

A CRITICAL AND EXEGETICAL  
COMMENTARY

ON

**THE ACTS OF THE  
APOSTLES**

BY

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IN TWO VOLUMES

VOLUME II

Introduction and Commentary on Acts XV-XXVIII

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## PREFACE

I have little to add to the Preface that I wrote for Volume I of this commentary. What I wrote then, especially by way of thanks to a number of people who in various ways have helped me, is still true. Some things are perhaps better arranged in this volume than in the first; one learns from one's mistakes. This volume contains a more or less conventional 'Introduction'. It will, I think, be clear why I could not write it until I had cleared my mind on a number of questions that arise in Acts 15-28.

Since Volume I was completed, the 27th edition of Nestle-Aland's *Novum Testamentum Graece* has appeared. After some thought I have decided in favour of consistency, and have retained the text and apparatus of NA<sup>26</sup>. Some day, perhaps, the commentary may be revised and the sigla of the later edition used throughout.

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(6) The apostles and elders gathered together to look into this matter. (7) When much discussion had taken place, Peter stood up and said to them 'Brothers, you know that in days of old God made his choice among you that through my voice the Gentiles should hear the word of the Gospel and believe; (8) and God, who knows the human heart, bore testimony to them when he gave them the Holy Spirit, as he had done to us, (9) and he made no distinction between us and them when he cleansed their hearts by faith. (10) So now why do you put God to the test by laying on the neck of these disciples a yoke which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? (11) On the contrary, we believe that it is through the grace of the Lord Jesus that we shall be saved, in the same way as they.' (12) The whole company fell silent, and they listened to Barnabas and Paul as they narrated the signs and portents that God had done among the Gentiles through them. (13) When they had ceased speaking, James joined in,<sup>2</sup> saying, 'Brothers, listen to me. (14) Symeon has reported how<sup>3</sup> God at the first look action so as to take out of the Gentiles a people for his name; (15) and with this the words of the prophets agree—as it is written: (16) 'Afterwards I will return, and I will build up again the tent of David that has fallen down, and I will build up again its ruins, and I will raise it up, (17) in order that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, even all the Gentiles<sup>4</sup> upon whom my name has been named.' So says the Lord,<sup>5</sup> making these things (18) known from of old. (19) Therefore for my part I give my judgement that we should not make trouble for those who from the Gentiles turn to God, (20) but write to them that they should abstain from the defilements caused by idols, from fornication,<sup>6</sup> from that which has been strangled, and from blood. (21) For Moses from generations of old has in every city those who proclaim him, since he is read out every Sabbath in the synagogues.'

(22) Then the apostles and the elders, along with the whole church, decided to choose men from among themselves to send to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; [they chose] Judas called Barsabbas and Silas, leading men among the brothers, (23) and wrote for them to deliver [as follows:] 'The apostles and the elders, your brothers, to the brothers in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia, who come from among the Gentiles: Greeting. (24) Since we had heard that some of us had disturbed you by what they said, unsettling your

<sup>1</sup>NEB, We are saved, and so are they; NJB, We are saved in the same way as they are.  
<sup>2</sup>NEB, summed up.  
<sup>3</sup>NEB, it first happened that God took notice of the Gentiles. NJB, God first arranged to enlist a people for his name out of the Gentiles.  
<sup>4</sup>NEB, whom I have claimed for my own.  
<sup>5</sup>NEB, whose work it is, made known long ago.  
<sup>6</sup>NJB, illicit marriages.

souls,—men to whom we had given no such instructions—(25) we,<sup>7</sup> when we met together, decided to choose and send men to you along with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, (26) men<sup>8</sup> who have devoted their lives to the name<sup>9</sup> of our Lord Jesus Christ. (27) So we have sent Judas and Silas, who will report the same things to you by word of mouth. (28) For the Holy Spirit and ourselves have reached the decision that we should lay upon you no other burden except these necessary things: (29) that you should abstain from things sacrificed to idols, from blood, from things that have been strangled, and from fornication.<sup>10</sup> If you keep yourselves from these things you will be doing right. Farewell.'

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<sup>7</sup>NEB, We have resolved unanimously; NJB, We have decided unanimously.  
<sup>8</sup>RSV, men who have risked.  
<sup>9</sup>NEB, cause.  
<sup>10</sup>NJB, illicit marriages.

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### Commentary

The meeting planned in the preceding paragraph takes place. It does not take the form of a trial (so that the Western reading in 15.2 does not correspond to Luke's intention) but rather of a general discussion of a question of practice. B. Gerhardsson (*Memory and Manuscript* (1961), 249–61) compares it to a rabbinic discussion of a piece of *halakah*, and thinks it to be an example of the *duzrovta roš layou* to which the apostles propose to devote themselves in 6.4. It is the apostles and elders who gather for discussion and evidently assume the authority to make a decision; they write the letter in which the decision is promulgated, though the whole church concurs (v. 22). At the outset there is much debate, which Luke does not report. After this he assigns speeches to Peter, to Barnabas and Paul, who are not separated as speakers, and to James. Peter is firmly in favour of a liberal attitude; the Law, he says, is an intolerable burden even to Jews, and God has clearly shown that he does not require observance from Gentiles. Barnabas and Paul report the miracles they have witnessed among the Gentiles, a demonstration of God's favour to the Gentiles and of his approval of the way in which the evangelists have conducted their mission. James's attitude is less clear, though he agrees with Peter and finds support for his position in the OT; some requirements, however, must be made. The whole company agrees with his conclusion, and a letter is written, disavowing those who have caused confusion in the Antiochene church and stating the decree proposed by James; if this is observed all will be well in the Gentile churches.

This paragraph is rightly described as the centre of Acts. It is the best example of a pattern that occurs several times in Acts and represents the way in which Luke conceived the progress of Christianity. In this pattern a difficulty is encountered; steps are taken to deal with it; not only is the problem solved but a notable advance takes place as a result. Thus for example at 6.1 the problem of the Hellenist widows (which could have ended in schism) arises; steps are taken to deal with it (6.2–6); the result (6.7) is a great increase in the number of disciples. Similarly in 19.9 there is such vehement opposition to Paul's work in Ephesus that he is obliged to leave the synagogue for another building; but the result (19.10) is that all the Jews and Greeks in the province of Asia hear the Lord's word. In ch. 15 the extension of the Gospel to the Gentiles (which is Luke's primary concern) is threatened by those who would compel all Gentile converts to become Jewish proselytes; steps are taken to deal with this problem; the result is not simply an answer to the problem

but the further expansion of the church. This appears immediately in 15.35, but is in fact the theme of the rest of the book. Thus Acts 15 supplies the key to the arrangement and movement of the book as a whole. 'Luc place le récit, tel qu'il l'a recomposé, au centre de l'activité missionnaire de Paul' (Taylor 5.222).

Haenchen saw the account of the Council as a Lucan composition. It was not indeed pure fiction; Luke wrote on the basis of traditions, which are not further defined. With this view Bultmann disagreed (*Exegetica* 415f. = *FST*, W. Manson 71f.); Luke made use of written sources. The sharpest point of disagreement was the Decree, together with the letter of which it formed part. Bultmann agrees with Dibelius that the address to Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia is a clear indication of a written source. Luke believed the letter and Decree to apply to all Gentile Christian churches; he would never have made up so limited a statement of its destination. Certainly (in Bultmann's view) Luke edited the written source, or sources, that he possessed, in particular he introduced the references to Barnabas and Paul.

Subsequent writers have taken different views of the composition of the paragraph. According to Hanson (155) 'The "Apostolic Council" is an imaginative reconstruction by Luke'; but from this Hanson excepts the letter and the Decree. Lüdemann 176 thinks that ch. 15 rests on tradition, but is undecided whether this was written or oral. He sees the marks of tradition in the concreteness of the narrative and in its agreements with Galatians 2. Many think that Luke has combined two traditions, based respectively on Jerusalem and Antioch. Sometimes the combination is set out in literary form. Thus Pesch (2.72) believes that Luke has combined a tradition of an Apostolic Council with an account of the Apostolic Decree; more precisely (2.74), he distinguishes Antiochene tradition (of the founding of the church, 11.19-26, and of the delegation to Jerusalem, 11.27-30; 12.25; 15.1-4, 12b) and the origin of the Decree (10.1-11.18; 15.5-12a, 13-33). Weiser (376) finds the story of a Jerusalem meeting in 15.1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 12, 7, 13, 10, 11, 19, and an account of the Antiochene problem and its solution in 15.5, (1), 23, 30, 20, 29, 23, 22, 27, 30, 31, 32. 'Lukas hat die Elemente beider Traditionen miteinander verbunden und so die eindrucksvolle Gesamtszene "Apostelkonzil" gestaltet.' It may be questioned whether such precise delineation of sources is possible; Luke gave himself too free a hand, and believed that the Decree, formulated as the result of a Council in Jerusalem, originated as the solution of the Antiochene problem. That Luke used all the sources he could find, whether written or oral, was argued already in 1.49-56; he did so here. Of the Decree Haenchen (454) writes, 'Lukas hat also nicht ... diese vier Forderungen einem alten Dokument entnommen, das er irgendwo gefunden hat, sondern er hat eine lebendige Tradition beschrieben, die man wahrscheinlich schon damals auf die Apostel zurückgeführt

hat.' That Luke found the Decree in use, observed by churches, is true; but were his contemporaries so illiterate that they never wrote down basic rules of their community? The paragraph reproduces written material, folk memory, and Luke's own story-telling.

The story invites comparison with Galatians 2. There are such close parallels between the two passages that it is hard to doubt that somewhere behind both lies a single event. In both Paul accompanied by Barnabas goes up to Jerusalem. In Acts 'certain others' go with them; in Galatians Titus goes, and it is not said that he is the only additional traveller. In Galatians James, Cephas, and John take part; in Acts James and Peter take part and there is nothing to suggest that John was not there as one of the unnamed apostles. In Galatians Paul and Barnabas are accepted by the Jerusalem apostles as colleagues; in Acts they take part in the discussion and are described in the letter as 'our beloved Barnabas and Paul'. In Acts the theme discussed in the Council is the proposition that all converts to Christianity must be circumcised; if the Galatians Council did not deal with this theme it was irrelevant to the Galatian situation to which Paul applies it. This is a weighty list of parallels. On the other hand, the Acts Council ends with the issue of a Decree, binding on Christians; in Galatians there is no sign of this Decree, nor is there any sign of it anywhere else in Paul's letters. In Galatians there is some sort of division of apostolic labour (Gal. 2.9); there is no trace of this in Acts. It would be difficult to maintain (though not a few have done so) that Acts and Paul are describing different events; equally difficult to think that Luke had read Galatians.

We may add, and take as a pointer to the unravelling of the historical problem, that both Acts and Galatians speak of the arrival in Antioch of representatives from Jerusalem. In Acts they take a hard line on circumcision and the Law: all must be circumcised and observe the Law. This demand is represented as the immediate occasion of the Council. In Galatians (assuming, as without indication to the contrary one should, that Paul sets out events in chronological order) the visit is of envoys from James, and it follows the Council. As a result of it the church in Antioch is divided: Peter, followed by Barnabas and all the Jewish Christians, withdrew into isolation, refusing to eat with uncircumcised Gentile Christians. Paul maintained his position and stood by the Gentiles, rebuking Peter to his face. Assuming Paul to have been neither stupid nor dishonest, though doubtless like all men fallible in memory, his account, which is first-hand, must be accepted where it differs from Luke's; and the likeliest explanation of the course of events is as follows.

A mission based on Jerusalem was circulating among the Pauline churches (cf. M. D. Goulder, *A Tale of Two Missions*, London, 1994). Circumcision of all was demanded. This, if unchecked, could have ruined Paul's work, and he went up to Jerusalem that he might

not run in vain (Gal. 2.2). Apart from an encounter with false brothers (who are distinguished from the apostles) the meeting was not inharmonious. There was agreement that Paul should go to the Gentiles (to evangelize them), the Jerusalem apostles to the Jews. This sounded well but was inadequately thought out and the terms remained undefined. It probably was related to the question whether an attempt should first be made to win the Jews for the Gospel, leaving the Gentile mission as a second-stage operation. It did not take into account what might be done in churches with mixed Jewish and Gentile membership. In Antioch it was at first assumed that since all were Christians all might have table fellowship together. The messengers from James (Gal. 2.12) must have said something like, We agreed that Gentiles might be accepted as Christians without circumcision; we did not say that Jews might so far cease to be Jews as to have unrestricted dealings with Gentiles. The two leaders, James and Paul, dug in their heels, and it was the Hellenistic Jewish Christians who found a way out by proposing the Decree—which Paul did not accept.

The theme of Luke's narrative does not change (see p. 745); the point of contention between Paul and Jerusalem changed. It was accepted that Gentile Christians did not have to be circumcised; it was not accepted by Jerusalem that there might be table fellowship between Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians. It is clear that the mission that required the circumcision, that is, the full proselytization, of Gentiles continued; it was certainly active in Galatia, but it no longer had the full support (though it may have had the implicit encouragement) of Jerusalem.

For the dating of the Council see Introduction, pp. lvi–lxi. Taylor (5.208) holds that the Council took place towards the end of the reign of Agrippa I, since it is clear from both Acts and Galatians that Peter (cf. 12.17) was still in Jerusalem. The argument is fallacious; 12.17 does not necessarily mean that Peter moved out of Jerusalem, and if he did he might easily have returned, especially after the death of Agrippa.

6. The ἐκκλησία of 15.4 now disappears (to reappear in v. 22 and possibly, as τὸ πλῆθος, in v. 12); the serious business of the Council is to be done by *apostles and elders*. 614 *pc sy<sup>a</sup>* add οὐν τῷ πλῆθει; it may be that the Western text did not lay quite so much stress on the importance of the apostles as is sometimes supposed. Of the apostles mentioned in ch. 1 only Peter speaks; Barnabas and Paul, apostles only at 14.4, 14, report on their work; James, who seems to be merged with the apostolic group, proposes a solution which is accepted. It is very probable that Luke is here constructing a scene out of a small quantity of material. Elders (presbyters) probably represent the church officers with whom he was himself familiar. At

13.1 the church at Antioch has prophets and teachers; at that point Luke was probably using an Antiochene source. Here he assumes the church order that he knows, adding in the apostles as, while they lived, the highest authority. It may be said that Luke, though he quotes only Peter, regarded them as the real decision makers (cf. Peter, James, and John in Galatians 2); the elders listen and agree.

ἰδεῖν *regl* is an unusual expression, though it must mean something like *look into*. J. L. North (NTS 29 (1983), 264–6) points out that the Latin *videre* de suggests a legal, judicial sense. Is it intended to suggest (cf. 15.2 and especially the Western text) that Paul and Barnabas are on trial? More probably we should think of something like a rabbinic, or Qumran, court settling a matter of *halakah*. Cf. B. Gerhardsson (above, p. 709). It is doubtful whether Luke knew much about such courts, and it must be borne in mind that groups of people, assembled to discuss courses of action, are all likely to behave in similar ways, whatever their backgrounds.

For λόγου, E 614 *pc sig sy<sup>a</sup>* have ὑπηλάτος, by assimilation to 15.2.

7. πολλὰς δὲ ὑπηρεσίας γενομένης. There was much discussion. For ὑπηρεσίας see 15.2; it means search (ὑπηρεῖν) for truth through public inquiry and debate, and it will shortly appear that the leading figures are agreed. Such dispute as is implied must (in Luke's view) come from those mentioned in 15.5.

At this point <sup>p45(vib)</sup> makes substantially the same addition to the text as is made by D in 15.2. Of 15.2, P<sup>45</sup> contains only ὑπηλάτος τούτου, so that it is impossible to tell whether it contained the words there also. They are better restored in the apparatus of NA<sup>26</sup> than in F. G. Kenyon's *editio princeps* (1933).

Peter rose up to speak, ἀναστὰς; cf. ἐξανέστη in 15.5: biblical style rather than a linguistic Semitism. D\* (614 *sy<sup>mg</sup>*) have ἀνέστη in τῷ Πνεύματι. Πέτρος καὶ: Peter is inspired; his pronouncement comes from God. Black (AA 69) notes the introduction of parataxis (ἀνέστη in God. Black (AA 69) notes the introduction knowledge: ἡμεῖς ἐπίσταμεθα—you know for yourselves, without my telling you. This applies to the reader, who will recall the contents of ch. 10, but there is no reason why some of Peter's activities should not have been generally known.

Peter's first sentence contains several obscurities. ἀπ' ἡμεῶν ἀρχαίων should introduce the assertion that something has been going on continuously since an early time; one would expect an imperfect, but we have in fact the aorist ἐξελέξατο, which calls for the definition of a point of time. We must understand the prepositional phrase to mean not *from* but *in ancient days, in days of old*. Hebrew <sup>72</sup> can occasionally be taken in this way (Gen. 6.4; Josh. 24.2; Ps. 77.6), but this is of little help. Preuschen (94) takes the

expression to be a stronger equivalent to *πρότερον*. But what are *the days of old*? Cf. v. 14 (*πρότερον*); also 11.15 (*ἐν ἀρχῇ*), and v. 21, though there *ἐκ γενεὴν ἀρχαίων* introduces a continuous state (*ἔχει*). The meaning seems to be that from the start (of the Christian movement)—in v. 15 the intention will be traced back to the prophets) God's plan included Gentiles. Whether those who were involved in the movement at the beginning were at the time aware of this is doubtful. There can hardly, in view of the dispute that arose, have been a specific instruction on the matter from Jesus, and in the absence of such an instruction those who questioned the step can hardly be blamed for doing so. Peter claims that he was the first to understand what should be done.

*ἐν ὑμῖν ἐξελέξατο ὁ θεός* (P<sup>74</sup> N A B C 33 36 81 945 1175 1739 *al* *bo* Ir<sup>ms</sup>) gave the copyists problems. D<sup>e</sup> E Ψ 59<sup>a</sup> (lat) sy<sup>h</sup> have (with some variations in order) ὁ θεός ἐν ὑμῖν ἐξελέξατο; D\* 614 *pc* have ἡμῖν ὁ θεός ἐξελέξατο; 189 *pc* sy<sup>p</sup> sa have ὁ θεός ἐξελέξατο. The text of N B is almost certainly correct, but it is difficult in that *ἐξελέξατο* has no direct object and that if the reference is to the Cornelius story (as it must be) Peter might have been expected to say that God made his choice (not among *you* but) among *us* (as in the reading of D<sup>e</sup>), since he himself was the one chosen. The difficulty is not to be dealt with by the observation that the Greek *ἐξελέξατο* could render the Hebrew *בחר*, whose direct object is often introduced by the preposition *ב*, sometimes translated in the LXX by *ἐν* (Bengel *ad loc.* compares 1 Chron. 28.4, 5). If this were accepted we should have to translate *God chose you*, that is, God chose the early Jewish Christian body (in the event represented by Peter) as his means of reaching the Gentiles. Wilcox (92f.) takes the Greek in this way and remarks on the Semitism (probably Hebrew, possibly Aramaic). There is however no reason to think that Luke is here translating with verbal literalness a Hebrew source; see below on vv. 16–18 where James quotes the LXX in a passage where it differs from the Hebrew. Peter is speaking of the divine choice that gave him a special task, and it is better to take the object of *ἐξελέξατο* to be the accusative and infinitive clause *ἀκούοντα τὰ ἔθνη ... καὶ πορευόμενα ἐν ὑμῖν* will mean that God chose among *you* (Christians, or perhaps apostles), that is, to the exclusion of the rest of *you*, that the Gentiles should hear and believe the Gospel through *my* mouth. Johnson (261) takes τὰ ἔθνη to be the direct object of *ἐξελέξατο*: God chose the Gentiles to hear the message ... This is not impossible, and gives an interesting oxymoron: God chose the un-chosen people ... But the order of words makes this seem improbable.

In this sentence the first phrase (in Greek) is emphatic. Peter has a special right to be heard in the debate because, as all are aware, it was through him that the word of the Gospel (for this expression there is no parallel in Acts, or elsewhere in the NT, but cf. Col. 1.5, in Acts

*εὐαγγέλιον* occurs only here and at 20.24) was first communicated to the Gentiles. The reference is evidently to the story of Cornelius, which is regarded as preceding not only the preaching to the *Ἑλληνισταί* in 11.20 but also Philip's preaching to the Samaritans and to the Ethiopians in ch. 8. It is hard to know whether this claim rests upon Luke's own understanding of the history or is based upon a memory or tradition of what Peter was believed to have said, whether at the Council or on some other occasion. For the editorial processes that underlie Luke's narrative see pp. 710–12.

What had been required of the Gentiles was that they should hear and believe the Gospel, not that they should be circumcised or commit themselves to observance of the Law.

The verse affirms the absolute priority if not the primacy of Peter in the Gentile mission. One might be inclined to suspect an anti-Pauline interest here, were it not that Luke goes on to fill the rest of his book with material that depicts Paul as the leader in this work, whereas Peter, after this assertion of God's choice of him, disappears. It may be that the motive is 'not only but also'; Paul may have been the greatest but Peter was the first. The two must not be set over against each other. This would accord with the eiranic interest of Luke (displayed not least in this chapter), as also perhaps would his silence regarding the rest of Peter's career, of which some aspects, from a Pauline point of view, were scarcely creditable (Gal. 2.11–18). Luke, through Peter, makes clear that the law-free Gentile mission originated within the apostolic tradition (Schnithals 137).

Peter speaks first; it is not so clear as some (e.g. Roloff 230) think that James was now head of the Jerusalem church.

8. For *καθόλοντων* see on 1.24; there the term is applied (probably) to Christ, here to God. Luke would find no difficulty in the double use of the term. God knew what was in the hearts of Cornelius and his friends and bore witness to them. *μαρτυρεῖν* is used, especially in the passive, as a word describing a person's reputation; cf. e.g. 16.2. Timothy had a good reputation with the brothers. This, in view of the context and the participial clause that follows, though on the right lines will hardly suffice here. If however we ask in respect of what God bore witness to Cornelius the answer is not clear. It might be to the fact that he feared God and practised righteousness, and was thus acceptable to God (10.35); it might be to the fact that he was, though a Gentile, one of the elect; it might be (looking at the matter from the other side) to the fact that he was about to exercise, was already beginning to exercise, faith. The last is probably nearest to Luke's thought. God bore witness to the fact that Cornelius had fulfilled all the conditions (hearing and believing the Word) necessary for being a Christian, and was thus qualified to receive the Holy Spirit.

The participle δοῦς (C E Ψ) ᾗ 1 I<sup>st</sup> add αὐτοῖς; D adds ἐπ' αὐτοῖς) is adverbial: *God bore witness to them in that he gave...* The gift was the visible sign of his approval, or rather the audible sign (10.46): Luke regards inspired speech as the sure sign of the work of the Spirit. It was a sign that placed Cornelius and his company on the same level as Peter and his apostolic colleagues. It was the gift of the Spirit that constituted the apostolic body at the beginning (2.4), and it was manifested in speaking with tongues. The Holy Spirit was given to the Gentiles in Caesarea (10.44) and was described as τὴν γλῶσσαν δοοῦν (11.17). God thus treated them exactly as he had treated Peter and the Eleven (καθὼς καὶ ἡμεῖς).

Speaking with tongues is not the best sign of the Spirit's presence; so Calvin (2.33): 'It seems that the evidence of election, that the Holy Spirit fell on them, is not altogether convincing (minus firmitas).'

9. God gave them the same gift that he gave us (v. 8): that is, οὐθὲν διέκρινεν μεταξύ ἡμῶν τε καὶ αὐτῶν, he made no distinction between us and them, treating both groups, circumcised Jews and uncircumcised Gentiles, alike. Since evidently God did not see fit to require circumcision before bestowing his gifts it was not for men to demand it.

For διακρίνειν see 11.12 (for διακρίνεσθαι, 10.20). With God as the subject and the verb in the active there can be no doubt about the meaning. P<sup>74</sup>, διεκρίναμεν, would have something to commend it were it not that the finite verb is followed by a singular participle, καθελοῖς, which makes the plural impossible.

For οὐθὲν (over against οὐδὲν) see Thackeray (58–62) and M. 2.111f. (also BDR § 33.2, n. 2 and LS 1269, s.v. οὐθεῖς). First found in an inscription of 378 B.C. it [οὐθεῖς] is practically the only form in use throughout the Greek-speaking world during iif/B.C. and the first half of ii/B.C. In 132 B.C. the δ forms begin again to reassert themselves, and the period from that date to about 100 B.C. appears to have been one of transition, when the δ and θ forms are found side by side in the same documents. For i/B.C. we are in the dark, but in i/A.D. we find that οὐθεῖς has completely regained its ascendancy' (Thackeray 58). In the NT forms with θ occur at Lk 22.35; 23.14; Acts 15.9; 19.27; 26.26; 27.33 (αὐθὲν); 1 Cor. 13.2, thus almost always in Luke-Acts, and never without textual variation. According to Moulton (loc. cit.), 'There has been a re-formation οὐθ' εἰς, with δ + h producing θ.' There is an inconclusive note in MD 4.16f. There seems to be no specific reason why Luke should have chosen to use this form of the word at this place, though it may mean that he drew Peter's words from a source. It is however impossible to regard all the passages cited above as derived from a single source; they are not connected with one another.

God's decision to make no distinction between Jew and Gentile

was expressed in the act (καθαρίσας, aorist) of cleansing their hearts. There is no parallel to this in Acts. The adjective καθαρός occurs at 18.6; 20.26; each time with reference to Paul's innocence in his relations with others—Jews in Corinth, Christians in Ephesus. καθαρίσκειν occurs in the Cornelius story (10.15) and its repetition (11.9), in the injunction with which Peter's vision closes: What God has cleansed (ἐκαθάρασε), do not you count common. Here, though the reference is to the Cornelius story, the meaning appears to be different. In the story (as Luke tells it—for the question whether the vision and the visit to Cornelius originally belonged together see I.493f., 496f.) the cleansing is presumably anterior to Peter's entry into Cornelius's house: 'You must not consider Cornelius and his house unclean; God has cleansed them.' Here in ch. 15 the cleansing takes place in view of the faith generated in Cornelius as he hears the word: τῇ πίστει (though Knowing (319) takes it to refer to the (Christian) faith) in v. 9 must be interpreted in terms of πιστεύουσα in v. 7. It is by faith (not by circumcision or other legal works) that God's gift of the Spirit and of cleansing is received. The distinction is real but it is doubtful whether it would occur to Luke. Cornelius had been admitted to the cleansed people of God, and without legal requirement; that was all that mattered.

In the story, the mark of Cornelius's acceptance was baptism (10.47f.; cf. 11.17). Baptism was a bath and could therefore be associated with cleansing; cf. 22.16. This is not however an image that Luke regularly uses (for him baptism is primarily a rite of initiation), and the cleansing of the heart probably means for him the forgiveness of sins (cf. 13.38f.) and inward renewal with a view to future obedience. Baptism is not viewed as the Christian replacement of circumcision.

The notion of inward cleansing is known in antiquity, also in circles that are not notably religious; thus Lucretius 6.23, Veridicis igitur purgavit pectora dictis; Xenophon, *Symposium* 1.4, ... ἀνθρώπων ἐκκεκαθαμένους τὰς ψυχὰς.

10. οὖν οὖν begins to bring the brief speech to its conclusion with a rhetorical question that leads to a *reductio ad absurdum*. *Why do you...?* means *You ought not to...* It is absurd to expect Gentiles to put up with what we Jews cannot endure.

τί περιέχετε τὸν θεόν; The thought appears to be that God has already, by his action, made clear that it is his intention to incorporate the Gentiles as they are—without circumcision or any other legal observance—in his people, and that to hinder their reception by legal stipulation is wantonly to provoke him. For this use of περιέχειν cf. e.g. Exod. 17.2, τί λοιδογεῖστέ μου, καὶ τί περιέχετε κύριον; Men are seeing 'how far they can go' with God, insisting on that which is plainly contrary to his will. In this case their action

would be 'eine Herausforderung Gottes, der durch die in Jerusalem bekannte Offenbarung im Hause des Cornelius die Gesetzestreue der Heidenchristen als seinem Willen entsprechend erwiesen hatte' (H. Seesemann in *JWNT* 6.33). This use of *πρωτεύειν* is almost exclusively biblical, but BA (1291), who understand it in a slightly different way, quote Herodotus 6.86.3 (6.86 γ.2 in *OCT*), ἡ δὲ Πιθίη ἐπεὶ τὸ πρῶτον τοῖ θεοῖ καὶ τὸ πρῶτον ἰσοὺ δύνανθα. Cf. Chrysostom (*Homily* 32.1): τὴ πρωτεύετε τὸν θεὸν ὡς οὐκ ἰσχύοντα σὺν αὐτῷ; ἀγα ἀποστόλοις ἐστὶ τὸ τὸν νόμον ἐλαττεῖν.

The construction continues with the infinitive, ἐπιτελεῖν, which Bruce (1.293) describes as epexegetic, and Zerwick (§ 392) explains as equivalent to a gerundive: 'Quid ientatis Deum ἐπιτελεῖν ἔργον = *imponendo* iugum super cervices . . .'. M. 3.136 follows this; cf. BDR § 391.4, n. 8. The Vulgate, translating literally, has *imponere*, τὸν here retains something of its demonstrative force; these (Gentile) disciples.

Rabbinic literature uses the word *yoke*, *עול*, but not as it is used here. See e.g. Aboth 3.5, He that takes upon himself the yoke of the Law (עול תורה), from him shall be taken away the yoke of the kingdom (עול מלכות) (that is, oppression by worldly authority). Thus the yoke of the Law, the obligation to obey it, is a blessing and a privilege. Peter takes it otherwise. In other passages of the NT ἔργον has a bad sense. At 1 Tim. 6.1 slaves are described as being ὑποῦν ἔργον, and the image is used theologically at Gal. 5.1 (μὴ πάλιν ὑποῦν δουλείαν ἐνέχεσθε); cf. Barnabas 2.6; the new law (ὁ καινὸς νόμος) of Christ is ἀνεῦ ἔργου ἀνέγκη; but cf. also 1 Clement 16.17: We have come ὑπο τὸν ἔργον τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ, which recalls Mt. 11.29f.

Peter claims that to require circumcision and legal observance from Gentile converts would be to lay upon their necks a yoke ὃν οὐτε οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν οὐτε ἡμεῖς ἰσχύσαμεν βαρύναι, to demand of them something that Jews themselves could neither endure nor achieve. Cf. Mt. 23.4. This does not agree with the attitude to the yoke of Torah quoted above—it was a privilege and joy; and Paul claims to have fulfilled the Law completely (Phil. 3.6). He was also well aware of Jewish Christians who continued to feel and to respond to its attraction. Conzelmann (83), noting these facts, argues that Luke was writing about something that he did not himself know at first hand. The controversy, when he wrote, lay in the past, and he did not fully understand the point at issue. Only a minimum of legal requirement now remained for any Christian, and Luke was unable to believe that there ever were Christians who loved the Law, and some who wished to impose it on Gentiles. If Peter really felt like this about the Law—that it was an intolerable burden—why did not he and his fellow Jewish Christians themselves give it up? Indeed, if Jews in general (οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν, not only the Christians but earlier

generations) found the Law insupportable how did it survive, and why was it painstakingly developed and interpreted in halakah and haggadah? Haenchen (429) similarly thinks that Peter is made to give the views not of his own but of Luke's time and environment; so also e.g. Weiser (381). This conclusion may be correct, but it is certainly an oversimplification. Paul, who had observed the Law, was a Pharisee (Phil. 3.5; cf. Acts 23.6; also 22.3), as were those who have given us the rabbinic literature. We have no reason to think that Peter was a Pharisee; he may well have been an *'am ha-'ares*, and was a Galilean into the bargain. Perhaps he was one of those Jews who made no serious attempt to keep the Law. His opinion may reflect also the views of liberal Hellenistic Jews, who, though they are to be distinguished from Paul, contributed to the Gentile mission. According to Schille (320), Peter represents 'die Anschauung der hellenistischen Kirche'. This again does not say all that is to be said. According to 10.14 and 11.8 Peter claimed that he had never touched unclean food (with the probability that one who was scrupulous in this respect would not be negligent in others). It is in agreement with this, or at least not in disagreement, that according to Gal. 2.12 he withdrew himself from table-fellowship with Gentiles. It is impossible to save the historicity of this speech (or at any rate this part of it) and Peter's reaction to the animal vision in ch. 10, even if some variability in Peter's character (attested by Gal. 2.12-15 as well as in the gospels) is taken into account. He is described here as something of a Paulinist, though the Paulinism is not accurately portrayed. That Luke should describe him in this way must cast some doubt on the view that towards the end of the century there was an influential minority of Jewish Christians.

This is the only place in Luke-Acts where βαρύνειν has the meaning *endure*, *put up with* (see J. L. Nolland in *NTS* 27 (1980-1), 105-115), but ἰσχύειν is a Lucan word: Lk. 8 times; Acts 6, rest of the NT 14.

11. ἀλλὰ implies, 'No, indeed, we could not do this, but on the contrary . . .'.  
The language of the verse is superficially Pauline (see on v. 10) but lacks Paul's precision. 'Paulinische Begriffe werden von Lukas übernommen, aber nicht die paulinische Theologie, welche sich dieser Begriffe bedient' (Haenchen 429). *The grace of the Lord Jesus* (C D Ψ 33 36 453 945 1175 1739 pc it sy<sup>p</sup> bo<sup>96</sup> It<sup>m</sup> add Xq<sup>1070</sup>) recalls 2 Cor. 8.9, but receives no definition. The general sense however is clear. Whatever precisely Luke may have understood by χάρις it did not mean works of the Law. And διὰ τῆς χάριτος stands emphatically at the beginning of the sentence, though it is probably to be connected with σωθῆναι rather than with πιστεύουεν (the third time a word of this root appears in this short speech); the latter

generations) found the Law insupportable how did it survive, and why was it painstakingly developed and interpreted in halakah and haggadah? Haenchen (429) similarly thinks that Peter is made to give the views not of his own but of Luke's time and environment; so also e.g. Weiser (381). This conclusion may be correct, but it is certainly an oversimplification. Paul, who had observed the Law, was a Pharisee (Phil. 3.5; cf. Acts 23.6; also 22.3), as were those who have given us the rabbinic literature. We have no reason to think that Peter was a Pharisee; he may well have been an *'am ha-'ares*, and was a Galilean into the bargain. Perhaps he was one of those Jews who made no serious attempt to keep the Law. His opinion may reflect also the views of liberal Hellenistic Jews, who, though they are to be distinguished from Paul, contributed to the Gentile mission. According to Schille (320), Peter represents 'die Anschauung der hellenistischen Kirche'. This again does not say all that is to be said. According to 10.14 and 11.8 Peter claimed that he had never touched unclean food (with the probability that one who was scrupulous in this respect would not be negligent in others). It is in agreement with this, or at least not in disagreement, that according to Gal. 2.12 he withdrew himself from table-fellowship with Gentiles. It is impossible to save the historicity of this speech (or at any rate this part of it) and Peter's reaction to the animal vision in ch. 10, even if some variability in Peter's character (attested by Gal. 2.12-15 as well as in the gospels) is taken into account. He is described here as something of a Paulinist, though the Paulinism is not accurately portrayed. That Luke should describe him in this way must cast some doubt on the view that towards the end of the century there was an influential minority of Jewish Christians.

connection however is not impossible. Cf. 13.48; faith itself is of the Lord's gracious appointment.

It is to be observed (see the note on 15.1 and p. 696) that in this verse the theme of the Council is still (not rules for table fellowship but) salvation and the conditions on which salvation may be received. 'De Salute agebatur' (Bengel 449). The tense of σωθήναι does not determine the time at which salvation is thought to take place. Past, present, and future are all possible: We believe *that we have been saved*, *that we shall be saved*, or even as a general proposition, We believe *that we are saved*. It is however probable that Luke here uses a construction whereby 'Verbs and expressions signifying *to hope*, *to expect*, *to promise*, and the like, after which the Infinitive in indirect discourse would naturally be in the Future . . . as representing a Future Indicative of the direct discourse, sometimes take the Aorist (as well as the Present) Infinitive' (Goodwin, *Moods and Tenses* § 23.2). This however, though probable, is not certain, because the construction normally applies only in cases where the main verb itself points clearly to the future, and πικτεῖν does not necessarily do this. See Nolland, as on v. 10.

In καὶ ὅν τοῦτον χάριτι καὶ ἡμῖν, ἐκείνοι is most naturally taken to refer to those (the Gentile believers) to whom the Holy Spirit has already been said to have been given χάρις καὶ ἡμῖν. The parallelism between them and us would then be expressed in two ways: the Holy Spirit was given to them as to us; salvation comes to us as to them, by grace through faith. This is probably what Luke intends, but the grammatically nearest antecedent to ἐκείνοι is οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν, if this is regarded as determinative, the point would be that the saints of the OT, prophets and the like, were saved by faith, and we are, or shall be, saved in the same way, apart from legal works. This was the view of Augustine (*Contra duas Epistolae Pelagianorum* 1.21(39), . . . ut eadem gratia Jesu Christi salvi facti credantur antiqui). Calvin (2.42), and Bengel (449). On either view the parallel is to be found neither in *believed* nor in *saved* alone but in the combination of the two.

According to Pesch 2.78 this passage shows the fundamental agreement between Peter and Paul (cf. Gal. 2.15f.). It does so only if the opinions expressed here are correctly ascribed to Peter; it is certainly true that Luke makes Peter speak—more or less—like Paul. Bruce (1.295) quotes the opinion of Ramsay (*Paul the Traveler* 164) who looks at the matter from a different angle and uses it to prove that Gal. 2.11f. cannot have happened after the Council because it would make Peter guilty of a 'meaningless tergiversation'. This is quite unconvincing, for (a) tergiversation is precisely the accusation Paul levels against Peter, and (b) whatever the relation between Gal. 2.11f. and the Council the event in Antioch must have happened after the Cornelius episode.

Peter (as represented by Luke) concludes his argument that by his actions God himself has made clear that Gentiles who believe are acceptable to him, and that he is prepared to bestow his gifts upon them without any condition in addition to their faith. If this is so, who are even apostles to impose conditions when God requires none? This is as far as Peter goes; he, and Luke, do not see that it is implied (Roloff 231) that Jewish Christians also have given up the Law as a means of salvation. It is fair to add, with Marshall (250), 'What Peter disputed was thus the need to obey the law in order to be saved; whether Jews kept it for other reasons was a secondary matter.'

12. Ἐοίκαμεν δὲ πᾶν τὸ πᾶθος. Luke presumably means that Peter's speech silenced the ἑτήρους of v. 7. The πᾶθος is probably the mass of the people (cf. the use of ἐκκλησία in 15.4, 22) as distinct from the apostles and elders, rather than the whole company of apostles and elders. The distinction is made clear in the reading of D (1) sy<sup>ms</sup>, συγκαταβήμενον δὲ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων τοῖς ὑπο τοῦ Πέτρου εἰρημένοις εἰσὶν πᾶν τὸ πᾶθος. Luke could mean simply that the company were silenced, but probably intends to suggest that they were convinced and agreed. See the long quotation from Musonius Rufus given by P. W. van der Horst in *NovT* 16 (1974), 309.

With ἦκουον Luke forgets that he has used the singular εἰσὶν with a noun of multitude, πᾶθος; or rather, picturing the occasion, thinks of a general silence, and of listening individuals, each intent on the story that Barnabas and Paul had to tell.

With ἐξηγομένων cf. ἐκδηγοῦμενοι in 15.3. There is no significant difference in meaning. ἐξηγ. is more frequently used in Acts (10.8; 15.12, 14; 21.19, always in the sense of narrating events) than ἐκδηγ. (13.41, quoting Hab. 1.5; 15.3), and, it seems, in Greek literature generally. In 15.3 Paul and Barnabas recount the conversion of the Gentiles, in the present verse the *signs and portents* that God had done among the Gentiles. Luke is probably thinking of essentially the same account (cf. 14.27), but the occurrence of signs and portents gives it greater probative value since it shows God's approval. No details are given; Luke expects the narrative of chs. 13 and 14 to be in his readers' minds, though these chapters do not contain many signs and portents. σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα is one of Luke's standard phrases (2.19, 22, 43; 4.30; 5.12; 6.8; 7.36; 14.3) and it slips in; he is responsible for the verse in its present form. The point here is that the signs and portents were done ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν. Haenchen (121) makes the point that since Luke lacks Paul's theological justification of the Gentile mission he is obliged to fall back on miracles. In fact, Luke has several ways of justifying the mission—Peter's argument that God has treated Jews and Gentiles alike, and James's argument (see below) from Scripture; it is

paradoxical that Paul should be left with miracles. Cf. however Rom. 15.19; 2 Cor. 12.12; Gal. 3.5. Stählin (203) thinks that the miracles were 'eine wichtige Form der Verkündigung'; Luke might have agreed, but it is doubtful whether Paul would have done so. The most that can be said is 'dass Gott zu dem Missionswerke des Paulus sein Ja gesprochen hat' (Baumfreund 191).

Bultmann (*Exegetica* 417 = *FS T. W. Manson* 72f. + n. 6) thinks that v. 12, like all the other references to Paul in 15.1-35, was inserted into a source that did not originally contain it. Paul and Barnabas were not present at the Jerusalem meeting that issued the Decree of 15.29. On this question see p. 710 and below; there is no difficulty in conjecturing a source that read ἐστὶν οὖν δὲ πᾶν τὸ πλῆθος, καὶ ἀπεκρίθη Ἰάκωβος. 'Die Sätze, in denen von Paulus und Barnabas die Rede ist, lassen sich leicht herushoben: V. 2 (es würde genügen: ἐταῖρον ἀναβαλεῖν τινὰ ἐξ αὐτῶν πρὸς πλ.), 3-5, 12, das οὖν τῷ Παύλῳ καὶ Βαρναβᾷ in V. 22; V. 25f.—Vgl. W. Bousset, *ZNW* 14 (1913), S. 156-162' (Bultmann). On the other hand Pesch (2.79) thinks that the order Barnabas and Paul does not suggest the hand of an interpolator. If Luke did insert the references to Paul and Barnabas this could have been on one or both of two grounds. (a) He knew a tradition which (correctly) recorded that the two had taken part in a conference at Jerusalem (cf. Gal 2.1-10), and (b) he needed in his record of the Council representatives of those whom he describes as Hellenists (6.1; see the note). He seems to have regarded Paul and Barnabas as representatives of the movement that began with, or was notably represented by, Stephen.

13. μετὰ δὲ τὸ σπληναὺς αὐτοῦς may be part of an addition made by Luke. For this possibility—it is no more—see on v. 12. ἐστὶν οὖν had been used in the introduction of Barnabas and Paul; James had now to be introduced, and the verb σπληναὺς was in Luke's mind and reused.

The introduction of James is slightly more formal in D<sup>sy</sup>: ὁνομαζόμενος (cf. v. 7) Ἰάκωβος εἰπεν. Luke does not tell us who is intended by the name James. Presumably he is the James of 12.17—evidently a person of such consequence that he needs no description; Luke's readers are sure to know who is meant. It is no doubt he who appears again at 21.18, again as a leading figure among the Jerusalem Christians. A James is mentioned among the brothers of Jesus (Mk 6.3), and as a witness of the resurrection (1 Cor 15.7). It is very probably the same James who plays an active role in Galatians; he was the only notable figure, in addition to Peter, seen by Paul on his first visit to Jerusalem (Gal 1.19); he was one of those who bore the title στῆλαι (2.9—with Cephas and John) but made no contribution to Paul's Gospel or his authority (2.6), rather recognizing his commission (2.7, 8). It was persons who came from James

who induced Peter to change his attitude in Antioch (2.12). The only other material worth taking seriously is provided by the accounts of the death of the Lord's brother in Josephus, *Ant.* 20.200, and in Hegesippus, quoted by Eusebius, *HE* 2.23.4-18. The latter especially suggests that the martyr had a great reputation for Jewish piety. Whether, and to what extent, we can also use the Epistle of James is a disputed question. On all this material see W. Pratscher, *Der Herrenbruder Jakobus und die Jakobustradition* (Göttingen, 1987); also Benoit (2.289, cf. 254). James seems at this point to be in agreement with Peter, Paul, and Barnabas. Whether the evidence of 21.18 and of Galatians confirms or contradicts this is a question that cannot be avoided.

ἀνδρες ἀδελφοί. For this mode of address cf. 1.16. Sometimes it means Fellow Christians, sometimes Fellow Jews; here it could mean either—or both.

ἀκούσατέ μου. According to Roloff (231) this address is a mark of authority; cf. Stählin 203. This is not necessarily so; cf. 2.22; 7.2; 13.16; 22.1. According to W. Dieterich (*Das Petrusbild der lukanischen Schriften* (Stuttgart, 1972), 317), James's is an Erwiderungsrede; it was not Peter who initiated the mission but God himself. This seems however to be what Peter himself says (ἐξεδέξατο ὁ θεός, v. 7).

14. Συμεὼν, 'Jacobus, Hebraeorum apostolus, Hebraico nomine Petrus appellat' (Bengel 449). Cf. 2 Pet. 1.1; this form, which recalls the Hebrew פֶּטְרוֹן, was probably intended to give the passage a Semitic air, regarded as suitable for James. Simon Peter, who had just spoken, is intended; notwithstanding Fitzmyer (*Essays* 108), it is mistaken to see here a reference to Symeon Niger (13.1). Cf. Cullmann (*Petrus* 18). James refers to Peter, not to Barnabas and Paul; this does not prove but is at least consistent with the suggestion that the original source did not contain v. 12; see on that verse.

ἐξηγήσατο. Cf. ἐξηγοῦμενοι (15.3), ἐξηγουμένων (v. 12). The repetition is striking. The word must surely have the same meaning here as in v. 12 and will therefore mean that Peter recorded an event; ἐρεσκεῖν will therefore refer to the conversion of Cornelius (which Peter clearly has in mind in vv. 7-9).

καθὼς has here the very unusual (but see Ep. Aristeas 263; 3 Jn 3) sense, *how*: Symeon has narrated how God ...

With πρῶτον cf. ἀπ' ἡμερῶν ἀρχαίων (v. 7); the event in mind belongs to the beginnings of the Christian story, and was the first of its kind. It is not easy to find a good rendering of ἐρεσκεῖν. Page (177) says that its meaning is not *visit* but *showed regard* or *consideration in taking*. *Begs.* 4.175 says that the meaning is *to make provision for*. There is in fact much to be said for the meaning not uncommon in the LXX and Lk. (see 1.68, 78; 7.16), *visit*,



once into the people of God? Or, The conversion of the Gentiles must wait upon the conversion of the Jews; that is, in practical terms, There must be no such wholesale, indiscriminate, and unregulated admission of the Gentiles as would prejudice or hinder the mission to the Jews? See the brief but clear discussion in Wilson (*Gentiles* 224f.). That the latter view was held is supported by Paul's argument to the contrary in Romans 9–11 (see *Romans* 196–210) as well as by other controversial material in the NT (e.g. Mt. 10.5f.). It is however unlikely that Luke, who is clearly an enthusiastic supporter of the Gentile mission, and understood the Council as furthering the mission, took James's quotation to bear this meaning. It is not unlikely that the OT passage was in early years understood in one way but was used by Luke and his contemporaries in another. It is also possible that at first only Amos 9.11 was used, in support of the view that the conversion of the Jews must come first; there is no question here of a difference between the Hebrew and Greek texts (as in v. 17). Each predicts a restitution of Israel under a Davidic king, who could be understood to be the Messiah.

There is some support for this in the fact that Amos 9.11 is quoted in the Qumran MSS (see especially Fitzmyer *Essays* 25, 50f., 88). In CD 7.15, 16 (in the course of an interpretation of Amos 5.26; cf. Acts 7.42f.) the words 'I will raise up the fallen tent of David' are quoted, and it is explained that the books of the Law (ספרי התורה) are the king's tent; the king is the community (7.17: קהלת). In 4QFlor. 1.11–13 the fallen tent, which will be raised up, is שוכן דוד, the shoot of David, who will stand up to save Israel (שוכן דוד יצא את ישראל), that is, the Messiah. Fitzmyer (51) says, 'There is, however, no similarity in the use of the text in the three places [two in the Qumran MSS, one in Acts], and adds that 'without any reference to a scion of David he [James] asserts the fulfilment of the verse in the conversion of the Gentiles to the Gospel'. It seems better to see the conversion of the Gentiles in the next verse (not quoted at Qumran; see below); one interpretation (see above) of Amos 9.11 as quoted here does see a reference to the Davidic Messiah. There remains however a marked difference between Acts and the Qumran Florilegium; in the latter it is said that the Shoot of David will be רועה עם דוד, the one who stands with the interpreter of the Law. Acts knows no such second figure beside the Messiah.

This verse is discussed in the light of the Qumran passages by Wilcox (49); it is hard to see why the ἀποστολῶν of Acts should be particularly associated with the Massoretic קהלת, the LXX's ἀποστολῶν with קהלת of CD 7.16. The Messianic interpretation of Amos 9.11 reappears in Sanhedrin 96b–97a, where R. Nahman explains to R. Yitzhak that Bar Naphi is a name of the Messiah, and bases this interpretation (there are others) on Amos 9.11 (where 'that has fallen' is הנפלה, *han-nopheleth*).

For κατασκευμένα (P<sup>74</sup> A C D M), ✠ (B) Ψ 33.326 pc have κατασκευμένα, and E has ἀνεσκευμένα. κατασκευμένα appears also in some MSS of the LXX.

17, 18. Here we may begin with the LXX text of Amos 9.12.

ὅπως ἐκλήρησαν οἱ κατάλοιποι τῶν ἀνθρώπων [A adds, τὸν κύριον], καὶ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, ἐφ' οὓς ἐπικέκληται τὸ ὄνομα μου ἐπ' αὐτούς, λέγει κύριος ὁ θεὸς ὁ ποιῶν τὰύτα.

James (Luke) adds ἄν after ὅπως; this is common in Attic prose and verse but was dropping out of use in the Hellenistic period (though not uncommon in the papyri). It is used also at 3.20; the MS A has it at Amos 9.12, but this is probably a reading back from the NT, as also was τὸν κύριον which provides an object for ἐκλήρησαν. James omits ὁ θεός, probably because he understands κύριος to refer to Christ.

ἐπ' αὐτούς, taking up the relative ἐφ' οὓς, crudely represents the construction of the indeclinable Hebrew relative: upon whom my name has been named, that is, with a view to marking them out as my property. The masculine οὓς, αὐτούς, follows the neuter πάντα τὰ ἔθνη *ad sensum*; 'the Gentiles' signifies a multiplicity of individual human beings. πάντα τὰ ἔθνη is explanatory of οἱ κατάλοιποι τῶν ἀνθρώπων, 'the rest of men', those who are not Jews. What is not clear is whether the relative clause is a limiting or an exclusive definition, that is, whether it means, All the Gentiles upon whom my name has been named, to the exclusion of those over whom it has not been named, or All the Gentiles, upon all of whom my name has been named. It is probable that Luke was prepared to let questions of this kind answer themselves. Cf. 13.48; it became clear who were appointed to eternal life when some believed and others did not. In the same way it would become clear which Gentiles bore God's name and which did not.

Luke's (James's) use of his text is thus clear; but his text is based on the LXX, not on the MT, which differs in several respects. It is translated in RSV: That they may possess (ἵνα) the remnant of Edom (ἀπόλοιπον) and all the nations who are called by my name (ἵνα) (literally, upon whom my name has been called, ἵνα ἐπικληθῶνται), says the Lord who does this. In this Hebrew sentence Amos predicts the dominion of Israel over all other nations, including what is left of Edom, whom God is claiming as his possession. This is not what James and the LXX say. In place of ἵνα, they shall possess, they read ἵνα, they shall seek. Instead of ἀπόλοιπον (the sign of the direct object), they read ἵνα, the Lord. Instead of ἀπόλοιπον, the remnant of Edom, they read, ἀπόλοιπον, the remnant of men, of humanity. In this way the meaning of the verse is almost reversed.

It is clear that neither James nor Luke invented this convenient



should be circumcised and thereafter keep the Law. ἐπιτορεύειν (though without ἐπὶ τὸν θεόν) could be used to describe what was required of Jews (3.19).

The Gentile converts must not be pestered: the context makes clear that this means that demands of full legal observance must not be made.

20. This verse, substantially repeated as adopted by the Council in v. 29 (cf. 21.25), calls for particularly careful examination: it contains noteworthy problems both in text (see, in addition to the note below, Metzger 429–34, with bibliography) and interpretation. James proposes not to cause trouble for the converted Gentiles but ἐπιτορεύειν αὐτοῖς... The precise force of ἐπιτορεύειν is not easy to assess. It may mean no more than to *send a written message*; so Heb. 13.22, where it appears that the content of the message is πρὸς ἀλλήλους. Cf. Thucydides 8.50.2 (ἀγῦπα ἐπιτορεύας, having sent a secret message); also 8.38.3; 8.99.1. More frequently however the word conveys the further meaning of *send written instructions*; not simply a message or exhortation is conveyed but *orders* (usually in writing). 'From the usage of the word in official documents the meaning readily passed over into "instruct", "enjoin"' (MM 245), and passages show that the instructions were normally communicated in writing. That in the present passage ἐπιτορεύειν points to a required course of action is made clear by the infinitive (τοῦ ἐπιτορεύειν) that follows. What cannot be certainly inferred is where the injunction stands on the scale between 'We write with the suggestion that you might consider abstaining...' and 'These are our written instructions: You shall abstain...'. This question must be considered again when we reach (vv. 23–29) the letter that Luke ascribes to the Council. The impression however at this stage is that James (as represented by Luke) wishes to proceed *suaviter in modo*, *fortiter in re*. He wishes to make things as easy as possible for the Gentiles, but there are limits... 'Not to make trouble for them but write to them that they should...' retains the ambiguous feeling in English.

The content of the request, suggestion, or command is expressed by τοῦ with the infinitive. The τοῦ is pleonastic, but characteristic of Luke; cf. 3.12; (5.31); 10.25; 13.47; 21.12; 23.15; 20; 27.1. The middle ἐπιτορεύειν is used with the meaning to *abstain* from a thing or from a course of action at all stages in Greek literature; there is a good example in a second century AD inscription given in *ND* 1.21 (προσάδοσσαν δὲ Διογανῆ τῷ νεωκόρῳ τούτων τῶν μυστηρίων ἐπιτορεύειν). In this inscription and in older Greek generally the verb is used without a preposition (as here, in P<sup>45</sup> N B D 81 1175 pc e p\*; ἀπὸ is supplied by P<sup>74</sup> A C E Ψ 381a).

Four abstentions, described by nouns in the genitive case, are

given in the text of NA<sup>26</sup>. These will be considered first before variant texts are discussed. A number of important Jewish parallels will be found in full in StrB 2.729–39.

(1) ἀλουργμάτων τῶν εἰδώλων. ἀλουργμα is *hapax legomenon* in the Bible and very rare elsewhere. It is derived from ἀλουργεῖν, to *pollute, defile*. This verb occurs four times in the LXX. In Dan. 1.8 it is used in describing Daniel's determination not to allow himself to be defiled by the food and drink served at the table of the king of Babylon. This was food which for a variety of reasons a Jew would be unwilling to touch; it would not have been prepared in the ways required by the Law, it might well consist of the flesh of unclean animals, it was certain that it might not have been paid on it. It is not noted in the context that it might have been offered in sacrifice to a pagan god, or idol (and thus an εἰδωλόθυτον, cf. v. 29). In Mal. 1.7 the verb is used twice (three times in the MSS B N\* A) of the priests who have profaned (φανάξεν; כָּשָׁה 1.6) God's name; they have done this by offering on the altar ἄγρονος ἱδουργμένους. The loaves are defiled because the priests defile the altar (τράπεζα κυρίου ἐξουδυνώμενη ἑορτῇ; כָּלֵה כִּיבַד כִּיבַד וְכָלֵה) and the offering. At Mal. 1.12 the word is used of the altar itself. There is no suggestion that offerings have been made to other gods. Strach 40.29 is difficult: A man who looks (with envy) on another man's table, his life is not to be reckoned life; he will defile his soul (ἀλουργοῦ ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ) with another man's dainties. Again, the context is concerned with food, but not with idolatry; defilement arises because food is the cause of envy and is obtained only by begging (40.28; 'Son, do not live a life of begging; it is better to die than to beg'). That the eating of food sacrificed to idols was a source of defilement was of course a Jewish belief, which no doubt many Jewish Christians continued to hold.

εἰδώλων must be a subjective genitive; the idols cause defilement, but in the word ἀλουργματα there is nothing that would restrict this defilement to that caused by the eating of food that had been sacrificed to the idols. This however is what ἀλουργματα becomes in v. 29 and 21.25; it is a possible but not a necessary meaning of the word. Thus at *The Rest of the Words of Baruch* 7.32(37) Jeremiah ἐβριε διδάσκων αὐτοὺς τοῦ ἀτρέχειν ἐκ τῶν ἀλουργμάτων τῶν ἐθνῶν τῆς Βαβυλώνης. It seems possible that there was an original prohibition of idolatry which (under the influence of such tensions as are apparent in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10) developed into a specific prohibition of εἰδωλόθυτα. Idolatry is forbidden in the OT (e.g. Exod. 20.4, οὐ ποιήσεῖς σκαυτὶ εἰδώλον), and at Lev. 17.7 it is forbidden to offer sacrifice to idols (οὐ θυσιοῦν ἐτι τὰς θυσίας αὐτῶν τοῖς ματαλοῖς; in view of what follows in Acts it is interesting that the verse continues, οἱς αὐτοὶ ἐτρογενέοντο ὄντο αὐτῶν).

(2) τῆς πορνείας (omitted by P<sup>45</sup>, see below). The common meaning of the word is prostitution, fornication, uncleanness; this is borne out by the use of related and compound words, such as πόρνῃ, πόρνος, πορνοποιεῖν, πορνοστός and the like (see LS 1450). A prohibition of πορνεία in this sense is intelligible and appropriate. It is however to be noted that in 1 Cor. 5.1 Paul uses the word πορνεία to describe the act of one who has taken (ἐξεν) his father's wife. This Paul describes as an exceptionally gross case of sexual irregularity. It is expressly forbidden in Lev. 18.8 (ἀδελφότητι γυναικὸς πατρός σου οὐκ ἀποκλήσεις), which occurs in a passage that deals with forbidden degrees of marriage (Lev. 18.6–18). This passage does not use the word πορνεία but it (together with some other regulations for sexual behaviour) is made to apply not only to the native Israelite but also to ὁ πορευόμενος πορεύσας εἰς τὴν γῆν (Lev. 18.26, כְּכִנְיָהּ גֵרִי). It is sometimes supposed (e.g. Schneider 2.183; Weiser 383) that we have here the proposed extension to Gentile Christians of the marriage laws that were (according to Leviticus) to be observed by aliens resident in Palestine. There is however no convincing reason for thinking that πορνεία was ever understood to refer simply to marriage within the forbidden degrees. In 1 Cor. 5.1 (see above) the word signifies a relation that was not adultery (assuming that the father was not alive) and not in the physical sense incest, if the woman was, as is usually supposed, the fornicator's stepmother.

(3) τοῦ πνεύματος (so P<sup>45</sup> N C E M<sup>l</sup> lat sy; the omission of τοῦ, by P<sup>24</sup> A B Ψ 33 81 pc, is not important; for the omission of the whole by D<sup>gig</sup> I<sup>lat</sup> see below), derived from the verb πνέειν, *to choke, strangle, suffocate*, is, literally rendered, *that which is strangled*. H. J. Schoeps (*Paulus* 60) turns this into a more definite picture with 'Tieren, die auf der Jagd mit Schlingen gefangen und getötet worden sind.' It is however extremely difficult to find evidence in Jewish sources for the specific classification by this or any related word of food that must be rejected. The natural Hebrew and Aramaic equivalent is the root פָּרַי, this does not however seem to be much used of animals, though there is an important passage in Philo, *Spec. Leg.* 4.122, where Philo attacks men of the type of Sardanapalus who desire novel kinds of pleasure and prepare meat unfit for the altar (ἀθύρτα) by strangling and throttling (ἀγγοντες καὶ ἀποπνέοντες) the animals. The use of the compound verb may perhaps be taken as an indication that the simple πνέειν was sometimes used in the same way, but we lack direct evidence of this. Moreover, as the context in *De Specialibus Legibus* shows, and as would in any case be deduced from the picture of a snared and strangled animal, the objection to the use of such an animal as food lay in the fact that its blood had not been drained away. That is to say, if this is what πνεύμα means, along with αἷμα (as αἷμα is often understood; see below) it is superfluous.

According to StrB 2.730, πνεύμα includes both, 'sowohl was das AT חַיָּוִי als auch was es נֶפֶשׁ nennt'. These two Hebrew words are conveniently defined in terms of Josephus, *Ant.* 3.260 (ἡρώως τοῦ ταῖν κτόρος ἀνθρώπου ζῆντος τὴν βρώσιν διεκλίσσεν) and of Exod. 22.30 (חַיָּוִי לֹא תֵאָכְלֶה בָּשָׂרָא בְּשַׁרְךָ בְּשַׁרְךָ). This interpretation of πνεύμα has been widely accepted together with the further points involved in the claim (StrB 2.730-4) that in rabbinic use חַיָּוִי came to mean any beast that had not been subjected to the ritually correct slaughtering process (שְׁחִיטָה), and נֶפֶשׁ a beast which, dead or alive, had a disqualifying blemish. The Greek word πνεύμα may have been regularly used and understood in this way, but evidence to prove this is lacking.

(4) τοῦ εἱματος. In the form of the text that we are at present considering this is usually understood in relation to the OT prohibition of the consumption of blood. This appears in the primeval commandment given to Noah (Gen. 9.4) and is repeated in later codes (Lev. 7.26, 27, 17.10-14; Deut. 12.16, 23). But, since loss of blood means loss of life, αἷμα came also to be used of *bloodshed*, in particular, of *murder*. This appears in general narrative and in idioms, such as ἐφ' αἱματι γενέσθαι, 'to avoid trial for murder by going into exile' (LS 38; Demosthenes 21.105; Dittenberger, *Syll.* 1.58.2). See also Sophocles, *Oedipus Tyrannus* 101; Euripides, *Orestes* 285. Since αἷμα can thus mean *bloodshed* it is equivalent to the rabbinic חַיָּוִי נֶפֶשׁ. It must therefore not be too readily assumed that avoidance of blood means avoidance of blood in food, especially since avoidance of πνεύμα (if this means meat improperly slaughtered) would include avoidance of blood, making the specific τοῦ εἱματος (in this sense) redundant.

The textual variations, which have the effect of producing a somewhat different 'draft Decree', will be considered shortly; it will be convenient first to consider several suggestions that have been made regarding the background and origin of James's proposals (and of the Decree as formulated in v. 29). These suggestions are not mutually exclusive.

(a) It may be that the terms of the Decree were thought of as practical considerations bearing on the situation as it could be seen to be arising out of the Christian mission to the Gentile world. The fundamental requirement of the Gentile convert was that he should abandon the religion that he had previously practised; that is, he must abandon the gods he had worshipped, turning his back on idolatry. He must abstain from the spiritual defilement that comes from idolatry. Verse 20 states this in absolute terms: v. 29 and 21.25 make the assumption that to eat εἰδωλόθυτα is to commit idolatry and is probably for most Gentile Christians the way in which they would be most likely to commit it. Jews had long known that the temptation to idolatry came most often through the butcher's shop and the brothel.

Hence what is in effect the command to use only Jewish butchers, where one could be confident that no εἰδωλόθυτα, πικρία, or αἷμα would be sold, and the prohibition of τρογεῖν. It should be noted that such commands, especially the prohibition of idolatry, would be necessary for salvation, and not merely in order to facilitate fellowship between Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians.

(b) The requirements may have been based upon the so-called Noachian precepts, precepts which it was believed were incumbent not only upon Jews but upon all, of whatever race. In their earliest form (Jubilees 7.20) these are 'to observe righteousness, and to cover the shame of their flesh, and to bless their Creator, and honour father and mother, and love their neighbour, and guard their souls from fornication and uncleanness and all iniquity'. These were subsequently developed (evidence is given in full in StrB 3.37f.) into the prohibition of idolatry, blasphemy, murder, incest, stealing, perverting justice, and eating flesh containing blood. Of these the first, third, fourth, and seventh appear (more or less) in James's decree. The parallel is not close, and there is nothing in the text of Acts to call Noah to mind.

(c) A better, and today widely accepted, parallel is to be found in the regulations given in Leviticus 17 and 18 for Gentiles living among Jews. These are directed to 'Any man of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among them (כָּל אִישׁ מִבְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְכָל גֵּר הָרֹבֵץ בְּתוֹכָם, Lev. 17.8). They require that sacrifices must be brought to the door of the tent of meeting (17.8f.); that blood must not be eaten (17.10–14); that what dies of itself or what is torn by beasts (17.15–17) must not be eaten (17.15f.); the forbidden degrees of marriage must be observed (18.6–30). These commands may be said to cover, in Acts, the prohibition of τρογεῖν (if that is understood to mean not fornication in the ordinary sense but forbidden family relationships), πικρίαν (if this is interpreted to mean πικρία and πικρία, and αἷμα (if this means blood as a food and not bloodshed). It cannot be said that the connection is close; see however Stählin (205) Schmithals (139); also Wilson (*Law* 85–102).

(d) A still better background, which fits readily with (a) above, is provided by a group of passages (p. Shebith 35a. 49f.; p. Sanhedrin 21b. 10f.; b. Pesahim 25ab; b. Sanhedrin 74a) in which it is urged that, though in persecution a Jew was not expected to give his life on any minor issue, there were three matters on which compromise was impossible. These were דָּרֵךְ הַדָּבָר, idolatry; דְּבַר שִׁכְרָה, the shedding of blood; and דְּבַר גֵּוֹלָה, incest. Here are what Luke calls the defilements of idols, blood, and τρογεῖν (which includes incest). There is nothing to correspond with the prohibition of πικρίαν; it is hard to supply any motivation for the inclusion of this except the desire to make it easy for Jewish and Gentile Christians to eat together; such food, with εἰδωλόθυτα (readily understood—though

not by Paul—as included in the ἐκλογισμοί), would be objectionable to Jews and no doubt also to many Jewish Christians. See further Wilson (*Law* 68–102). Johnson (273) combines (c) and (d).

The important textual variants in the verse must now be noted.

(a) καὶ τῆς τρογεῖας is omitted by P<sup>45</sup> (not extant at 15.29; 21.25); also (though not noted in the apparatus of NA<sup>25</sup>) by some Ethiopic MSS, and (we may infer) by Origen in c. *Celsus* 8.29, though here Origen is referring to the letter sent by the Council, that is, to v. 29. He speaks of the decision 'to write a letter to the Gentile believers, demanding that they should abstain only from what they called "the essentials" (μὲν αὖτε ὁὕς ἐνὸνταὶ) ἐκλογισμοί'. These are things sacrificed to idols, or things strangled, or blood' (Chadwick 472). Little can be built on this passage, for Origen is dealing with food (and might therefore omit τρογεῖα as irrelevant), and is writing with less than his usual care; for he says that the Council was held at Antioch. It is probably correct to regard the reading of P<sup>45</sup> not as one important witness to an otherwise unknown (Caesarean) text of Acts but as a simple error. See however G. Zuntz, *Opuscula Selecta* (1972), 227–9. It is unwise to use the omission as an argument for an original two-clause decree (P. H. Menoud, *SVTS Bulletin* 2 (1951), 22–8).

(b) καὶ τοῦ πικρίου is omitted by D gig I<sup>ms</sup>. The same omission is found in v. 29 and 21.25; there can be no doubt that it represents another form of the text of the Decree. The omission of an element that is purely ritual, with no ethical bearing whatever, undoubtedly alters the balance of the Decree and has often been held to affect the interpretation that must be given to the reference to *blood*. With πικρίαν, blood suggests a ritual food law; without it, it may more readily be understood as a reference to bloodshed, murder. This is however a double-edged argument. Knowing (325) thought that πικρίαν was omitted because it was thought to be covered by αἷμα, Clark (360) that it was added 'to make it clear that αἷμα referred to diet as in Leviticus xvii. 14, not to homicide'.

(c) After αἷματος the Western text makes a substantial addition: καὶ ὅσα ἐν μὴ θέλουσιν (ὅσα μὴ θέλουσιν, D) αὐτοῖς (ἐαυτοῖς, D) γινώσκειν ἐτέρον μὴ τοῦ ἐν (τοῦ ἐν, D), D 323 945 1739 1891 pc sa I<sup>ms</sup>. This addition of the negative form of the Golden Rule strongly reinforces the ethical effect of the omission (also by the Western text) of πικρίαν.

It has often been maintained that when the Old Uncial text and the Western text are compared we find on the one hand a set of essentially ritual requirements: abstinence from sacrificial food, from fornication (which could be understood to mean forbidden marriages or sacrificial prostitution), from non-kosher food, and from food containing blood; and on the other hand an ethical code, requiring the rejection of idolatry (which, put positively, means adherence to the exclusive worship of the one true God), avoidance of all unchaste

behaviour, avoidance of murder, and obedience to the fundamental moral law, expressed in the Golden Rule. With very few exceptions, textual critics have maintained that the ritual form must be primitive, and have been transformed (by the omission of *πρωτόν*) and the addition of the Golden Rule) into an ethical code, perhaps in the second century, certainly at a time when the older code was no longer understood. There is enough force in this argument to make one prefer the Old Uncial text as Luke's work. As often expressed, however, it is an over-simplification. It can be shown (see *FS* Osborn, 50–59; Taylor 210) not only that the Decree continued for centuries to be observed (and often to be found to require explanation—or explaining away), but that it was interpreted in different ways in different circumstances. Just as the circumstances that evoked it had both ritual and ethical elements, so the Old Uncial Decree had both ritual and ethical elements, especially in the form in which James proposes it, which shows that the real concern in the prohibition of *ἀσυνήματα τῶν εἰδωλῶν* (*εἰδωλόθυτα*) was the avoidance of idolatry itself (and hence the cultivation of true worship), *προσέτα* may have certain specific associations, but it means fornication, and the Decree forbids the sin of fornication. *πρωτόν* does refer to non-kosher food, and this is a non-ethical element in the Decree, but since the consumption of blood is already forbidden in the prohibition of *πρωτόν* it is by no means impossible that blood means murder, violence. It is not surprising that those who accepted the authority of this mixed Decree emphasized sometimes one sometimes the other aspect of it. The Western editor(s) came down strongly on the ethical side.

The Golden Rule, in its positive form, appears in Mt. 7.12; Lk. 6.31. In the Matthean form there is the appended note, 'For this is the law and the prophets. It was already established in Judaism (though mostly used in the negative form) as a summary of man's moral obligation; see e.g. Tobit 4.15 (ὁ μισῆς, μὴ ἐνὶ συνουσίᾳ); b. Shabbath 31a (Hillel: What is hateful (יָד) to yourself, do not to your neighbour); Philo, *Hypothetica* 7.6 (in Eusebius, *Preparatio Evangelica* 8.7.5, ὁ τις παθεῖν ἐχθαίρει, μὴ ποιεῖν αὐτόν). See further Bousset, *RJ* 138; StrB 1.459f.

For the further history of the Decree see H. J. Schoeps, *Theologie und Geschichte des Judentums* (1949), 303; *Aus frühchristlicher Zeit* (1950), 78. See further on v. 29 and 21.25, also above.

21. Moses (as not only the author of the Pentateuch but the founder of the Jewish religion) has (ἐγεν, described by Moule (*IB* 8) as a 'present of past action still in progress' and translated by him as *has had*) from generations of old (this—cf. מִדֹּרֶת דְּרָוִרָה, StrB 2. 739f.—goes further back than ἀπ' ἡμερῶν ἀρχαίων in v. 7) in every city (distributive use of κατὰ; cf. 2.46, and other passages)

those who proclaim him, τοὺς κηρύσσοντας αὐτόν. James thus uses a verb frequently used of the proclamation of the Christian Gospel, the proclamation of Christ (cf. 8.5; 9.20). That there were those who proclaimed Moses as a cult figure is certainly true; see 7.22 and the notes there and on 1.38f. James however explains what he means in the participial clause that follows: Moses is proclaimed in that he is read (aloud) in the synagogues every Sabbath. For the synagogue service see on 13.15. Throughout the Empire, and beyond, wherever there were Jews the words of Moses were heard every week. Cf. Josephus, *Apion* 2.175, ἐκείνης ἡμέρας τῶν ἁγίων ἐργῶν ἀρμενίων ἐπὶ τῇ ἀρχαίᾳ ἐκένουε τοῦ νόμου συλλέγεσθαι καὶ τοῦτον ἀναβῶν ἐκινεῖσθαι; cf. 282. See Bousset (*RJ* 72, 172); Tcherikover (269–332). 'Jewish communities of greater or lesser extent and significance had settled in almost every part of the then civilized world' (*NS* 3.3; for details, 3–86). It may be that the use of κηρύσσειν implies (as it does with Christian preaching) some kind of authority; Moses is not merely read but asserted as an authority, so that what is read (including for example Leviticus 17 and 18) must be obeyed. This inference seems very doubtful.

The sentence begins with *for* (ὅτι), and therefore presumably gives the ground for an earlier statement, but it is not clear which statement it supports. (1) It may look back to v. 19: It is not for us to trouble the Gentiles since Moses already has enough preachers to take his part. Gentiles, moreover, who want the Law can go to the synagogue for it (Williams 184). (2) It may look back to v. 20. It is necessary to lay some obligations on the Gentiles, since Moses has everywhere so many followers—so many observant Jews. (3) It may look back to vv. 15–18: We can see that Amos's prophecy is already being fulfilled in the large number of those who preach the Law. Dibelius (92) suggests that v. 21 may be a marginal gloss on the final words of the quotation. There is no serious basis for this suggestion, and as it stands v. 21 is too remote from the quotation for a reference to it to be likely. The general tone of James's speech is favourable to Gentiles and we may therefore accept (1), but the whole passage is so obscure that it may be that Luke intended both (1) and (2). It is not necessary to trouble the Gentiles seriously (by demanding circumcision) but it is necessary to trouble them a little (by the Decree). Alternatively, Luke may be placing traditional material in a new setting and thereby giving it a new meaning. He is no doubt responsible for James's speech as it now lies before us, but it is improbable that he simply invented it—the Decree itself is certainly traditional, though it was not (see p. 712) James's work. If the Decree is omitted the speech would impose no conditions upon Gentiles and connection (1) would then be virtually the only possibility, though it might be combined with Filson's observation, 'It seems clear from Acts 15.21 that [James] expected synagogue worship to go on in

every city and that he also expected Jewish Christians to keep the Mosaic Law' (*Decades* 82). Perhaps somewhat less than clear, see the good discussion by Wilson (*Law* 83f.).

Calvin's comment (2.51f.) is worth quoting: 'He warns that it is not possible for the ceremonies to be abolished so quickly, as if at one fell swoop, because the Jews had already been accustomed to the teaching of the Law for many generations, and Moses had his preachers; that agreement therefore must be gained for a short time until the freedom, procured by Christ, should gradually be more clearly understood, in other words, as the common saying goes, that the ceremonies had to be buried with some decency.' In the early church there were those, notably Paul, who were quick to see the theological principle involved in every arrangement, but no doubt there were many more, who may or may not have included James but certainly included Luke, who were happy to proceed on (what seemed to be) common-sense lines.

22. *The apostles and elders* were those who had met to consider the question raised at Antioch (v. 6). Here they meet *ὁν δὴ τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ*, the whole body of Christians, that is, of the Jerusalem church; the church of Antioch had sent only a small delegation (15.2), and no other church seems to have been represented. The rank and file Christians have disappeared in the next verse (but see the note there on *ἀδελφοί*) and are given no share in the writing of the Council's letter. It goes too far to say, 'Clearly only the presence of the congregation gave legal validity to the resolution, although the members of the congregation did not take part in the discussion and did not vote in the decision' (B. Reicke, in Stendahl, *Scrolls* 146). The report of the discussion is extremely scanty and no vote is recorded. Luke is in any case not thinking in terms of legal validity; what was important was the claim (v. 28) that the Holy Spirit had directed the proceedings. For comparison of this 'democratic' element with the structure of the Qumran community see Braun 2.328f. The representation of monarchical, oligarchical, and democratic elements in the NT church needs, as Braun shows, qualification; categorization in such ready-made terms is dangerous.

The assembled company decided (*ἔδοξε*; the impersonal use of this verb, very common in 'official' Greek, appears in the NT at Lk. 1.3; Acts 15.22, 25, 28, 34; 25.27; Heb. 12.10—a Lucan characteristic) to write to the church at Antioch, sending the message by men whom they chose to accompany Paul and Barnabas, *ἀνδράς* is made precise by the appositional *ἰουδαῖν τοῦ καλοῦμενον* (cf. e.g. 1.23) *Βαρνάβαν* (the reading of D, *Βαρνάβαν*, is no more than an unfortunate slip of the pen) *καὶ Σίλαν*. The name Judas occurs several times in Acts, Judas Barsabbas (for this surname, used also of Joseph, see on 1.23) only in the present context, at vv. 22, 27, 32, and

34 (si v.l.). Nothing else is known of him. Silas becomes an important companion for Paul, in succession to Barnabas: see on vv. 22, 27, 32, 34, (si v.l.), 40; 16.19, 25, 29; 17.4, 10, 14, 15, 18.5. He is sometimes identified with the Silvanus (perhaps a latinized form of the Semitic שילאן) of the Pauline epistles (2 Cor. 1.19; 1 Thess. 1.1; 2 Thess. 1.1), also with the Silvanus of 1 Pet. 5.12, though he can hardly be invoked as responsible for the good Greek of that epistle; he was (according to the present verse) a leading member of the Jerusalem church, and there is no more ground for supposing him capable of stylish Greek than Peter himself. The identification with Paul's Silvanus is probable. For the opposite view, a distinction between two men both bearing the name Silas, the identification of one of them with Titus, the identification of Titus with Luke, and some other curiosities, see the article on Silas by P. W. Schmiedel, in *EBib* 4514-21.

For *ἐκλεξαμένους*, (P<sup>75</sup>) 33 323 614 945 1739 *pc* (sy<sup>p</sup>) have *ἐκλεξαμένους*, which agrees with the case of *τοῖς ἀποστόλοις καὶ τοῖς πρεσβυτέροις*. In such a sentence Greek usage is tolerant of either case; see Zerwick § 394; BDR § 410 n. 2.

*ἡγούμενος* (present participle of *ἡγείσθαι*) was on the way to becoming a noun; cf. 7.10; 14.12; and see LS 763, s.v. II 3, with many papyrus references; also MM 277. One may guess that Judas and Silas were among the *πρεσβυτέροις*.

23. *γράφαντες* is another false concord (cf. *ἐκλεξαμένους* in v. 22), perhaps better described as anacoluthon; so BDR § 468.2, n. 3, who point out that Luke continues as if he had written *οἱ ἀπ. καὶ οἱ πρεσβ. ἐβουλεύσαντο . . . πείναι . . . γράψαντες*, and draw attention to a close and interesting parallel in Thucydides 3.36.2 (*ἔδοξε αὐτοῖς . . . ἀποκτείναι . . . ἐπικρατοῦντες . . .*).

There is considerable textual confusion in the opening words of the verse, *διὰ χειρὸς αὐτῶν* may be (*Begs.* 4.179) a Semitism (□□□) but it is common in Acts and there is no special reason why the short and simple text of P<sup>45vid</sup> P<sup>75</sup> A B *pc* bo (*γράφαντες διὰ χειρὸς αὐτῶν*) should have caused offence to copyists. But *κ<sup>ε</sup> E* (33) *ἢ sy<sup>h</sup>* add *τῶδε* as an object for *γράφαντες*. (C) D *gig w* (sy<sup>p</sup>) (sa) have *γρ. ἐπιστολὴν διὰ χ. αὐ. πρεσβυτέρων τῶδε*. 614 *pc sy<sup>int</sup>* have *γρ. διὰ χ. αὐ. ἐπιστολὴν καὶ πείναι πρεσβυτέρων τῶδε*. *ἢ* has *γρ. ἐπιστολὴν διὰ χ. αὐ. ἐχούσαν τὸν τύπον τούτου*. It is easy to understand the addition of a simple object for *γράφαντες*, not easy to understand the elaboration and variety. There seems to be no better explanation than that copyists and editors recognized and wished to emphasize the central importance that the letter of vv. 23-29 has in Acts.

On the use and construction of *πρεσβεῖν* see in addition to the *lexica* BDR § 308 n. 5.



(rather than 'some sent from us'). There is much to be said for omitting ἐξ ἐκθόνων. See Metzger (436).

25. The report of trouble in Antioch led to a decision in Jerusalem: ἐδοξε ἡτι. The impersonal use of ἐδοξε occurs twice in this letter (also v. 28). It is possible (see above) that Luke found the whole letter extant in this form and borrowed the expression for narrative use in v. 22; perhaps more likely that he himself elected to use it in all these sentences; it was frequently used to introduce decrees. 'Frequently of a public resolution... especially in decrees and the like' (LS 242, s.v. II 4b, with many illustrations, including Thucydides 4.118.7, ἐδοξε τῷ δήμῳ (see the whole paragraph); Aristophanes, *Thesmophoriazousae* 372 (379), ἐδοξε τῇ βουλῇ). Cf. also Josephus, *Ant.* 16.163. Luke knows and uses the right word for his purpose, which is rather to utter a decree than to express an opinion.

δοθῆναι is a Lucan word, often used by Luke (see on 1.14) with more than its usual meaning of unanimity, denoting also physical assembly; here it probably has both meanings. The apostles and elders met and reached a common mind. This means that, according to Luke, even the extremists agreed (Wilson, *Law* 107).

ἐκ ἐξουμένων. In a similar sentence in v. 22 the accusative was used, though in each case there is textual variation. Here the dative is read by P<sup>45</sup>vid AB L Ψ 33 81 614 945 1175 1739 pm, the accusative by N C D E H P 36 323 1241 2495 pm. See Metzger (437), who finds the textual question 'difficult to decide'; it looks as if he, against the majority of his committee, preferred the accusative. Barnabas and Paul (the order may be significant—Barnabas was an early Jerusalem disciple; cf. v. 12) are τοῖς ἀγαπητοῖς B. καὶ Π. It is stressed that there is no division between the Jerusalem apostles and the Antiochene missionaries. The reading of D (ἡμῶν, for ἡμῶν) might suggest a different attitude ('Dear to you, not necessarily so to us'), but is probably a simple error. The two pronouns were identical in pronunciation and were often confused. On the relation between Paul and the Jerusalem church see Introduction, pp. xxxix–xli, et al.

26. Further description of Barnabas and Paul follows. They are ἀνθρώποις παραδεδομένοι τὰς ψυχὰς αὐτῶν. At first glance this might be taken to mean, Men who have given their lives, but this is obviously not the sense intended. Accordingly the suggestion has been made that the meaning is, Men who have hazarded their lives; so LS 1308, but with no other example of this meaning, which is rightly judged by *Begs.* 4.180 to be 'indefensible'. The phrase must mean, They have devoted their lives (so apparently BA 1242, 'Menschen, die ihr Leben für den Namen des Herrn hingegeben haben'); and this, though followed in Greek by ὅτι, must in English be followed by, to the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Barnabas and Paul are Christians of unreserved devotion, τὰς ψυχὰς αὐτῶν is used

as a reflexive. Cf. Thucydides 5.16.3, τύχη αὐτὸν παραδίδωσι, trust oneself to fortune. StrB (2.740) seem to take the expression to mean 'give one's life for', since they equate it with γὰρ ψῆν, but Mekhila Exod. 20.6 (75b) which they quote seems rather to mean 'devote': מָנָה עַל פְּשַׁע מִתְנַחֵם.

At the end of the verse D E 614 pc 1 sy<sup>hmg</sup> add εἰς πάντα πειρασμόν. This probably reflects the view that the text as it stood implied, They have handed over their lives to death, which needed correction to, They have handed over their lives to every (kind of) trial. Cf. Sirach 2.1.

27. οὖν connects with v. 25. Since it was decided to send men with Barnabas and Paul we have therefore now sent ... The perfect ἀπεστάλαξαν implies that Judas and Silas (see v. 22) are now on their way, presumably bearing the letter. They are however not merely bearers but will confirm its contents (τὰ αὐτὰ, the same things that the letter contains, especially the disavowing of the trouble-makers). Haenchen (436) comments: 'Der Leser weiss ja schon, was das Dekret enthalten wird, die Briefempfänger aber noch nicht. Man sieht, dass die Briefkomposition auf Lukas zurückgeht.' The conclusion is probably correct (see above) but it is difficult to follow the logic by which Haenchen reaches it. The hearers will take in the letter as a whole and find that the hearers say the same things.

The construction of the second part of the sentence is obscure. διὰ λόγου, standing in contrast with an implied δι' ἐπιτολῆς, is clear enough; λόγος, though it means much more, can on occasion refer to speech uttered aloud. But καὶ αὐτοὺς ... ἀπεστάλαξαν is strange Greek, even when taken from the same standpoint as the perfect ἀπεστάλαξαν. BDR § 339.2a, n. 8 note that the present participle is sometimes used instead of the final future participle, and cite in addition to this verse not only 21.16 (συνήλθον ... ὄντες) but also Thucydides 7.25.7, ἐπεμψεν ... πρέσβεις οἱ Σπαρτιάται ... ἀπελθόντας ... they sent ambassadors to report ... See also Euripides, *Suppliants* 154, ταῦτ' ἐξεδιμάζων ἡλθον. This use of the present participle is rare, and the sense of purpose seems usually to be more or less qualified, but it may be taken to cover Luke's ἀπεστάλαξαν. More difficult is καὶ αὐτοὺς. This is reminiscent of nothing in Greek so much as of the Hebrew circumstantial clause, which can be introduced in this way, the clause being completed often by a participle; see e.g. Gen. 18.8; 24.62. BDR § 442.4b, n. 12 (noting the Vg *qui*) rightly say that καὶ may be taken in the sense of a relative, but this does not amount to an explanation. We have seen reason to think that the letter Luke gives here is, apart from the Decree, his own composition; otherwise it would be attractive to think that he had retained a trace of the Hebrew in which such a letter would originally have been composed. If not this, we may think that

Luke heard of the letter in a partly Hebrew-speaking environment. If original at all it must have come from such an environment.

28. ἐδοξε: cf. vv. 22, 25. The apostles and elders are now joined in their decision by the Holy Spirit. In view of the importance of the decision this must be regarded as the outstanding example of Luke's insistence that all developments in the church's life were directed by the Spirit. For participation in a decision by a divine being cf. Dio Chrysostom 80(30).8, ἐδοξε τῷ θεῷ; Appian, *Syria* 58.303, ἐδοξε τοῖς θεοῖς. It is not suggested that a decision made by the church must be a decision of the Holy Spirit; the unanimity of the church bore witness to a decision already reached by the Holy Spirit. Luke does not claim that any of the participants in the discussion was, when he spoke, moved, or filled, by the Holy Spirit. Whether the claim that the Holy Spirit on this occasion spoke through the church is affected by the fact that Paul (it seems) did not accept the decision is a question that should be borne in mind with regard to such ecclesiastical assertions.

It was not decided that no requirements should be laid upon Gentile Christians, only that such requirements should be limited. Certain demands were to be made, but nothing more, μὴδὲν πλεόν. 'Att. πλεόν' nur Lk. 3.13; In 21.15; Act 15.28 gegenüber 18mal πλεόν, aber immer πλεόν, πλεόνος (BDR § 30.2, n. 3). The word πλεόν (a natural one to use; cf. Polybius 1.315, τὸ πάρος τῶν ἐπαγμάτων, but note ζυνῶς in v. 10) occurs in a similar clause at Rev. 2.24, οὐ βιάσθω (cf. ἐπαιθεῖσθαι) ἐπὶ ἡρώς ἄλλο πάρος. The same letter (to Thyatira) condemns the false prophetess Jezebel, who teaches the Christians πορνεία καὶ γυναικὲν εἰδωλόθυτα: similarly 2.14. Nothing is said about blood and non-kosher food, but it seems likely that the Decree, or something like it, circulated in these churches and was approved by them, or at least by leading members in them. This is a matter on which commentators on Revelation do not agree. R. H. Charles (1.74) thinks that the prohibition of non-kosher food and blood was deliberately omitted. 'The use of the word ἄλλο in itself points to the exclusion of the two latter. Thus our author had clearly the Apostolic decree in his mind.' On the other hand, Lohmeyer (HNT, *Apokalypse* 29) writes, 'Die formale Uebereinstimmung mit Act 15.29 ... beweist nicht, dass hier auch inhaltlich ein das Aposteldekret zu denken sei.' It is interesting to note F. J. A. Hort (31), on τὰς ἀποστολὰς: 'A curious coincidence with Acts 15.28, but probably accidental'; and H. B. Swete (45), 'A scarcely doubtful reference to the Apostolic decree in Acts 15.28 ... the rest of the prohibitions imposed in the years 49-50 ... are not reimposed'. This allusion to the Decree, if such it be, is probably the earliest, antedating the post-biblical references given in *FS Osborn* 55-9.

τῷ is used as an improper preposition, taking the genitive; cf. 8.1; 27.22, *except*.

The exception is denoted by τοῦτων τῶν ἐπ'αρχαίς. The meaning is clear: the words mean *these necessary (requirements)* and refer to the four abstinences called for in the next verse. But the expression is unusual: the demonstrative pronoun and article, followed by the adverb (the neuter singular of the adjective ἐπ'αρχαίς forming the corresponding adverb). According to Haenchen (436), this is 'ganz ungewöhnlich'; similarly *Begs.* 4.180: the reading 'can hardly be right. ἐπ'αρχαίς is used in Attic Greek as an adverb ... but not with the article'. These statements call for some qualification. It is quite possible in Greek to use an article with an adverb, but this construction seems to be mainly if not exclusively confined to adverbs of time and place; e.g. οἱ τότε, *those who lived at that time*; οἱ ἔξω, *those who are outside*; τὰ κάτω, τὰ ἄνω, *things below, things above*. The possibility of extending this use of article and adverb must always have existed even if it was seldom taken up. Its unnaturalness in the case of ἐπ'αρχαίς is attested not only by modern attempts at explanation and conjecture but also by ancient variants in the text. It is uncertain whether ἐπ' ἀνάγκας (N A C) is a genuine variant; αἱ is a not uncommon itacistic equivalent to ε. If it is intended as ἐπὶ with the dative plural of ἀνάγκη it will mean *these matters which arise out of necessities*. τῶν ἐπ'αρχαίς τοῦτων (P<sup>39</sup> 40) scarcely differs from the text cited above (though Metzger (437) describes it as 'the easier sequence'). If τοῦτων ἐπ'αρχαίς (omitting τῶν) is read the way is open to repunctuation, with a colon or full stop after τοῦτων: '... no other burden than these things: it is necessary to abstain from ...'. There is support for this (see *Begs.* 4.180f.) in Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* 4.15, where indirect speech is used: ἐμνήσαν γὰρ ἐπ'αρχαίς ἀπέχεσθαι δεῖν εἰδωλόθυτον, καὶ. 'Moreover the *Didascalia* seems here to have felt that somehow it ought to read τῶν τοῦτων τῶν ἐπ'αρχαίς ἀπέχεσθαι ...'. The reading τῶν ἐπ'αρχαίς (P<sup>74</sup> A 36 453 1241 pc) Metzger ascribes to accidental omission of τοῦτων.

It is probably best to accept the reading of N<sup>2</sup> B C ψ 81 614 945 1175 1739 2495 α<sup>1</sup> (τοῦτων τῶν ἐπ.) and the unusual construction that it involves. But however the text is taken and construed it includes the notion of necessity, compulsion (see LS 607; cf. e.g. Josephus, *Ant.* 16.365; Epictetus 2.20.1; and see Wilson, *Law* 82). It is not said, 'You Gentiles are completely free of legal requirements, but as a matter of courtesy to your Jewish brothers you might be so kind as to abstain from ...'. This is important for the understanding of the Decree; Luke at any rate understood it as a matter not of courtesy but of compulsion, and therefore presumably as a condition of salvation (cf. 15.1, 5).

Bauernfeind (198) thinks that abstinence from πικρόν and αἶμα will have been a real burden to Gentiles, yet one that Luke will have regarded as compatible with the law-free Gospel.

29. This verse repeats what is given in v. 20 as James's opinion with the following variations: (1) instead of ἀσυνήματα τῶν εἰδωλῶν we have εἰδωλόθυτα; (2) the order is idolatry, blood, things strangled, fornication, instead of idolatry, fornication, what is strangled, blood; (3) the plural πτωκτῶν is used instead of the singular πτωκτοῦ; (4) there is a concluding exhortation. There are textual variants similar to those noted in v. 20; see once more Metzger (429–34). This time fornication is omitted only by some Vulgate MSS.

#### 40. PAUL AND BARNABAS RETURN TO ANTIOCH 15.30–35

(30) So they, when they had been dismissed, went down to Antioch, and when they had gathered the company together they delivered the letter. (31) When they had read it they rejoiced at the comfort<sup>1</sup> that it brought. (32) Judas and Silas, who also were prophets, speaking at length, encouraged<sup>2</sup> and strengthened the brothers. (33) After spending some time [in Antioch] they were released<sup>3</sup> by the brothers in peace [to return] to those who had sent them. (35) But Paul and Barnabas stayed on in Antioch, teaching and preaching<sup>4</sup> the word of the Lord along with many others.

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- E. Delebecque, *RHPH* 64 (1984), 47–52.  
T. Holtz, as in (38).  
B. N. Kaye, *NovT* 21 (1979), 13–26.  
E. Richard, as in (38).

#### Commentary

This short paragraph is the necessary complement to the preceding one. The results of the Council had to be communicated to the church in which the problem arose, and its letter delivered. Nothing is said here that could not have been inferred from the letter of 15.23–29 except that Judas and Silas were prophets. Luke may have been dependent on information derived from Antioch, but he is probably rounding off in his own words the important story of the Council and preparing for Paul's change of partners; Silas is introduced as one who is acceptable both to Jerusalem and to Paul.

30. Luke develops his story into a new phase with λέγει οὖν; see on 1.6. *They* (the group mentioned in 15.23) *then having been dismissed*; the sense makes 'those who had been dismissed' impossible. D\* (1) add ἐν ἡμετέrais ὁλῳγαις; it is hard to see what the Western editors gained by inserting these words, or what would have been gained by omitting them if they were original; nor is it clear whether

<sup>1</sup>RSV, exhortation; NEB, NIB encouragement.  
<sup>2</sup>RSV, exhorted.

<sup>3</sup>NEB, with the good wishes of the brethren.

<sup>4</sup>NIB, proclaimed the good news, the word of the Lord.