samuel. 7:12-16; cf. 22:51; Ps. 89:29, 36f. 132:11f, 17). This offspring is identified as Jesus, and his function is described as a Saviour. See Marshall, *The Book of Acts*, 224.

⁶⁵ Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 410.

was God who raised Jesus from the dead (Acts 13:30).⁶⁶

Paul then continues to proclaim about Jesus' resurrection. After many days of his resurrection, Jesus appeared to his disciples. Paul told his audience in Pisidian Antioch that Jesus' followers had borne witnesses⁶⁷ to his resurrection: "And for many days he appeared to those who came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, and they are now his witnesses to the people" (Acts 13:31). Paul then quotes three Old Testament texts to prove that God raised Jesus from the dead. The first is Ps 2:7 in Acts 13:33 which has (a text connected with 2 Sam 7:12, 14) to demonstrate that one of David's descendants will be raised up and shall be God's son. Acts 2:33 reads: "You are my Son; today I have begotten you." In raising Jesus, it showed that God exalted him as his son. Polhill notes that the word "today" refers to "the day of Jesus' resurrection in this context."⁶⁸ Paul quotes Ps 2:7 to show the faithfulness of God by raising Jesus up from the dead. At the same time, he tries to show Jesus as the one who could eventually fulfill the promise made to David. The second is the quotation of Isa 55:3 in Acts 13:34, "I will give you the holy promises made to David," shows that the resurrection of Jesus is the promise made to David. Thus Paul argues, in Acts 13:34a, "...raising him from the dead, no more to return to corruption," must imply that Jesus' resurrection is the fulfillment of the

⁶⁶ That Jesus rose 'from the dead' (εἰκ νεκρῶν) is a familiar confessional formula found throughout the NT: with εἰγεῖν in Luke 9:7; Acts 3:15; 4:10; 13:30; Rom 4:24; 6:4; 7:4; 8:1; 1 Cor 15:4; Gal 1:1; Eph 1:20; Col 2:12; 1Thess 1:10; 2 Tim 2:8; Heb 11:19; 1 Pet 1:21; with ἀνίστημι in Acts 13:34; 17:31." See Polhill, *Acts*, 303.

⁶⁷ The noun "martuvrion ('witness') occurs thirteen times in the book of Acts 1:8, 22; 2:32; 3:15; 5:32; 6:13; 7:58; 10:39, 41; 13:31; 22:15, 20; 26:16. Ten times are in connection with the resurrection and/ or exaltation of Jesus. The verb marturevw occurs eleventh times and two or three occurrences are concerned with the resurrection of Christ." See Herrick, "Acts 13:13-41: Paul Sermon in Pisidian Antioch – The Realization of Long Awaited Davidic Hope," in <http://bible.org/article/acts-1313-41-pauls-sermon-pisidian-antioch%E2%80%944-realization-long-awaited-davidic-hope>. Accessed on 21 January 2013.

⁶⁸ Polhill, *Acts*, 303-4.

prophecy that God made to David. Paul declares that the promise given to David is fulfilled in Jesus by raising him from the dead. The third is Psalm 16:10 when David prophesies that “you will not let your Holy One experience corruption” (Acts 13:35). Just as Peter did at his Pentecost speech (Acts 2:25-31), Paul also argued that David died, his body was buried and decayed (v. 36), as such he could not have been speaking of himself. But Jesus whom God raised from the dead did not see corruption. Therefore, the prophecy of David must be applied to Jesus. This risen Lord is the holy one who did not see corruption (διαφορᾶν) (v.37). Paul’s position here seems to be, according to Ehrman, that “failure to believe in Jesus’ resurrection results from a failure to believe that God raises the dead.”⁶⁹

2.3 The Exhortation to Repentance and Faith in Christ (Acts 13:38-41)

Paul then continues by proclaiming the forgiveness of sins through Jesus, which is something the Law of Moses could not provide. Paul, here, proclaims the greatest act of God’s mercy, “the forgiveness of sins through Jesus.”⁷⁰ Paul asserts:

Let it be known to you, my brothers, through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you; by this Jesus everyone who believes is set free from all those sins from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses (Acts 13:38-39).⁷¹

Paul argues that the Mosaic Law was unable to justify a person, but through faith in Christ

⁶⁹ Ehrman, *The New Testament*, 135.

⁷⁰ “Throughout Luke-Acts, the work of Christ is described in terms of ‘the forgiveness of sins’: Luke 1:77; 3:3; 24:47; Acts 2:38; 5:31; 10:43; 26:18. It is often argued that this concept is not found in Paul. It is, however, very much involved in his whole idea of justification. Cf. also such explicit references as Rom 4:7; Col 1:14; Eph 1:7.” See Polhill, *Acts*, 305.

⁷¹ Here the verb “freed” literally means “Justified.” See Marshall, *The Book of Acts*, 228. According to Polhill (*Acts*, 305), “everyone who believes” is reminiscent of Paul’s constant emphasis on the sole necessity of faith in Christ.

a person can be completely justified. This faith must manifest in obedience to the commands of Christ: repenting of sins, and being baptized in the name of Jesus for the forgiveness of sins.⁷² Through faith in Jesus, one is “put righteousness with God and becomes acceptable to him.”⁷³ Only faith in Jesus brings forgiveness for those things from which the law cannot bring forgiveness.⁷⁴ The thing is that the Law of Moses could never serve as a basis for forgiveness of sins and making a person to become acceptable to God.⁷⁵

Paul concluded his sermon in Acts 13:40-41 with a warning. His warning was a quotation from the prophet Habakkuk:

Beware that what the prophets said does not happen to you; Look, you scoffers! Be amazed and perish a work that you will never believe, even if someone tells you (1:5).

Paul, like the OT prophets, warns his audience not to reject his message. This passage originally was used to warn the Israelites because they were behaving as scoffers, refusing to believe in God and his mighty deeds. If they did not repent, God would punish them with the attack of the Chaldeans.⁷⁶ Paul shows that such unbelief is also a danger for the Jews in Antioch of Pisidia. Paul quotes Hab 1:5 to warn them the danger of failing to believe in God’s

⁷² Bruce Bickel and Stan Jantz, *Acts: Living in the Power of the Holy Spirit* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2004), 90.

⁷³ Polhill, *Acts*, 305.

⁷⁴ Witherington, *Acts*, 431.

⁷⁵ Some interpreters take v. 39 to mean that “the law could atone for some sins, but not for all, and that Christ justifies us in those areas where the law fails. This idea is totally alien to Paul’s thought and is found nowhere else in Luke-Acts. The more ‘absolute’ meaning seems to apply best: the law can never set right with God; only Christ can.” See F. F. Bruce, “Justification by Faith in the Non-Pauline Writings of the New Testament,” *The Evangelical Quarterly* 24 (1952): 69-71. Also Polhill, *Acts*, 305.

⁷⁶ Polhill, *Acts*, 305. See Bruce, (*Commentary on the Book of the Acts*, 279.) notes that “these words of Habakkuk were reminiscent of a warning uttered by Isaiah in the days of the Assyrian peril (cf. Isa 28:21f.; 29:14).”

mighty acts of raising Jesus from the dead.⁷⁷ Salvation only comes to those who believe in the risen Lord. This salvation is not only for the Jews but also for the “Gentiles” (non-Jews), it opens to all those who repent and believe in the risen Lord. The reaction of Paul’s speech in Pisidian of Antioch is positive. Many of his audience have no doubt in admiration of his message (Acts 13:42).

Summary: Paul’s first missionary speech in Antioch of Pisidia begins with a brief summary of God's mighty acts in Israel's salvation history. It emphasizes much on the continuity of the present work of God with the history of God's mighty acts on behalf of Israel. The point of his sermon is to prove that Jesus has fulfilled the promise that God made to David. The fulfillment comes through the resurrection of Christ. Salvation and the forgiveness of sins are given through faith in Jesus, not through the laws. Jesus offers forgiveness, but the promise of forgiveness is given only to those who repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus.

⁷⁷ Marshall, *The Book of Acts*, 229

CHAPTER THREE

THE SIMILARITY AND CONTRAST BETWEEN TWO SPEECHES

There are notable similarities and differences in the two sermons of Peter and Paul in Acts. The gospel, however, they both proclaimed in two different places and in two different circumstances find its commonality in the risen Christ as the fulfillment of God's redemptive plan. Peter's speech interprets the Pentecost event in the light of Easter faith. In the case of Paul's speech, it was a call to faith in Christ as Savior.

A. Similarity

There are several parallels between Peter and Paul in Acts.¹ Among the many parallels is the first major speech of both Peter and Paul: Peter's first major speech at Pentecost and Paul's first major speech in the synagogue of Pisidian Antioch. Comparing both speeches, one may find that they have so much in common. In each of the two speeches, "the emphasis is on the Jerusalem Jews' responsibility for Jesus' death, the contrast between the death on the cross and the triumph of the resurrection, the apostolic witness, the testimony from Scripture, ... and the call to repentance."² Thus, there is a common structure in the two speeches that can be observed.

The pattern of Peter's first missionary speech in Jerusalem (Acts 2:14-41) is as follows: the refutation of the charge of drunkenness and the explanation of the Spirit's descent as prophesied by Joel (vv.14-21), the times of fulfillment have come through the

¹ See Felix Just, "The Acts of the Apostles," Catholic-resources.org, in <http://catholic-resources.org/Bible/Acts.htm>. Accessed on 19 April 2013.

² Polhill, *Acts*, 299.

presentation of the *kerygma* and argumentation from Scripture (vv. 22-35), the conclusion and exhortation (vv. 36-41).

Paul's first missionary speech in Antioch in Pisidia (Acts 13:16-41) follows this pattern: It begins with a brief summary of Jewish salvation history (vv. 13:16-23), and moves on to the preparation for Jesus by John the Baptist (vv. 13:24, 25). It proceeds to claim that the times of fulfillment have come through the presentation of the *kerygma* and argumentation from Scripture (Acts 13:26-37), and the conclusion and exhortation (vv. 13:38-41).

The Swedish NT scholar Edvin Larsson in his exegetical commentary on Acts has clearly shown the structure of the two missionary speeches of Peter and Paul as consisting of four steps:

- (1) Addressing the audience
(Acts 2:14 / 13:16).
- (2) An explanation of the situation which has caused the speech
(Acts 2:14c-21 / 13:17-25).
- (3) a. A short summary of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus or an account of God's work and its relevance (Acts 2:22-24, 31-36 / 13:27:31).
b. Proof from Scripture or Scriptures quotation and exposition
(Acts 2:25-35 / 13:32-37).
c. An admonition: call for repentance (Acts 2:37-40 / 13:38-41).
- (4) Normally supplemented by a report on the result of the missionary speech
(Acts 2:41 / 13:42f).

This structure in Acts is a pattern of preaching which one may regard as a missionary speech.³ In a similar vein, Mark Allan Powell proposes a structure of missionary speeches that principally follows a same pattern:

³ Edvin Larsson, *Apostlagärningarna* 13-20 (Kommentar till Nya Testamentet 5B), Stockholm: EFS-förlaget, 1987), 379-396, esp. 393-394. See also Thor Strandenas, "The Missionary Speeches in the Acts of the Apostles and their Missiological Implications," *Swedish Missiological Themes* 99/3(2011):341-354, esp.343.

- (1) An introduction regarding the particular situation.
- (2) An account of Jesus' ministry, death and resurrection.
- (3) Citation of proofs or confirmation from the Old Testament.
- (4) A call to repentance.⁴

Passage	Speaker	Type	OT Cited	Content
Acts 2:14-41	Peter	Evangelistic	Joel 2:28-32; Psalm 16:8-11; Psalm 110:1	The proclamation of salvation in the risen Christ (Acts 2:22-36).
Acts 13:16-41	Paul	Evangelistic	Psalm 2:7; Psalm 16:10; Isaiah 55:3; Habakkuk 1:5	The proclamation of the age of salvation/Jesus Christ is the Messiah and the prophecy of Old Testament is fulfilled in him (Acts 13:26-37).

The similarities of the two speeches under scrutiny can be identified in the following manner: (1) God's dealings with Israel; (2) the resurrection account from LXX Psalm 15:10 [MT Psalm 16:10]; and (3) repentance and forgiveness of sins in Christ. To this we now turn our attention.

1. God's dealings with Israel

Peter's speech at Pentecost showed how God dealt with his people through the Holy Spirit. Leo O'Reilly describes the Holy Spirit in Acts as "the source of word and sign."⁵ By this he means that the Spirit gives the apostles power to preach, witness, and also perform

⁴ Powell, *What Are They Saying about Acts?*, 31.

⁵ See Leo O'Reilly, *Word and Sign in the Acts of the Apostles: A Study in Lucan Theology*, AG 82 (Rome: Editrice Pontificia Universita Gregoriana, 1987), as cited by Powell, *What Are They Saying about Acts?*, 53.

signs and wonders. Empowered by the Spirit, Peter, spokesman for the believers, boldly preached the word of God on the day of Pentecost.⁶ Roger Stronstad has rightly observed that “Luke’s concept of the Spirit drew heavily from the OT background.”⁷ Stronstad noticed that “just as in the OT the Spirit is transferred from one leader to another (e.g., Moses to Joshua, Elijah to Elisha), so also in Acts the Spirit is transferred from Jesus to his disciples.”⁸ Thus, it could be said that what had happened on the day of Pentecost was God’s continuity with the past. No one can deny the fact that Peter’s speech is closely linked with the gift of the Holy Spirit.⁹ That is how God deals with his people through the Holy Spirit.

In the case of Paul’s speech in Pisidian Antioch, Ferdinand Hahn indicates that the main focus was on the “salvation history of Israel” as the major vehicle for making his missionary speech.¹⁰ Paul briefly narrated Israel’s story from the Exodus to the choice of David as the king of Israel.¹¹ The historical narrative forms the basis for Paul’s proclamation of the good news: “We bring you the good news that what God promised to our ancestors” (Acts 13:32). Stanley E. Porter notes, “Paul only uses the word for ‘proclaiming good news’ (euaggelizomai) once in this speech (cf. 14:15), but it is clear that he uses this as a

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Roger Stronstad, *The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson 1984), 13-27, 75-82. See Powell, *What Are They Saying about Acts?*, 51.

⁸ *Ibid.* See also Powell, *What Are They Saying about Acts?*, 52.

⁹ Powell, *What Are They Saying about Acts?*, 53.

¹⁰ Ferdinand Hahn, *Mission in the New Testament*, Studies in Biblical Theology, 47 (London: SCM Press, 1965), 134-35.

¹¹ The keynote of this brief summary of Israel’s salvation history is to show God’s mercy to Israel. God delivered the Israelites from captivity, cared for them in the wilderness, and gave them the promised land of Canaan. Next God gave them judges. When they asked a king for their nation, God gave them Saul as their king. Not pleasing with Saul’s conduct, God then chose the shepherd boy David to be the next king. Following David as a model, God promised to raise up a Savior for Israel and the world from the lineage of David. See F.J. Foakes-Jackson, *Acts of the Apostles* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 9th impression 1960), 117.

way of drawing his historical narrative to bear upon what he wishes to say about Jesus.”¹² In reviewing God’s dealings with Israel (Acts 13:17-25), Paul’s concern was to point out that God would “raise up” a savior from David’s offspring (σπευρμα) to Israel (v. 23b) in the person of Jesus.¹³ In Paul’s speech Jesus is presented as σωτηρ, not as Christ. As a savior, he would save God’s people from their sins. Salvation comes from no one, but Jesus the Savior, who was sent by God to Israel. Paul, therefore, speaks of Jesus as fulfillment of the promise made to David.

2. The resurrection account: Text from the LXX Psalm 15:10

In both speeches the main focus was “crucifixion and resurrection of Christ.” Both apostles emphasize on Jesus being rejected by the Jews (cf. Acts 2:23 / 13:27). Both of them claim that the responsibility of Jesus’ death is laid on the Jews (Acts 2:23-24 / 13:27-30). Accordingly, the Jewish people have been judged as evil generation by Peter and Paul. Similarly, Jesus calls his Jewish crowd an “evil generation” (Luke 11:29). The Lukan Jesus regards them as a people who have rejected him. Luke shows that by rejecting Jesus, “Judaism has also rejected God’s plan of salvation.”¹⁴

The speeches of Peter and Paul also highlight the resurrection as focal point (Acts 2:27 / 13:35). Both use the OT to ground the resurrection of Jesus as part of God’s salvific plan. Thus in every stage of Luke’s argument, he appeals to the OT Scriptures as conclusive

¹² Stanley E. Porter, *The Paul of Acts: Essay in Literary Criticism, Rhetoric, and Theology* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999), 135.

¹³ This is the point Paul wants to stress, God “raised up” David. It is a common expression in the Old Testament that God raises up a prophet or ruler to serve his people. But here the verb “raised up” is also an expression for Jesus’ resurrection. See Polhill, *Acts*, 300.

¹⁴ Powell, *What Are They Saying about Luke?*, 51-52.

testimony.¹⁵ LXX Psalm 15:10 [“Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.”] is quoted by both Peter (2:27) and Paul (13:35) to support their argument of Christ’s resurrection. Both speeches follow the same line of argument. They both argue from the Scriptures that God fulfilled his promised to David by raising Jesus from the dead.¹⁶ Having quoted the Davidic psalm, Paul follows Peter in asserting that David could not possibly have referred to himself as the Lord’s “holy one” in LXX Ps 15:10, but must have foretold that one of “his seed” would never see corruption (cf. 2:25-31).¹⁷ It could not have been David since he himself died and saw corruption. Thus the resurrection of Christ is God’s powerful action; and not merely a private achievement of Jesus (Acts 2:32; 13:32-34).

In Peter’s speech, resurrection meant that “Christ was rescued from the lasting experience of the grave and corruption, and the majesty of the risen Lord is emphasized.”¹⁸ The resurrection demonstrates that Jesus is both Lord and Christ. The risen Christ is the one who outpours the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:33, 36). In Paul’s speech, the

¹⁵ Jacob Jervell, *The Theology of the Acts of the Apostles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 132.

¹⁶ The term for “raised,” *ajnesthsen* is from *ajnivsthmi*. This is the most important expression for Jesus’ resurrection in Acts 2:32; 3:26; 13:33; 17:31. Other expression in Acts of the resurrection include *ejgeivrw* (3:15; 4:10; 5:30; 10:40; 13:30, 37) and the intransitive use of *ajnisthmi* (10:41; 17:3). See Trull, “Peter’s Interpretation of Psalm 16:8-11 in Acts 2:25-32,” 436. U. Wilckens, *Die Missionsreden der Apostelgeschichte*, Second Edition (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1963), 137-140, also notes that Luke speaks of Jesus being raised from the dead by God. According to Wilckens, “Luke prefers the active form (*ejgeivrw*) to express the initiative of God, or understand the action to be that of God rather than of the Son of man. Luke uses (*ejgeivrw*) 18 times in the Gospel and 12 times in Acts. Of these 18 usages three uses in Luke (active form) and six uses in Acts (passive form) refer to Jesus. The verb (*ajnivsthmi*) is used intransitively of resurrection of Jesus four times in Luke and twice in Acts, and transitively (with God as subject) 5 times in Acts.” He points out that there is no ground for the Son of man as raising himself from the dead. Only in the Johannine tradition, Jesus is said to have power to lay down his life and to take it up again (Jn 2:19, 21; 10:17f.). See also I. Howard Marshall, “The Resurrection in the Acts of the Apostles,” in *Apostolic History and the Gospel. Biblical and Historical Essays Presented to F. F. Bruce*, eds. W. Ward Gasque & Ralph P. Martin (Exeter: The Paternoster Press, 1970), 101-102.

¹⁷ Foakes-Jackson, *Acts of the Apostles*, 117.

¹⁸ Maurice Jones, *St. Paul the Orator: A Critical, Historical, and Explanatory Commentary on the Speeches of St. Paul* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1910), 50-51.

resurrection is more connected with life - a life which from now on cannot know death (Acts 13:33-34).¹⁹ For Paul, Jesus' resurrection could also mean that God will no longer bear Israel's ignorance. Thus, Paul urges his audience to accept Christ as savior. There will be a judgment on them if they continue with their ignorance (13:41).

Another common element in the two speeches is Peter's definite plan and foreknowledge of God (2:23), which in Paul is expressed as the plan of God (ἡ βουλή τοῦ θεοῦ) spoken through the words of the prophets (13:27). Both indicate that God is in charge of everything. God the Father is at the center of the life of Jesus.

There is likewise commonality when both speeches emphasize Jesus exercises his power and authority through his name (2:38 / 13:38-39). Forgiveness of sins is given through Jesus' name.

Summing up, the speeches of Peter and Paul share a common citation of LXX Ps 15:10 to prove the resurrection and exaltation of Christ. According to Walter C. Kaiser, "it was this Psalm that received one of the honored places in the early Christian Church when it served as one of the Scriptural bases for Peter's message on the day of Pentecost and Paul's address at Antioch of Pisidia."²⁰

3. Forgiveness of sins in Christ alone

The people of Jerusalem and their leaders did not recognize Jesus as the promise of the prophets. Thus they condemned him though they could not prove him deserving death. But God raised up Jesus from the dead and exalted him at his right hand as Lord and Savior. Through him God grants repentance to Israel for "the forgiveness of sins" (ἀφεσι-

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Walter C. Kaiser, "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* 23/3 (1980): 219-229, esp. 219.

aJmartiw`n). Jesus' resurrection is the supreme sign of reconciliation with God through the forgiveness of sin. God raised Jesus from the dead as a final testimony of his mission and ministry to lead people away from sin and toward salvation.²¹ Peter told the people of Jerusalem:

This man, handed over to you according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of those outside the law. But God raised him up from the dead (Acts 2:23-24)... This Jesus whom you crucified is the one that God has made both Lord and Messiah (cf. Acts 2:36).

In the same way, Paul told the Diaspora Jews:

Because the residents of Jerusalem and their leaders did not recognize him or understand the words of the prophets that are read every Sabbath, they fulfilled those words by condemning him.... When they had carried out everything that was written about him, they took him down from the tree and laid him in a tomb.... But God raised him from the dead (Acts 13:27, 29, 30).

Both Peter and Paul left the Jews with no doubt in their mind that they were responsible for crucifying Christ. So Peter and Paul urged them to repent and believe in Christ so that their sins would be forgiven. Peter urges his audience:

Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38).

While Paul asks his hearers,

Let it be known to you, my brothers, that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you; by this Jesus everyone who believes is set free from all those sins from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses (Acts 13:38-39).

²¹ Robert J. Hater, *Catholic Evangelization: The Heart of Ministry* (Orlando, FL: Harcourt Religion Publishers, 2002), 19.

There is assurance of the “forgiveness of sins”²² through Jesus Christ (cf. Acts 2:38 and 13:38-39) in both speeches. Repentance or forgiveness of sin is achieved “in the name of Jesus Christ” in Peter’s speech (2:38), and “through this man...Jesus” in Paul’s speech (13:38). In both speeches forgiveness of sins is made available through Jesus. The only difference is that in Paul’s speech there seems to be an echo of “justification” or “righteousness” (*dikaiosunh* - Acts 13:38), which is a gift of God through faith in Jesus, not through the works of the Law. This view, however, is rejected by Bruce who asserts that nothing in the speech of Paul suggests a sacrificial law. To his mind, Paul simply means that Jesus’ death can atone even for those sins which the Mosaic Law was not able to deal with.²³ Moses’ law alone cannot provide justification. Only faith in Jesus can bring about a person’s forgiveness of sins.²⁴ Richard Zehnle confirms that “for the author of Luke-Acts, a person is only saved by the change of heart which is motivated by faith in Jesus and expressed by baptism in his name.”²⁵ Thus, the remission of sins is said to be the result of repentance and baptism.

Moreover, Acts 2:38 also shows that the gift of the Holy Spirit comes as a result of repentance and baptism in the name of Jesus. Note here the close connection between faith

²² According to David S. Dockery, the emphasis on the “‘forgiveness of sin’ was prominent in Acts. In Acts 2:37-39, Peter told the Pentecost audience that the forgiveness of sins and the experience of the Spirit’s presence were promised to those who repented and were baptized (also cf. Acts 3:19, 26; 5:31). Luke also associated forgiveness with the response of faith in Acts 10:43; 13:38, 39; 15:9.” See David S. Dockery, “The Theology of Acts,” *Criswell Theological Review* 5/1 (1990): 43-55, esp. 51. For Robert Bruce Compton, the phrase ‘the forgiveness of sins’ is understood as a synonym for salvation (“Water Baptism and the Forgiveness of Sins in Acts 2:38,” *Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary Journal* 4 (1999): 3-32, esp. 3).

²³ F. F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles*, Third Edition (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 311.

²⁴ F. F. Bruce, “The Speeches in Acts—Thirty Years,” in *Reconciliation and Hope. New Testament Essays on Atonement and Eschatology Presented to L.L. Morris on his 60th Birthday*, ed. Robert Banks (Carlisle: The Paternoster Press, 1974), 61.

²⁵ Richard Zehnle, “The Salvific Character of Jesus’ Death in Lucan Soteriology,” *Theological Studies* 30 (1969): 420-444, esp. 425.

and the Holy Spirit. As Zehnle asserts, “for the evangelist Luke, it is necessary to have faith in the name of Jesus in order to be saved.”²⁶ The turning to God (*metanoia*) means a profession of faith in the name of Jesus.²⁷ Both speeches concluded with a solemn warning (Acts 2:40; 13:40-41).

To sum up this portion, the two speeches are very close in structure and in content. Paul’s speech, however, does not mention the Holy Spirit, while Peter’s speech does. Accepting forgiveness of sins made available through Jesus alone is a necessary ingredient for salvation.

B. Contrast

The general features of Peter’s first speech on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:14-41) are “reproduced in Paul’s first sermon at Antioch of Pisidia.”²⁸ Nevertheless, each of the speeches has its own distinctive elements.

1. Language of Imperatives

Acts 2:38 Pevtro~ de; e{fh pro;~ aujtouv~
metanohvsate, kai; baptisqhvtw e[kasto~
uJmw`/n evpi; tw/` ojnovmati 'Ihsou` Cristou`
eij~ a{fesin aJmartiw`n, kai; lhvyesqe thvn
dwrea;n tou` 'Agivou Pnevmato~.

- metanohvsate - Aorist active imperative, 2nd person plural verb from metanoeww, “to repent”.
- baptisqhvtw - Aorist passive imperative, 3rd person singular verb from baptizw, “to baptize”.

Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 443.

²⁸ Jones, *St. Paul the Orator*, 49.

Acts 13:40-41 ⁴⁰blevpete ou\`n mhv ejpevlqh/ to; eijrhmevnon ejn toi`~ profhvtaiv. ⁴¹i[dete, oiJ katafronhtaiv, kai; qaumavsate kai; ajfanivsqhte, o[ti e[rgon; ejrgavzomai ejgw; ejn tai`~ hJmevrai~ uJmw`n, e[rgon o} ouj mh; pisteuvshate ejavvvn ti~ ejkdihgh`tai uJmi`n.

- **blevpete** - Present active imperative, 2nd person plural verb from **blevpw**, “to see, see with open eyes, or to become aware of”.
- **i[dete** - Aorist active imperative, 2nd person plural verb from **oJravw**, “to see, catch sight of, notice, be on guard”.
- **qaumavsate** - Aorist active imperative, 2nd person plural verb from **qaumavzw**, “to marvel, wonder at, be amazed, be astonished”.
- **ajfanivsqhte** - Aorist passive imperative, 2nd person plural verb from **ajfanivzw**, “to destroy, cause to disappear, perish”.

Beware, therefore, that what the prophets said does not happen to you: “Look you scoffers! Be amazed and perish, for in your days I am doing a work, a work that you will never believe, even if someone tells you” (Acts 13:40-41).

In the passage of Peter, there are two imperative verbs: repent (**metanohvsate**) and be baptized (**baptisqhvtw**). The language of imperative is usually employed to exhort the audience to act. Peter’s speech, therefore, is an invitation to act and a promise. He is asserting that there is salvation for those who repent and who are baptized in the name of Jesus. In return Peter also makes a promise that whoever believes in Christ will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. In sum, Peter is stressing two aspects of salvation that Jesus provides the believers now: forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

In the passage of Paul, there are four imperative verbs: beware (**blevpete**), behold (**i[dete**), be amazed (**qaumavsate**), and perish (**ajfanivsqhte**). Comparing the occurrences of the imperative verbs from the two speeches, it appears that Paul uses it more than Peter. Paul’s use of it was not only meant as an invitation to his message, but more so as a response to his message. Paul’s use of imperative form involves a kind of warning. If one

does not do or listen to what he or she is commanded, there is an impending danger that follows. The great Apostle to the gentiles reminds his audience that there will be God's eschatological judgment if they fail to believe in Christ (13:40-41). Here Paul is making a strong statement that those who continue in their unbelief will suffer judgment. And God's offer of salvation in Christ is offered now, and not in the future. There can be no salvation for those who ignore or reject God in Christ. Belief in Christ is thus necessary to salvation.

2. The Place, Time, Audience

On one hand, Peter's speech took place in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost after the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke other languages (εἰς ἑκάστην γλῶσσαν αἰνοῦντες). The visiting Jews assembled in Jerusalem were amazed to hear the disciples speaking their own languages. Some accused the disciples of drunkenness. In response to this accusation, Peter delivered his first sermon. In the words of Fitzmyer, it is known as "the first of the missionary speeches in Acts, an address delivered to Jews, kerygmatic and Christological in content."²⁹

On the other hand, Paul, accompanied by Barnabas, delivered his speech in the synagogue of Pisidian Antioch on a Sabbath day. After the reading of the Torah and the Prophets, the leaders of the synagogue invited Paul and Barnabas to address "a word of exhortation" to the congregation, consisting mostly of Jews in Diaspora and some God-fearing Gentiles.³⁰ Paul was the one who responded to the invitation and delivered his exhortation standing up accompanied with gestures.

3. Witness to the resurrection of Christ

²⁹ Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 248.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 508.

Peter's sermon stresses that the disciples were witnesses to the resurrection of Jesus: "... all of us are witnesses" (2:32). Peter includes himself as one of those worthy witnesses of Christ's resurrection. This does not mean that the twelve apostles witnessed the actual resurrection event, but they were witnesses to the appearances of the risen Christ (Acts 1:3). As Elmar M. Kredel notes, "the faith of the Church depends on the testimony of these men."³¹ For this reason, the Book of Acts stresses on the importance of the apostolic witness.³²

In the case of Paul, he told his audience in Pisidian Antioch that Jesus' followers in Jerusalem had witnessed Christ's resurrection. Paul did not associate himself with these followers: "...and for many days he appeared to those who came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, and they are now his witnesses to the people" (Acts 13:31). Instead, Paul explains that the resurrection of Christ is the fulfillment of prophecies made to their ancestors (οἱ Ἰσραηλιτῶν πατέρων). According to Luke Timothy Johnson, "This fulfilled promise is the content of the 'good news' (εὐαγγελισμός) proclaimed by Paul."³³ Paul's missionary speech was intended not to witness to the resurrection, but rather to announce the good news.

In sum, the differences in both speeches have something to do with the audience or recipients of the message. The central message of the gospel does not change. Both focus on the witnesses of the post-resurrection appearances. It shows that the testimony of Christ's

³¹ Elmar M. Kredel, "Disciple," in *Sacramentum Verbi: An Encyclopedia of Biblical Theology*, Vol. 1, ed. Johannes B. Bauer (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970): 209-213, esp. 212.

³² Alan Richardson (*Christian Apologetics* [New York: Harper and Row, 1947], 209) claims that "this testimony, the apostolic witness, is found in the New Testament and nowhere else. The New Testament documents are the only firsthand historical attestations concerning those events which provide the key to the Christian understanding of God and his dealings with our world. All later re-writings of the Gospel-story, and all subsequent re-interpretation of it, are dependent for their historicity and validity upon the witness of the New Testament."

³³ Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 234.

resurrection is part of the works of the Christian leaders. Likewise, it is also part of the fulfillment of Christ's prophecy: "... and you my will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). The ministry of Christ in words and deeds is therefore continued in the ministry of his witnesses.

To conclude: The sermons of Peter and Paul are effective missionary speeches for evangelizing their respective audiences. They are not only informative or instructive; they are likewise transformative because they exhort their audiences to *metanoia* ("a change of mind and heart") and to faith in Christ as the only means to salvation. The speeches, composed by Luke and put into the mouths of Peter and Paul, are meant to inspire and build up the faith of the Christian community so that with the help of the Holy Spirit they can be effective witnesses of the risen Christ and Savior. This Christ Jesus is the fulfillment of the OT prophecies.

CHAPTER FOUR

THEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE TWO SPEECHES

What can be learned from a comparative study of the first speeches of Apostles Peter and Paul in Acts of the Apostles? If the Scripture is indeed the wonderful words of life, then it must have meaning for us, Christians, since the word of our God will stand forever (Isaiah 40:8). This is what this last chapter shall attempt to answer.

1. Born to witness

The speeches of Peter and Paul show an example of what it means to bear witness to Jesus Christ. Both of them are the Church's first missionary speeches. Thus the two kerygmatic speeches could serve as a training guide for the evangelizing task of the Church. The task of evangelization for the 21st century is presenting the Church enormous challenges. We live in a world characterized by globalization, secularization, pluralism, relativism, and advancements in science and digital technology. The Church has to compete with, adjust, or even adapt to these contemporary realities. All the more is the Church summoned today to proclaim the Christian kerygma with much vigor. Just like the audiences of Peter and Paul, people nowadays need to be strengthened in their faith. At the same time, like Peter and Paul, we need committed people who will be true witnesses to Christ in and out of season. As I. Howard Marshall affirms, "One reason Luke wrote Acts was to teach Christians how to be a witnesses of Christ."¹ In the book of Acts, one finds that "witnessing" is a primary theme.² It

¹ I. H. Marshall, *Luke: Historian and Theologian* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan 1970), 159-161. See also Mark Allan Powell, *What Are They Saying about Luke?* (New York: Paulist Press, 1989), 118.

² See Acts 1:22; 2:32; 3:15; 4:20, 33; 5:32; 8:25; 10:39, 41; 13:31; 18:5; 20:21, 24; 22:15, 18, 20; 23:11; 26:16; 28:23. As Robert Koch observes: "the word 'witness' occurs 34 times in the New Testament. It occurs 13 times in the Acts of the Apostles. In the epistles, it occurs nine times in Paul, twice in Hebrews, once in 1 Peter, and five times in Revelation. It occurs four times in the synoptic gospel." See Robert Koch, "Witness," in

also could be said that witnessing is the nature of the Church's mission. In 1975 Paul VI made the powerful statement in his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, "Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses."³

2. Called to mission

Mark Allan Powell claims: "For Luke, the church is a community with a mission."⁴ By her nature the Church is an assembly of missionaries. By virtue of the Sacrament of Baptism, every baptized Catholic is a missionary. Witnessing to Christ within and without is the mission of every Christian. The word "mission" comes from the Latin verb *mittere* and from the participle *missum*. Its meaning is "to send" or "to be sent."⁵ This "to be sent," or "being sent" responds to a commission, or to a task assigned for a person to carry out.⁶ Kosuke Koyama notes that "the word 'mission' points to a God who 'sends' his people to proclaim the Good News (Exod 3:14; Isa 52:7; Rom 10:15; and John 20:21)."⁷ On the one hand, "mission" means the total redemptive purpose of God of establishing his Kingdom on earth. "Mission" on the other hand, is the activity of God's people, the Church, to proclaim

Sacramentum Verbi: An Encyclopedia of Biblical Theology, Vol. 3, ed. Johannes B. Bauer (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970):976-985, esp. 976.

³ Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, no. 41.

⁴ Powell, *What Are They Saying about Luke?*, 118.

⁵ José Cristo Rey Garcia Paredes, *Theology of Religious Life Covenant and Mission*, Mission 3 (Quezon City: Claretian Publication, 2006), 80.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Kosuke Koyama, "Missiology," in *A New Hand-Book of Christian Theology*, eds. Donald W. Musser & Joseph L. Price (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992), 312- 314, esp. 312.

and to manifest the Kingdom of God to the world.⁸ The Church is sent by God on mission and cooperates with God to send missionaries. It is always God who sends. After being empowered by the Holy Spirit at Pentecost the apostle Peter began to bear witness to the resurrection of the Lord. In other words, Peter fulfills Jesus' prophecy before his Ascension: "You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8b). It is Jesus' desire that the Gospel reaches as many places and as many people as possible. The Second Vatican Council has nicely articulated the missionary character of the Church: "The Church on earth is by its very nature missionary since, according to the plan of the Father, it has its origin in the mission of the Son and the Holy Spirit."⁹ Thus, it becomes clear that the mission of the Church is in continuity with the mission of the Son and the Spirit. As Pope Paul VI affirms, "mission is the deepest identity of the church."¹⁰ Because of Christ's missionary mandate the Church has the duty of proclaiming by word and witness the gospel of the Lord everywhere.

3. Evangelization as the mission of the Church

Jesus, as the first evangelizer, commanded the Apostles on the day of his Ascension to the Father:

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age. (Mt 28:19-20).

But to evangelize does not mean simply to teach people a set of doctrines, but to proclaim Jesus Christ by one's words and actions. One has to make oneself an instrument of Christ's

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Vatican II, *Ad Gentes*, no. 2.

¹⁰ Paul VI, *Evangelli Nuntiandi*, no. 14.

presence and action in the world. Evangelization, then, is the essence of the Church's identity. Again, Pope Paul VI states:

The Church exists in order to evangelize, that is to say in order to preach and teach, to be the channel of the gift of grace, to reconcile sinners with God, and to perpetuate Christ's sacrifice in the Mass, which is the memorial of his death and glorious Resurrection.¹¹

The task of evangelization, however, belongs to the whole Church, not just to the ordained ministers or the religious, but to all its members.¹² Evangelization is the "duty of every Christian."¹³ In Jesus' earthly ministry he chose simple people, like fishermen, and sent them to mission. He chose Matthew who was a tax collector scorned by fellow Jews. Jesus called Paul, a fierce persecutor of the Church, to be his great apostle sent to the Gentile missions. The apostles Peter and John were, borrowing the description of Acts 4:13, "uneducated and ordinary men." God's methods and ways are not the same as humans. God can use the foolish, the weak and the despised persons of the world to bring Glory to him (1 Cor 1:26-31). The problem for most Christians is that when they hear the word 'mission,' they do not take them as words applicable to them. They automatically think that these words are exclusively meant for a selected few. Quite the reverse, God intends to use everyone to accomplish his mission regardless of the person. It should not surprise us that many of those called by God to do his mission did not always have a proud past before they were chosen.

4. Evangelization through Social Media

These days the means of social communication have become important tool to evangelization. The Church has to find ways to communicate with the people of different age

¹¹ Paul VI, *Evangelli Nuntiandi*, no. 14.

¹² Vatican II, *Ad Gentes*, no. 4.

¹³ Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, no. 16-17.

categories through new technology and mass media. By making use of social media (e.g., internet, mobile phones, facebook, twitter, etc.) the church can attract people to appreciate the word of God. In his message for World Communications Day, Benedict XVI mentions that “social networks are an important place for people of faith to reach out to others by patiently and respectfully engaging their questions and their doubts as they advance in their search for the truth and the meaning of human existence.”¹⁴ He also urges people “to use online networks to invite others into a faith community, religious celebrations and pilgrimages; elements which are always important in the journey of faith.”¹⁵ Through this social communication, the Church could help people find the faith in their times of need. The social media should be considered as an extension of the Church pulpit from which the word of God is proclaimed.

5. Called to preach, serve and witness

These are the three aspects of evangelizing mission that cannot be separated from one another. Each is so vital that evangelization would not be successful if one of the elements is left out.¹⁶

5.1 To Preach

Preaching is “the proclamation of the good news of salvation in Christ.”¹⁷ It is the central part of Christian *kerygma* (2:22b-24; 13:27-30). Preaching, as David Buttrick

¹⁴ Carol Glatz, “Social Networks Need More Logic, Love and Less Ranting, Rage, Pope Says,” in <http://www.catholicnews.com/data/stories/cns/1300292.htm>. Accessed on April 29, 2013.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Robert J. Hater, *Catholic Evangelization: The Heart of Ministry* (Orlando, FL: Harcourt Religion Publishers, 2002), 121.

¹⁷ The word “preach” derives from the Latin *praedicare* (to announce, declare). In Greek terms: *Kerussein* (to herald, proclaim), *evangelizesthai* (to announce the gospel). See Mary Catherine Hilbert, “Preaching,” in *The New Dictionary of Theology*, eds., Joseph A. Komonchak, Mary Collins, & Dermot a. Lane (Collegeville, MI: The Liturgical Press, 1990): 791-797, esp.791.

observes, “continues the work of Christ who gather a people to himself and, by death and resurrection, set them free for new life in the world.”¹⁸ Or in the words of Fred B. Craddock, “Preaching is not simply a matter of speaking on Christian subjects, preaching itself is to be a Christian act.”¹⁹ For Thomas G. Long, “Preaching is not merely a deed performed by an individual preacher but rather the faithful action of the whole church.”²⁰ Thus those who hear and believe the witness to Christ in preaching are to continue to tell, teach and bear witness. In fact, preaching can be done in many ways and forms. The ordained ministers are the ones who have the authority to preach the word during the liturgical celebrations of the Church, while the lay Christians live exemplary the Christian life in their own families and work places. Living exemplary lives in their own spheres could be considered another form of preaching. Families are the training ground for future ordained ministers and religious. Committed teachers in schools have great influence in the development of the youth. They too are preachers. Christian writers and musicians effectively preach through their artistic expertise. In all of these varied forms of preaching, the Gospel of Jesus Christ can be presented as the good, the beautiful, and the truth. Again, preaching involves both words and action. There is no dichotomy between them. Ministers of the word ought to live exemplary lives worthy of their calling. Their very lives and actions serve as living sermons. The great Hindu leader Mahatma Gandhi in his critique of Christians says: “I like your Christ, I do not like your Christians. Your Christians are so unlike your Christ.”²¹ Preachers, parents,

¹⁸ David Buttrick, *Homiletic: Moves and Structures* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 451.

¹⁹ Fred B. Craddock, *Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1985), 25.

²⁰ Thomas G. Long, *The Witness of Preaching*, Second Edition (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 51.

²¹ Phil Pringle, *Top 10 Qualities of a Great Leader* (Tulsa, Oklahoma: Harrison House, 2007), 69.

teachers, artists, musicians cannot say, “Do what I say, but do not follow what I do!” Coherence in one’s words, actions, and concrete lives make people credible witnesses.

The 1982 document of the U.S. Bishops’ Committee on Priestly Life and Ministry entitled *Fulfilled in Your Hearing*, indicates that an effective preaching “must enable people to recognize God’s active presence, to respond to that presence in faith through a life that will live in conformity with the Gospel.”²² The purpose of preaching is to make the word of God fully known (Col 1:25). Preaching must both bring about information and transformation of people. Preaching must bring the people closer to God so that they too can witness and possess the fullness of life promised by Jesus. Hence, Catholic seminaries and theological faculties must seriously plan and provide the pastoral course on Homiletics to aid and train seminarians in giving homilies.

5.2 To serve

Jesus is presented to us as the exemplar of a serving missionary. In the Gospel, Jesus emphasizes so much on the value of service: “For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve” (Mark 10:45). “Serviam” is the motto of every Christian. As the true servant of God, Jesus obeys and fulfills the will of God.²³ Jesus’ teaching/preaching was always accompanied by works of service: he healed the blind, cleansed the lepers, cured people’s diseases, gave them food to eat, washed the apostles’ feet. If we look at the beginning of his ministry, he begins his ministry with these words:

The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring
the good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the

²² USCCB, “Fulfilled in Your Hearing: The Homily in the Sunday Assembly,” (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1982), 29.

²³ Franz Mussner, “Servant of the Lord in the New Testament” in *Sacramentum Verbi: An Encyclopedia of Biblical Theology*, Vol. 3, ed. Johannes B. Bauer (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970), 842-844, esp.843.

captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free,
and to proclaim a year of Lord's favor (Luke 4:18-19).

It would be a good idea for today's missionaries to rediscover the serving mission of Jesus and take it as a model. Missionaries ought not to lord over their people, but are called to a loving service. Seminary formation must provide opportunities for seminarians to do various apostolates, e.g., hospital work, retreat giving, NGOs, Catechetics. This will equip the future priests and missionaries in their whole-rounded formation.

5.3 To witness

The purpose of witness is "to arouse and to deepen faith in Christ."²⁴ The apostles were called by God to be witnesses of the risen Lord. Pius XII summoned all Christians to this task of bearing witness: "Today more than ever, and as in the first centuries of her existence, the church chiefly needs witnesses... who by their whole way of life make the true countenance of Christ shine out before a world which has grown pagan."²⁵ There can be no true proclamation of the Gospel unless Christians also offer the witness of lives in harmony with the message they preach. With an authentic witness, people can be easily attracted and lead them to ask questions which can be the beginning of their conversion as well. Seminary formation should not only focus on intellectual development, but must also emphasize on spirituality.

6. The Role of the Holy Spirit

Another favorite theme in Luke-Acts is the Holy Spirit, the Advocate promised by the Risen Lord. In Acts 1:8 Jesus says, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you" It is also the Holy Spirit that gives birth to the missionary Church and

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 984.

²⁵ *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 39 [1947], 312. See Koch, "Witness," 985.

“compels her to cooperate in the missionary task.”²⁶ Ever since the Church received the gift of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost (cf. Acts 2:14), she has never tired of making known Christ to the whole world. It is the Spirit that gives the Church *life* and *dynamism*. Bishop Ignatius of Latikon at a meeting of the Council of Churches at Uppsala aptly states:

Without the Holy Spirit:
God is far away;
Christ stays in the past;
The Gospel is a dead letter;
The Church is simply an organization;
Authority is a matter of domination;
Mission is a matter of propaganda;
The liturgy no more than an evocation;
Christian living a slave mentality.²⁷

The Holy Spirit can and should make a difference in our lives as it did in the audiences of Peter and Paul. The Holy Spirit can renew the face of the earth. The Holy Spirit is not yesterday. He is today present with us.

To conclude, the two speeches of Peter and Paul present to us enormous implications on how we must live our Christian lives. They give us insights into missiology, evangelization, priestly formation, and spirituality, among other things. The more we read them, the more they give us insights on how we have to live up with the word of God in the 21st century. The Christian *kerygma* proclaimed by Peter and Paul has never changed; they are as relevant as ever.

²⁶ Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, no. 17.

²⁷ Cited in Fr. Pius Sammut, OCD, “Fifty Days,” in <http://www.fatherpius.littleway.ca/pond11.html>. Accessed on 14 May 2013.

CONCLUSION

In the Book of Acts, the life of the early Church is recorded and preserved. Marshall is of the conviction that “Luke believed that the events which he was recording were the fulfillment of the prophecies contained in the Scriptures and consequently they were the same kind of divinely wrought events as were already recorded in the Scriptures.”¹ Thus what took place in the early church was in accordance with prophecy (cf. Luke 24:47; Acts 1:4f., 20; 2:16-21; 3:24; 10:43; 13:40f., 47; 15:15-18; 28:25-28). It is the Book of Acts that provides us with that helpful information of how God deals with his people. It also gives us with the historical experience of our faith and how that faith came to be embraced from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth (i.e., Rome). Thus one may assume that Acts is the first history of the Christian church. For without it we would have no record of the beginnings and development of the early church. Book of Acts, however, is more than just a textbook of Church history. It is closely linked with the Gospel of Luke as well. Luke wrote the Acts, including the many speeches, with a decided theological purpose of presenting the continuity of God’s saving activity in Christ. His concern is to strengthen the faith of the community in the risen Christ. Luke’s purpose of composing speeches is to instruct the readers and to proclaim the message of salvation. The speeches contain theological and missionary aims. These aims are found particularly in the speeches of Peter and Paul.

On the day of Pentecost, Peter’s speech explains the significance of the coming of the Holy Spirit. It proclaims Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection. Then it claims that the disciples are bearing witness to Jesus’ resurrection, and this is proved to be validated by OT. The speech concludes with a call to repentance. The speech delivered by Paul in the synagogue

¹ Marshall, *Acts*, 18.

of Pisidian Antioch was in many ways similar to Peter's speech.

The substance of the two speeches of Peter (2:14-41) and Paul (13:16-41) is to preach the gospel: to bear witness to the risen Lord, to proclaim repentance for the forgiveness of sins in the name of Jesus. Both of the speeches share common structure, form, content and element. Although there are similarities between the two speeches, both Peter and Paul have their own distinctive ways of presenting Christ's message. In spite of having different audiences or recipients of the message, the central message of the gospel never changes. Proclaiming the good news about Jesus' resurrection, repentance and forgiveness of sins are the climax of the two speeches. Salvation is offered to all men but only for those who repent – to change mind and heart (*metanoia*) and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the source of salvation for all. One of the aims of the two speeches is to tell the people what they must believe and how they must act to gain salvation. In other words, the two speeches give direction for the present and future.

It is through Christ that the forgiveness of sins is offered to all humankind. God's Spirit is outpoured on the disciples through the risen Lord. It was from him that the gift of the Spirit had come down to the Church on the day of Pentecost. Filled with the Holy Spirit, Peter delivered his first missionary speech to the Jews in Jerusalem from all over the world. Peter's speech at Pentecost is the beginning of apostles' mission to bear witness to Jesus' resurrection. It was also the moment the Church's mission began to spread the gospel among the nations. Thus the mission of the church is the continuity of the mission of the Son and Spirit, i.e., to preach repentance and forgiveness of sins in Jesus' name to all nations (Acts 1:8). The basic intention of the Church in preaching the word of God is to give birth to faith and then strengthen it. Marshall maintains that "for Luke, mission means evangelization, the

proclamation of the good news of Jesus and the challenge to repentance and faith.”² Moreover, the Church is also called to witness to all people that the offer of salvation is not confined only to those who belong to God’s chosen Israel, but also to everyone who calls on the name of the Lord, Jesus (Acts 2:21). The resurrection and exaltation of Jesus indicates that God has made Jesus, Lord (Acts 2:36). As Lord, Jesus has been given the power to forgive sins and to offer salvation. Salvation comes from believing in Jesus’ name in Acts.

Speeches can be considered the most important part of the book of Acts. We find that the speeches in Acts are concerned with not only to spread the word of God but also they themselves bear witnessing to the gospel. Especially the speeches of Peter and Paul show us how to bear witness to Christ’s resurrection and how to defend the Christian proclamation of Jesus as the savior with the help of texts from the Scriptures. These two speeches present us the basic method of the early Christian preaching and also help us to “relive the experiences of the early Christians as they witnessed to their resurrection Lord and Savior.”³ Proclaiming Jesus Christ as the only Saviour of the world in the twenty-first century is a hard task. However, we have to believe that mission is still possible if we are able to read the signs of the times and adapt our method of doing the missionary works in the right way. Just like Peter and Paul, we need to accept every opportunity to preach the gospel of Christ.

² *Ibid.*, 50.

³ Liefeld, *Interpreting the Book of Acts*, 127.

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