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Dissertation Abstract:  
*Conversion in Luke and Paul*  
David S. Morlan

This dissertation explores the conversion theologies of Luke and Paul. For Luke and Paul conversion played an important role in the early Christian experience and in this dissertation we take a fresh look into how they interpreted this phenomenon. We traverse representative texts in the Lukan and Pauline corpus equipped with three theological questions. What is the change involved in conversion? Why is conversion necessary? Who is responsible for conversion? In our theological and exegetical analysis of Luke 15, Acts 2, Acts 17:16-34, Romans 2 and Romans 9-11 we answer these three theological questions, which then builds a theological profile for both Luke and Paul. These profiles provide fresh insight into the theological relationship between Luke and Paul showing significant similarities as well as sharp contrasts between them. Differences emerge concerning their understanding of repentance as well as in the correlation between conversion and creation: for Luke, conversion is the restored *imago dei* of the original creation while for Paul it is a fresh act by God of New Creation. Similarities surface between Luke and Paul concerning the centrality of Christology in their conversion theologies. While showing a complex relationship between human and divine agency in conversion, both Luke and Paul understand *successful* conversion to be impossible without the intervention of an agency outside of the pre-convert.

# **Conversion in Luke and Paul**

Some Exegetical and Theological Explorations

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A dissertation submitted in fulfillment  
of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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## PREFACE

A sage senior scholar sat me down in his office the day I arrived in Tyndale House, Cambridge to begin the studies that now culminate in this dissertation. In a brief meeting this scholar gave me two stern warnings that have hovered over me like a dark cloud for the past five years. First, he told me that pursuing a PhD could become an essentially selfish thing. *My* research. *My* thinking. *My* writing. *My* degree. As a result, it carries with it an intrinsic danger of shutting out even my own family for the sake of the prize. Being a young married man, he told me that any achieved degree that leaves in its wake a broken marriage is no achievement at all. Second, he reminded me that while the fruit of this research will reflect the influence of many other scholars, it is my name that will be attached to it and it is I who will have to give account for it. He told me that my concern ought not ultimately to lie with the judgment of an examining board, but with that of God. Thank you, Bruce Winter, for your haunting warnings that encouraged me to preserve and to protect my family and my faith.

While I would never advise anyone to write a PhD while planting a church, the community that has emerged in Fellowship Denver has turned out to become a great source of encouragement in this process. Thanks to my ministry partner and Fellowship Denver co-founder, Hunter Beaumont, for his patience and understanding while I've worked on our mission in Denver *and* in the library on my PhD.

So many friends have read and critiqued various chapters and versions of this dissertation that I cannot here name them all. However, three deserve special mention. Thanks to Kimiko Egy for her sharp eye in proofreading an earlier manuscript. Thanks to Nick Ellis who read back to me out loud most of this dissertation, which helped to sharpen my argumentation. Also thanks to Professor Craig Blomberg for reading an earlier draft of this dissertation and offering numerous insights and suggestions for improvement.

I must also mention my supervisors Professor John Barclay and Dr William Telford. John has been a 'doctor-father' in every sense of the word: providing my family with space heaters and extra blankets for cold Durham nights while also constantly challenging me to improve my work, asking penetrating questions which continue to

clarify and confront my thinking. Bill's genius in organization and planning helped give this project structure and *achievability*, both of which were critical for me since most of this dissertation was written as a 'part-time' student. Both John and Bill have been exceedingly patient with me - reading rough drafts from a student who is mildly dyslexic can be quite frustrating but they have endured with class and professionalism.

I would like to mention my family. My mother and father have been a constant source of support and encouragement to me in this process. My three sons Will, Ian and Beckett have been a joy and a welcome distraction from the ever-present PhD process. I greatly look forward to spending more time with them in the weeks and months to come. Finally, I must mention my wife, Renee. She is my closest friend and has been exceedingly patient and understanding during this process. She is infinitely smarter than I am, but has sacrificed so much for the sake of our family. She is honorable, worthy of imitation and it is the great joy of my life to have her as my wife.

Daivd S. Morlan

Good Friday 2010

## JOURNAL ABBREVIATIONS

<i>ATR</i>	Anglican Theological Review
<i>AJPS</i>	Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies
<i>AUSS</i>	Andrews University Seminary Studies
<i>ABR</i>	Australian Biblical Review
<i>BL</i>	Bibel und Liturgie
<i>Bib</i>	Biblica
<i>BI</i>	Biblical Interpretation
<i>BTB</i>	Biblical Theology Bulletin
<i>BibSac</i>	Bibliotheca Sacra
<i>BT</i>	The Bible Today
<i>BBR</i>	Bulletin for Biblical Research
<i>BJR</i>	Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester
<i>CS</i>	Chicago Studies
<i>ChC</i>	Christian Century
<i>CJ</i>	Concordia Journal
<i>CQ</i>	Covenant Quarterly
<i>CC</i>	Cross Currents
<i>CTM</i>	Currents in Theology and Mission
<i>CBR</i>	Currents of Biblical Research
<i>CV</i>	Communio Viatorum
<i>EC</i>	Early Christianity
<i>EcR</i>	Ecclesia Reformanda
<i>ER</i>	Ecumenical Review
<i>EQ</i>	Evangelical Quarterly
<i>ExpTim</i>	Expository Times
<i>FEV</i>	Foi et Vie
<i>HTR</i>	Harvard Theological Review
<i>HBT</i>	Horizons in Biblical Theology
<i>ITS</i>	Indian Theological Studies
<i>IBMR</i>	International Bulletin of Missionary Research
<i>IDS</i>	In Die Skriflig
<i>IJSR</i>	The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion
<i>JBL</i>	Journal for Biblical Literature
<i>JETS</i>	Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society
<i>JQR</i>	The Jewish Quarterly Review
<i>JD</i>	Jian Dao
<i>JES</i>	Journal of Ecumenical Studies
<i>JSHJ</i>	Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus
<i>JSNTS</i>	Journal for the Study of the New Testament
<i>JSSR</i>	Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion
<i>JSCE</i>	Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics
<i>JSPS</i>	Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies

<i>JTT</i>	Journal of Translation and Textlinguistics
<i>JTS</i>	Journal for Theological Studies
<i>JTSA</i>	Journal of Theology for Southern Africa
<i>JSJ</i>	Journal for the Study of Judaism
<i>JSOT</i>	Journal for the Study of Old Testament
<i>JPS</i>	Journal of Pentecostal Theology
<i>JPJ</i>	Journal of Progressive Judaism
<i>JRA</i>	Journal of Religion in Africa
<i>KD</i>	Kerygma und Dogma
<i>LTQ</i>	Lexington Theological Quarterly
<i>LL</i>	Living Light
<i>MS</i>	Mission Studies
<i>NovT</i>	Novum Testamentum
<i>NTS</i>	New Testament Studies
<i>NRT</i>	Nouvelle Revue Theologique
<i>Numen</i>	Numen
<i>PRS</i>	Perspectives in Religious Studies
<i>QR</i>	Quarterly Review
<i>RT</i>	Religion and Theology
<i>RaE</i>	Review and Expositor
<i>RB</i>	Revue Biblique
<i>RSR</i>	Recherches de Science Religieuse
<i>RTP</i>	Revue de théologie et de philosophie
<i>RE</i>	Religious Education
<i>RJ</i>	Restoration Quarterly
<i>SJÅ</i>	Svensk Exegetisk Årsbok
<i>SJT</i>	Scottish Journal of Theology
<i>SR</i>	Studies in Religion
<i>TR</i>	Theological Review
<i>TS</i>	Theological Studies
<i>TRINJ</i>	Trinity Journal
<i>TynB</i>	Tyndale Bulletin
<i>TZTh</i>	Tübinger Zeitschrift für Theologie
<i>USQR</i>	Union Seminary Quarterly Review
<i>WTJ</i>	Westminister Theological Journal
<i>WW</i>	Word & World
<i>ZKTh</i>	Zeitschrift für Katholische Theologie
<i>ZTK</i>	Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche
<i>ZNW</i>	Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche
<i>ZMR</i>	Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft und Religionswissenschaft

## OTHER ABBREVIATIONS

*NIDNTT* New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology

*TDNT* Theological Dictionary of the New Testament

*BDAG* A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature

*LCL* Loeb Classical Library

*CEV* Contemporary English Version

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION: SETTING THE QUESTIONS

*Luke alone is with me*<sup>1</sup>

2 Tim. 4:11a.

According to early Christian tradition, the relationship between Paul, the famed Apostle to the Gentiles, and Luke, a physician and supposed writer of Luke-Acts,<sup>2</sup> displayed unity in mission (Ph. 24) and closeness of friendship (Col. 4:14). Only Luke remained loyal to Paul when others abandoned him, ashamed of his chains (2 Tim. 4:11). Likewise, Paul's 'Gospel' (Rom 2:16, 16:25; cf. 2 Tim 2:8) referred not to his *own* Gospel, but to his friend's Gospel - the Gospel written by *Luke* (*Eccl. Hist.* 3.4; Just 2003, 2). Similarly, Luke held Paul in high regard in Acts as *the* key figure in the spread of 'the way'. Eusebius noted that for Luke, Paul's actions in Acts were 'demonstrated before his [Luke's] own eyes' (*Eccl. Hist.* 3.4).<sup>3</sup> Luke witnessed his friend in action and wrote about it so others could know. Paul and Luke showed genuine closeness and exhibited a true Christian alliance.

Such was the relationship of Paul and Luke before the dawn of the critical era. In 1831, however, Baur wrote the now famous essay on the Christ-Party in the Corinthian church. This scholar, who would become arguably 'the most influential German critic of all time' (Gasque 1975, 26), revolutionized the previously assumed relationship between Luke and Paul and subsequently changed the landscape of NT studies by ushering it into

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all English translations in my dissertation will be quoted from the *English Standard Version* (ESV).

<sup>2</sup> According to the early church historian, Eusebius, Luke was a physician and wrote 'inspired' books that exemplified his 'art of healing souls' (*Eccl. Hist.* 3.4).

<sup>3</sup> That is, if one believes the 'we' passages in Acts to be Luke's eyewitness account.

the modern critical era. Baur's essay, 'Die Christuspartei in der korinthischen Gemeinde, der Gegensatz des petrinischen und paulinischen Christenthums in der ältesten Kirche, der Apostel Petrus in Rom' (1831), suggested that division characterised the early church rather than harmony. The four identified parties in Paul's first letter to the Church in Corinth (1 Cor. 1:12) represented a sharp divide between two factions in the early church. This separation, which ran along Hellenistic and Jewish lines, lurked behind the texts of the NT. Paul represented the Hellenistic Christian church, while Peter, James and the 'Christ party' represented the Jewish faction of Christianity. The former rallied around the radical universal doctrine of justification by faith while the latter held on tightly to the particularism of the law and ties to the historical Jesus. The former emphasized the work of the spirit in the progress of history (i.e., following Hegel's *Phänomenologie des Geistes*)<sup>4</sup> and knew Christ according to the spirit, while the latter insisted on their relationship with Jesus according to the flesh (Baur 1878, 50). This bitter and basically irreconcilable split lay at the center of the early Christian movement.

Baur developed what was later to be called *Tendenzkritik*, a method of reading the NT, which had this historical situation as its fundamental assumption. This 'tendency criticism' deciphered the particular theological viewpoint of each NT writer in the effort to determine if the writer was on Paul's side or on Peter's side of the early church. NT scholars tried to get behind the glossed over text to discover the real historical and theological position of the individual writers. The theological fallout from Baur's essay and his *Tendenzkritik* is multifaceted. However, for the purpose of my dissertation, I call the readers' attention to the ramifications Baur's essay had on the unity, congruence, and compatibility of Luke and Paul. Using legal jargon, Baur's essay 'filed the paper work' that would lead to the permanent divorce of Paul and Luke.

Baur's *Tendenzkritik* cast suspicion over texts that portrayed a unified and harmonious early church. Luke-Acts emerged as the masterpiece of 'glossing over' the 'real' situation of the early church. Relying on Hegel's prevailing philosophy of history in which history swings from one extreme to the other before finally leveling out (thesis, antithesis and synthesis), Luke's work comprised the final *synthesis* of Paul's thesis and Peter's *antithesis*. Nowhere in Acts do we see the sharpness of Paul's thought against

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. Hodgson 1968, 17-36 and Riches 1993, 31-33.

Peter and the other apostles. For instance, in Gal. 2:9 Paul describes James, John and Peter as those who *appear* (οἱ δοκοῦντες) to be pillars (Baur 1878, 53). In contrast, Luke held both Peter and Paul together as leaders of the early church with very little ‘contradistinction’ between them (Baur 1878, 58).

While Baur believed there to be a theological difference between Paul and Luke, he held that the author of Acts was a true ‘Paulinist’ nevertheless. Luke wrote Acts to ‘defend the mission of Paul to the Gentiles against the criticisms of the Jewish-Christian party’ (Gasque 1975, 30); indeed, this is one reason why Luke portrayed Paul preaching the Gospel first to the Jews and only turning to the Gentiles upon the Jewish rejection of the Gospel. Luke portrayed Paul to be truly Jewish, respectful of the book of Moses and of Jewish customs, hoping to preserve Paul’s reputation among those in the supposed Jewish-Christian faction. Paul is portrayed as a Petrinist who did not openly challenge the leader of the Apostles. Hence, Baur argues that the purpose of Acts was to be an apology of the unified ministry of the early church (1845, 5). Yet this apology was in fact very different from the early church as it really was (1845, 6).

With some adjustments, most modern followers of Baur (e.g. Vielhauer 1968; Dunn 1977, 346-349) agree that Luke-Acts essentially ushered in the dawn of the catholic church. As a result, an historical *and theological* chasm lay between Paul and Luke.<sup>5</sup> The supposed friends find themselves in different interpretive eras of the Christian church.

## 1.1 Recent Theological Comparisons of Paul and Luke

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<sup>5</sup> E. Käsemann following Baur believed Luke was a loyal ‘Paulinist’ but also noted a distinct theological difference between the two. According to Käsemann, Luke’s theological perspective was ‘ecclesiastically domesticated’ when compared to Paul’s own writings (1969, 240). Paul preached a radical doctrine of the cross of Christ while Luke favored a theology in which salvation was ‘only within the Church, whose history, thanks to divine guidance, shows a continuous progression...’ (Käsemann 1969, 240). Using the method later termed ‘critical theological interpretation’ (Morgan 1988, 113), Käsemann accused Luke-Acts of representing the sort of theological system to which Paul’s Gospel was radically opposed. This caused Fitzmyer to react in his commentary against Käsemann by stating: ‘I can admit that the demands of the Pauline story of the cross are more radical, a *skandalon*, but I am not sure that the Lukan call to “repentance and conversion” is any less Christian than Paul’s’ (1979, 27). To Käsemann, the salvation history in Luke-Acts is ‘always on the safe side’ (1971, 62) and God’s action in the cross of Christ was precisely against comfortable religious parameters. A salvation-historical system was basically a ‘catholicization’ of the gospel and Luke-Acts exemplified this movement in the Christian church (cf. Käsemann’s famous essay ‘Paul and Early Catholicism’ in his *New Testament Questions of Today* 1969).

A positive impact that Baur's work had on the relationship between Luke and Paul is that overly homogenized readings of Paul and Luke were crushed. As a result, most serious modern works that compare Luke and Paul note, to varying degrees, the obvious differences between them:

(1) Paul and Luke wrote different types of literature:<sup>6</sup> Paul wrote epistles while Luke wrote a story.<sup>7</sup>

(2) Paul and Luke had very different audiences: Paul wrote to churches, some of which he started himself, while Luke addressed both of his volumes (Luke 1:3; Acts 1:1) to the frustratingly mysterious Theophilus.

(3) Paul addressed theological and social issues directly. Luke wrote a story, which reflected theological assumptions and pictured social issues, but his medium of narrative prevented him from dealing with them as directly as Paul's medium did.

(4) Luke pulled together resources in order to give a putatively reliable account of the origin and growth of the early church (Luke 1:1-4). Paul relied primarily on his personal source, the revelation of Christ (Gal. 1:1, 12; 1 Cor. 15:8), and leaned very little on other sources in comparison to Luke (cf. however, 1 Cor. 15:3).

These differences alone point to drastically different purposes in writing, which may have caused them to highlight different aspects of their theologies. Despite these difficulties, however, discovering the extent of the differences and similarities between the theologies of Luke and Paul is an important task that must not be ignored. Together

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<sup>6</sup> As Marshall puts it: '...Luke is often compared with Paul who is said to be a more profound theologian; Paul has thought things through more deeply and comes up with discussions on a different level of understanding. But this comparison does not deny that Luke was indeed a theologian, and indeed it may be in danger of drawing false conclusions if it ignores the important differences in genre between the letters of Paul and Luke-Acts' (1999, 4).

<sup>7</sup> Whether he did so primarily as a theologian (Conzelmann 1961), historian (Marshall 1970), theological historian (Peterson 2009), scientist (Alexander 1993), or literary artist (Parsons and Pervo 1993) is, of course, up for debate.

the writings of Luke and Paul comprise the majority of the NT and, as such, theological interpretations of their writings have enormous influence in the world today. For the Christian church worldwide, theologies derived from the writings of Paul and Luke not only set the course of direction for numerous denominations but also help shape the actual religious beliefs of untold millions. For scholars of the NT, understanding better the theological beliefs of Luke and Paul helps to untangle how each of these lofty figures accounted for the numerical growth of the Christian movement. Furthermore, understanding the extent of their theological relationship helps scholars to be conscious of the unity and diversity within the NT itself.

Scholars travel different avenues to understand the theological relationship between Paul and Luke more clearly. In the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, Vielhauer wrote an influential and often quoted article entitled ‘On the “Paulinism” of Acts’. In this article Vielhauer drew a sharp theological distinction between Luke and Paul (1968), which subsequently impacted Conzelmann’s important work on Luke and ushered in the heyday of redaction criticism in Lukan studies.<sup>8</sup>

In his article, Vielhauer noted several theological differences between Luke and Paul. For instance, in Acts there is very little ‘word of the cross’ compared to Paul’s letters (1968, 37-43). The differing explanations why Jesus died are presented as contradictory (Acts 2:23-31; Rom. 3:21-16). In Acts, Paul is a preacher of repentance (Acts 17:20:26:20) – a theology Vielhauer suggests conflicts with Paul’s own letters (1968, 43; cf. however Rom. 2:4). Repentance itself consisted of self-consciousness of one’s natural kinship to God, an idea derived mostly from Acts 17. Luke believed natural theology to be a faithful forerunner of the Christian faith – natural theology needed only to be Christianized, as it were (1968, 36-37). For Luke, Jesus was the perfect Moses, while, for Paul, Jesus was the anti-Moses. Hence, Luke did not express the faith-law antithesis that is seen in Paul’s letters (1968, 40-42). Luke saw the world through the lens of an unfolding historical redemptive pattern while Paul lived with an ongoing apocalyptic expectation (1968, 44-46). Indeed, for Vielhauer, the only real ‘Paulinism’ in

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<sup>8</sup> Cf. Du Plessis’s article, ‘Merkers op die pad van die Lukas-navorsing’ (1983) in which he traces out main points in the history of Lukan interpretation pointing to Vielhauer and Conzelmann as the two scholars who helped to put Luke on the map as a theologian in his own right.

Luke is found in his 'zeal for the worldwide Gentile mission and in his veneration for the greatest missionary to the Gentiles' (1968, 48).

Vielhauer's sharp distinction between the theologies of Luke and Paul was quickly challenged as the broad scope of his thesis left himself open for more detailed criticism. For example, in his essay, 'From Paul to Luke,' Borgen challenges Vielhauer's thesis by showcasing the theology of Paul and Luke in light of the rejection of the Gospel by Israel. He notes that both Paul and Luke interpret the 'historical fact that the Gospel for the most part has been denied by the Jews and accepted by the Gentiles' (1969, 170). He shows that both Luke and Paul depend on Deut 29:4 to interpret the rejection of the Gospel by Israel (Rom. 11:7-8 and Acts 28:26). He also shows that both Paul and Luke see the rejection of Israel as a necessary component in order for the Gospel to go to the Gentiles (Luke 14:15-24; 20:9-19 and Rom. 9-11). Additionally, both Luke and Paul understand there to be a time given by God to the Gentiles on the basis of eschatological epochs (Rom. 11:25 and Luke 21:24). As a result of highlighting these similarities, Borgen concludes that 'Vielhauer is too positive in his interpretation of the opposition between Pauline and Lucan eschatology' (1969, 174).

While Borgen did not address all of Vielhauer's concerns regarding the broad differences between Paul and Luke, he did set a course for more detailed analyses of Paul's and Luke's theology by using a single aspect of theology (i.e. the role of Israel). For example, Lodge, in his essay, 'The Salvation Theologies of Paul and Luke', limits his comparison of Luke and Paul to their salvation terminology. He argues that while they use very similar salvation terms (e.g. σωτήρ, σωτηρία) they actually used these common terms quite differently. In Paul, salvation is mostly used to explain that which is 'yet to come' (Lodge 1983, 52). In 1 Thessalonians each occurrence of salvation terminology (2:16; 5:8, 9) is 'not something which has yet occurred' (1983, 37). As the wrath of God was yet to come (1 Thes. 1:10), so, too, salvation was yet to come. Lodge states that the 'whole process leading to salvation, with its message about the past, exhortation for the present, and hope for the future, is summed up in the praise Paul bestows in the salutation of the letter for the Thessalonians' "work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope (1:3)" (1983, 37). In 1 Cor. salvation is achieved only 'if

you hold fast' (1 Cor. 15:1-2; 1983, 39) and the present reality of a believer is not salvation *per se* but the state of 'being saved' (Lodge 1983, 39).<sup>9</sup>

In Luke, however, salvation is used mostly to show that which 'has already come' (Lodge 1983, 52).

Salvation is present in the forgiveness of sins, putting us in a right relationship with God. This internal, spiritual situation has become tangible in the healing ministry of Jesus. As Jesus proclaims at the start of his public ministry, the promise of good news for the poor, release and liberty for the captive and oppressed, and sight for the blind 'has been fulfilled' in his presence and person (Lk 1:18-21; Isa 61:1-2). Thus, unlike the Pauline usage, 'to be saved' and 'salvation' have an application in Luke-Acts to deliverance from physical infirmity or danger (Lodge 1983, 49).

Hence, according to Lodge, the major difference between Paul and Luke concerning salvation terminology was on their contrasting emphasis on eschatology. 'For Paul, Jesus will be our Savior. Luke proclaims him Savior at his birth. The process of being saved is Paul's concern, while Luke stresses that the Christ-event has saved' (Lodge 1983, 52). Lodge concludes that 'the source of our developing Christian awareness of the meaning of salvation' emerges precisely out of the tension between these two writers (1983, 52).

Similar to Lodge's narrowed approach is the essay by Koenig in which he compares Luke and Paul by focusing on their notions of grace. In his article, 'Occasions of Grace in Paul, Luke and First Century Judaism', Koenig describes Paul's and Luke's notions of grace, concluding that, for Paul, grace was not just what occurred in conversion but was also demonstrated in the 'everyday way of being in the world' (1982, 565). For Luke, the fact that he did not mention his own conversion makes it difficult to know for sure what his theology of grace was (1982, 569). However, Koenig extracts from Luke's characters, Jesus, Peter and Paul, occasions of grace at poignant moments in their ministries (1982, 569). He sees at the core, however, deep unity between Luke and

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<sup>9</sup> Missing in Lodge's analysis, however, is Rom. 10:10 in which Paul says, 'For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and *is* saved.'

Paul in that ‘occasions of grace are fundamentally outcroppings of God’s work in Christ to extend his reign throughout the world’ (1982, 571). As Luke and Paul witnessed the expansion of the early church, they saw it fundamentally as a work of God’s grace in the world.

Still others read Paul and Luke in light of their notions of the Kingdom of God (Cho 2002, 2003). Cho argues that Luke divided the notion of the Kingdom of God from that of the Spirit. Paul, on the other hand, understood the Spirit and the Kingdom to be closely associated. Indeed, Paul was an innovator in antiquity in that he understood the Spirit to be the essence of the Kingdom of God, while for Luke the Spirit was restricted to specific purposes. ‘Luke does not regard the Spirit as the source of the manifestation of the kingdom of God or as the life of the kingdom in its entirety as in Paul. For Luke the primary role of the Spirit in relation to the kingdom of God is presented in qualified terms: principally as the power for the proclamation of the kingdom’ (Cho 2003, 197).

Besides what has already been mentioned, there are recent studies comparing Luke and Paul in respect of purity,<sup>10</sup> apostleship,<sup>11</sup> the Law,<sup>12</sup> historical narrative,<sup>13</sup> the

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<sup>10</sup> Cf. Berger’s article, ‘Jesus als Pharisäer und frühe Christen als Pharisäer’ in which he argues that Jesus’ notion of purity was close to that of Pharisees yet different enough to upset them. Paul understood his conversion to Jesus to actually fulfill his Pharisaical desire for holiness. In Luke there is a synthesis of Pharisaical and Gentile notions of purity as they strive to live in unity (Acts 15) (Berger 1988, 231-262).

<sup>11</sup> Pfitzner’s article, ‘Office and Charism in Paul and Luke’, argues that Luke highlighted the role of the Spirit in Paul’s ministry in order to align him with the first apostles. It is argued, however, that Paul himself struggled with the exact role of the Spirit in relationship with apostleship (1981).

<sup>12</sup> Kilgallen tackles the question of whether or not Luke believed salvation was the result of obedience to the Law. He concludes that ‘with the help of earlier tradition which appears in various Pauline letters it seems clear that Luke, as Paul, makes the claim that the Holy Spirit, “the Promise of my Father” (Luke 24:49), results from faith in Jesus and not from the law’ (2004, 41).

<sup>13</sup> In his series *Christian Origins and the Question of God*, Wright extracts from various texts of Second-Temple Judaism what he understands to be a macro-level narrative in which the whole of Judaism *mutatis mutandis* fits. Wright subsequently reads the texts of the New Testament in light of this narrative (e.g. 1992). Thus, Luke and Paul exist within the same basic narrative, which is a salvation-historical model of exile and return from exile. This narrative climaxes with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The narrative approach method of reading Luke and Paul has advantages. For example, in Wright’s model, the church today can be an actor with Paul and Luke in the *same* play. This is contrary to Engberg-Pedersen (2000) who sees an unbridgeable division between the NT era and the modern-critical era. Thus Wright’s model has a certain theological appeal absent in other models such as Engberg-Pedersen’s. However, one wonders if macro-level narrative reading obscures the specific contours of particular texts. It might be said, moreover, that Luke’s strongly salvific historical construct fits well with Wright’s narrative structure, which then (as one may want to argue) forces Paul’s theology to be crammed into congruency with Luke’s. I am not suggesting, one way or another, that this is what Wright, in fact, does, but only that his method is vulnerable to this sort of criticism.

spirit,<sup>14</sup> and even Emperor worship.<sup>15</sup> However, none of these studies has succeeded in providing an in depth theological comparison of Luke and Paul as have the works of Taeger (1980, 1982). Referring to the work of Vielhauer, Taeger agrees that there is a fundamental difference between Luke and Paul, yet, in contrast to Vielhauer, Taeger focuses his analysis on an important single aspect of their theologies. In his article, ‘Paulus und Lukas über den Menschen’, Taeger compares Paul’s and Luke’s notion of anthropology – especially their individual notions of anthropology as it concerns non-Christians (1980).

Reminiscent of Bultmann’s study of anthropological terms in Paul,<sup>16</sup> Taeger conducts a brief survey of how ‘body’ and ‘flesh’ are used in Paul and Luke. While noting a similarity of vocabulary between them (1980, 98), he then suggests that Luke does not have as sophisticated a dualism as does Paul.<sup>17</sup> For Luke, σάρξ was a description of the whole person (Luke 24:39; Acts 2:31), while Paul believed there to be a division between the flesh and spirit (e.g. Rom. 7:5, 14, 18, 25; 8:4). It is further suggested that Luke believed humanity, and the terms used by Luke to describe it, are basically neutral – for Luke the problem was not intrinsic to human depravity *per se*. Instead, what humanity needed was awareness of the possibilities to connect with the Creator and to make steps in that direction (1980, 99; cf. Luke 8:12, 15; Acts 2:37; 11:23; 14:22; 17:29). Humanity did not have a sin problem but rather struggled with ‘Schlechtigkeit’ (Acts 3:26, 19), ‘Ungerechtigkeit’ (Acts 8:23) and ‘Bosheit’ (Acts 8:22; 1980, 102).

Taeger concludes that Luke believed humanity did not need to be saved, but corrected. As he wrote later in his monograph on Luke, ‘Der Mensch ist kein salvandus,

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<sup>14</sup> Jackson’s essay ‘Luke and Paul: A Theology of One Spirit from Two Perspectives’ shows the similarities between Luke’s and Paul’s pneumatology. The four similarities argued by Jackson are: (1) the presence of the Holy Spirit shows God’s approval, (2) all Christians receive the Spirit at conversion, (3) the fruit of the Spirit’s work in the lives of believers, and (4) believers may experience the Spirit in ways that are inseparable from their experience of the Father, Christ, angels, or ‘the Word’ (Jackson 1989, 335-354). Jackson, however, avoids drawing any distinction between them, and thus the comparison is vulnerable to accusations of leading to too much homogenisation (1989; cf. Liu 1999, 119-151).

<sup>15</sup> In his recent monograph, *Christ and Caesar: The Gospel and the Roman Empire in the Writings of Paul and Luke*, Kim argues against political readings of Paul and Luke (2008).

<sup>16</sup> Cf. 2.1.

<sup>17</sup> Determining the exact nature of Paul’s dualism is in dispute, however (Barclay 1998).

sondern ein corrigendus' (1982, 225).<sup>18</sup> Conversely, for Paul, mankind must encounter God's climatic action. In this action, mankind experienced a true discontinuity with the past – a Christian person is fundamentally different than before. For Paul, it is 'no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me' (Gal. 2:20; 1980, 107). Paul's view of humanity is that it is in need of a miracle, not a correction – 'if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation' (2 Cor. 5:17; 1980, 107). Taeger concludes that Luke's and Paul's notion of anthropology are incompatible.

Despite his fruitful study, is there another way to frame the ideology of Paul and Luke while still encompassing some of the insights given by Taeger and others? I suggest that Chester's recent monograph on conversion in Paul's theology (2003) may provide a previously unexplored option of how one can read Paul and Luke. Noting the lack of research on Paul's notion of conversion, Chester creatively compares Paul's understanding of conversion with that of the notion of conversion held by his own converts at Corinth, thereby producing an ideological and sociological analysis of conversion. However, before undertaking this study, he noted that 'one could undertake a study which compared Paul's understanding of conversion to that of another New Testament writer' (2003, 32).<sup>19</sup>

His observation prompts the question, 'What if one were to compare Paul's understanding of conversion with Luke's version of conversion?' It is interesting that, to date, there has not been a single, highly detailed, theological examination of conversion in Luke and Paul. This is all the more fascinating when one considers that Paul is writing mostly to his *own* converts, and that Luke, according to some, is writing for the sole purpose of making converts. O' Neill, for example, concluded that 'The book of Acts, together with Luke's Gospel, is probably the only work in the N.T. which was specifically addressed to unbelievers...he wrote Luke-Acts to persuade men at the center of power to abandon their lives to the service of the kingdom of God' (1970, 185). While many do not accept O'Neill's conclusion regarding Luke's purpose for writing, there is virtually no doubt within serious Lukan scholarship regarding the emphasis on conversion in Luke-Acts (e.g. Nave 2002, Mendez-Moratalla 2003). An investigation

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<sup>18</sup> This has been challenged by Stenschke (1998a, 1998b), which will be covered in the next chapter.

<sup>19</sup> Chester notes that one benefit of such a study would be to avoid some of the problems involved with mirror-reading (2003, 32; cf. Barclay 1987).

and comparison of the theology of conversion in the thought of Luke and Paul is needed, relevant, and is a necessary component for a greater understanding of the complex relationship between these twin towers of early Christianity.

## 1.2 Conversion

Fredriksen recently requested ‘mandatory retirement’ of the topic of conversion in understanding Christian origins (2006). She argues that, when it concerns the notion of conversion, it is much too easy to project the scholars’ own thoughts and opinions about conversion into the reality of conversion as it was manifested in antiquity. Instead, she suggests that scholars today would be better off simply respecting the difference between ancients and moderns.<sup>20</sup> It is simply too difficult to determine what ‘counted’ as a true convert in ancient times. While she makes a very good point about projecting modern conceptions onto ancients, this weakness has been acknowledged in scholarship, and, furthermore, attempts have been made to overcome it (Segal 1990; Chester 2003).

However, if scholars, following the advice of Fredriksen, endeavor simply to describe the religious life of the early church, they would, at some point, need to account for the increased volume of adherents in the early church. That this increase may not match with modern experiences of Christian conversion ought not prevent an investigation of the phenomena experienced by these converts in the first-century CE. Indeed, that this movement convinced a dedicated Jew (Phil. 3:5-7), an African (Acts 8:27), adherents of native religions (Acts 14, 17), men and women (Gal 3:28), slaves and masters (Philemon; Gal 3:28), and rich and poor (James 2:1-7), to turn from previous ways of worship and to worship in the name of an obscure Jewish Nazarene instead, is, at the very least, noteworthy. Conversion is simply too important a phenomenon in the early church to be ignored by scholars of the NT.<sup>21</sup> With this said, a study of the *theological* constructs of conversion in Paul and Luke can avoid many of the pitfalls

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<sup>20</sup> Cf. also her essay on Augustine and conversion in which she concludes that conversion narratives are anachronistic (1986, 3-34).

<sup>21</sup> In contrast to Fredriksen, Crossley argues that it is precisely in understanding the dynamics of conversion (e.g., through the social networks of work and households) that one can account for the rise of Christianity (2006). While there are questions as to the role conversion played in the Judaism from which Christianity sprouted (e.g. McKnight 1991; Goodman 1995; Feldman 1996), there is little questioning its centrality in the early church. As Chester notes, ‘Christianity was a new religious movement which could only grow by persuading outsiders to accept its message and enter its communities’ (2003, 25).

highlighted by Fredricksen. The problems of what ‘counts’ as conversion can be sidestepped if we focus our attention on two individual constructs of conversion rather than having to explain how conversion generally worked in ancient society.

A concentrated study of Paul and Luke comparing their theologies of conversion does not exist in recent scholarship. There are recent works dealing with the notion of conversion in the Gospel of Luke (Mendez-Moratalla 2003). Also, there are notable recent works on conversion in Paul (e.g. Chester 2003). Yet, with the exception of a few general works (e.g. Gaventa 1986; Witherup 1994), there has yet to be a serious work dedicated to the notions of conversion in Luke and Paul.

There are, however, scores of studies of Paul’s own conversion, its impact on his theology, and its relationship with Luke’s account of his conversion in Acts (cf. Segal 1990; Longenecker 1997; Kim 1997). Indeed, scholarship in the modern era acknowledges the theology-altering effects of Paul’s conversion. Whatever happened to Paul that changed him from persecutor to apostle, there is little question that it likely changed his own theology significantly.

There are two potentially significant weaknesses, however, in how scholars have approached the relationship between Paul’s own conversion experience and his actual theology of conversion. The first is the weakness of circular reasoning and I will give three examples of this below. Bultmann began his famous section on Paul in his *Theology of the New Testament*, by noting the historical situation of Paul (1955, 187-189). He specified that Paul came to believe the message of Jesus through the preaching of the early church and that, in this way, his theology was influenced by his conversion. It is not surprising, then, that ‘hearing the word preached’ and ‘decision’ are foundational in Bultmann’s reconstruction of Paul’s conversion theology. In his monograph, *Paul the Convert*, Segal argues that Paul had an esoteric/apocalyptic experience with the risen Christ, and that this experience is what drove Paul’s theology regarding how others convert to Christ as well (1990, 34-71). In his massive tome, *The Deliverance of God*, Campbell reconstructs Paul’s own entry into the Christian community as one that had nothing to do with Paul’s understanding of sin or the ensuing ‘wrath of God’ on his sin (2009, 125-166). Indeed, Campbell points out that ‘*none of the key terms within Justification occurs in Paul’s account of his conversion in [Gal.] 1:12-16*’ (2009, 148;

emphases his). Hence, it is not too shocking to discover Campbell constructing a Pauline theology that radically rereads how sin, justification and the wrath of God function in Rom. 1:18-3:20.<sup>22</sup>

While such connections made by Bultmann, Segal and Campbell above are interesting, one wonders if interpreting Paul's notion of conversion based on an historical reconstruction of his own conversion is to approach the issue from the wrong angle. If one followed the above method, one could easily be trapped in a logical puzzle: 'we know **x** (conversion) means **y** (receiving the preached word of Christ) because it fits with Paul's own experience **z** (Paul was converted though the preached word of Christ), and our understanding of **z** (Paul's own conversion) is correct because it fits with **x** and **y** (conversion means receiving the preached word of Christ).' In other words, it seems to be vulnerable to the charge of circular argumentation.

In light of this, a study is needed that focuses on conversion in Paul *without* relying on Paul's own conversion/call experience. Paul's own conversion experience, however one describes it, was unquestionably *unique* to him. As such I think it was highly unlikely that Paul expected what happened to him (e.g. Gal. 1:15-17; 1 Cor. 15:8) to happen in the exact same way to other converts to Christianity.

A second potential weakness in recent studies of conversion in Paul is that they rely too heavily on Luke's account of Paul's conversion in Acts. Campbell, for example, does this and suggests that Paul's 'Damascus road' experience in Acts 9 is one that has an 'unconditional' quality to it (2009, 145). Indeed, Luke does *not* picture Paul as having a prolonged seeking period before his encounter with Christ. Again, it is no surprise that Campbell then construes a Pauline soteriology that downplays any notion of conditionality, based on, to some extent, Luke's depiction of Paul's conversion (2009, 143-148; cf. Chapter Eight).

In contrast to the above approach, I propose a study on the theology of conversion in Luke and Paul using explicitly their *own* writings to do so. Thus, the story of Paul's conversion in Acts will be counted as Lukan material and be studied in light of Luke's thinking – not forced to fit with Paul's thinking. My approach may uncover specifics of

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<sup>22</sup> Cf. S. Kim's work on reconciliation in which Paul's own experience of reconciliation with God in his conversion experience remains at the center of his theology (1997; 2007).

Paul's own conversion as a by-product; however, it is not the focus of the study. Moreover, this method moves us past the discussion whether Paul was really converted (Segal 1990), just transformed (Gaventa 1986), or simply given a mission (Stendahl 1977).<sup>23</sup> While these discussions are worthy of note, I question how helpful they are in helping us better understand *Paul's* notion of conversion as an Apostle calling the Gentiles to conversion. To summarize: the study I propose represents necessary scholarship in a scholarly field void of in-depth comparison of Luke's and Paul's understanding of conversion in their *own* writings.

While it would be premature at this point to define conversion for Luke and Paul respectively, a more etic<sup>24</sup> definition is appropriate in order to raise our awareness of the complexity of the phenomenon of conversion.<sup>25</sup> To reach a useful preliminary definition, the individual and social aspects of conversion will be noted briefly.

In his classic monograph *Conversion*, A. D. Nock's opening chapter entitled 'The Idea of Conversion' defined the notion of conversion in contrast to that of 'adhesion' as most religious beliefs offered 'adhesion' but *not* conversion. Indeed, the 'non- prophetic' religions 'did not involve the taking up of a new way of life in place of the old' (1933, 7). Conversion, on the other hand, as offered by the prophetic religions, Judaism and Christianity, was 'reorientation of the soul of an individual, his deliberate turning from indifference or from an earlier form of piety to another, a turning which implies a consciousness that a great change is involved, that the old way was wrong and the new is right' (Nock 1933, 7). Similarly, the work of W. James characterized conversion as a strongly personal or individual change. This change, which could be sudden or over-time, was understood as a transformation of the 'habitual center of his personal energy' (1961, 196). Not surprisingly this study prompted a vast amount of research highlighting

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<sup>23</sup> Many suggest that Paul was not converted because he did not change gods, but I wonder if these same people would suggest that Luke's account of the response to Paul's preaching in Athens (Acts 17) counts as conversion. This is interesting because Luke seems to imply that they are turning to the same god they had worshiped before but only in ignorance. Technically, they did not change their god at all. Does that mean they are not really converted?

<sup>24</sup> By 'etic' I mean describing the phenomenon of conversion in a way that can be ascribed to *various* cultures and contexts irrespective to how individuals within each culture might describe the same phenomenon. This is in contrast to an 'emic' account which would purport to describe conversion in a way that would be meaningful to those *within* the specific culture in which conversion is occurring.

<sup>25</sup> As Conn correctly observes, conversion 'remains one of the most widely used but least understood words in the religious vocabulary' (1982, 323).

the psychological aspects of conversion. These studies depicted conversion as a transformation of an individual's 'self-concept' in which the 'locus of personality' is transformed (Leininger 1975, 191-202) and demonstrated the 'inner tension' involved with religious conversion (Yates 1996).

In contrast to the individualist notion of conversion as proposed by Nock and James, there exists a realm of studies focused on the social aspects of conversion. Influenced largely by the socio-economic philosophies of Marx and Weber, studies such as Turner's 'Religious Conversion and Community Development' show a strong connection between religious conversion and the socio-economic status of a community (1979). Turner shows, for example, that the mass conversion of Tzeltal Indians in the 1950s produced a striking change in their community, namely a decrease in poverty, disease, and illiteracy (1979, 252-260).

While noting the overemphasis of the individual in Nock's and James's portrayals of conversion, Chester references other works (e.g., Meeks 1993) that demonstrate and highlight the role of the community in conversion. Chester then develops a '[b]alanced approach to conversion'<sup>26</sup> in part by maintaining aspects of both individualism and community in conversion. His definition of conversion is 'an experience rooted in both self and society. It involves a personally acknowledged transformation of self and a socially recognised display of change' (Chester 2003, 13).<sup>27</sup>

### 1.3 Setting the Questions

My primary aim is to build a sharp theological profile of both Luke's and Paul's notions of conversion. This is not an *exhaustive* study of conversion in Luke and Paul but one that will endeavor to draw sharp contrast and similarities - as the evidence allows. I wish to understand how Luke and Paul each individually perceived and understood the process/event of religious/moral change from one vision of the world to another more preferable way of being/living in the world. How they understood this change and, to some extent, why they believed this change was necessary is the focus of this study.

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<sup>26</sup> 'Developing a Balanced Approach to Conversion' is Chester's title of Chapter One.

<sup>27</sup> S. Chester borrowed this definition from Jules-Rossette (1976, 132).

The ultimate aim is to analyze and compare the crucial *theological* factors that comprise Luke's and Paul's respective notions of conversion. By theological, I mean how the writers understood the role God (however it is they understood him) played in converting someone from their inherited religion to the Jesus movement. My hope is to provide a theological grid by which Luke's and Paul's conceptions of conversion might be understood in relationship with one another, while concurrently endeavoring not to impose spurious modern categories on these ancient writers.

In order to analyze Luke's and Paul's notions of conversion conscientiously, I have crafted a series of questions that will be applied to both Luke's and Paul's writings. Certainly, Luke and Paul have questions of their own that they are attempting to answer that may or may not be related to the questions below (see 1.4). However, since this is a theological comparison of Luke and Paul, these three mainly theological questions are necessary tools to begin to explore and analyze their ideological constructs of conversion.

The first question is this: according to Luke and Paul, what is the change involved when someone became a 'Christian' or a 'believer'? Determining the intellectual change required (i.e. what one must believe as true) and discovering the nature and extent of the individual spiritual change required (i.e. what must happen spiritually in an individual) are important aspects in building a sharp profile of Luke's and Paul's notion of conversion. A cursory look at the conversion vocabulary used by Paul and Luke which describe this change shows differing emphasis on certain terms (e.g. 'faith' for Paul and 'turn' for Luke). This surface difference may lead one to conclude that they have different meanings behind the terms – but this would be premature. One must be careful not to assume that differing terminology always assumes differing meanings. Prior to a thorough investigation, one must be open to the possibility that different terminology may have theologically similar meanings or, conversely, that differing terminology may indeed have different theological meanings. Likewise, even if they use the same terminology (e.g. 'calling') that does not necessarily prove that they mean the same thing by using the same term. Hence, the aim of my first question is to get to what Luke and Paul believed regarding the change involved in conversion. Of course, in order to do this I must analyze the conversion terms they actually use, but I will be mindful not to assume the meaning of terms divorced from the intention of Paul and Luke.

The second question is this: why is conversion necessary? That humanity needs to ‘be saved’ is evident in Luke (e.g. Luke 1:71; 18:26; Acts 2:21, 47; 4:12) and Paul (Rom. 5:9-10; 8:24; 10:1; 10:9-13)<sup>28</sup> but *why* was religious conversion considered necessary? Taeger has pointed out that anthropology in Luke and Paul is not just an important aspect of their overall notions of theology but of their notions of conversion in particular. Understanding the intrinsic and fundamental nature of humanity is needed to answer this question of why one needed to convert in the first place. Stated positively, what is the motivation for humanity to convert, and, stated negatively, what is the consequence if they do not? I hope to discover how both Paul and Luke understood and characterized humanity’s relationship with God prior to conversion as well as how they were characterized after conversion. Discovering the major differences between individuals pre-conversion and post-conversion and the nature and extent of their relationship with God pre-conversion and post-conversion is an important goal with respect to this question.

The third question I will ask regards the relationship of human and divine agency in conversion. Questions of agency in conversion remain a central feature of controversy within Christian theology.<sup>29</sup> The recent volume, *Divine and Human Agency in Paul and his Cultural Environment*, edited by Barclay and Gathercole (2008) show this to be an important issue not just in Paul’s theology but also in the wider 1<sup>st</sup> Century CE Jewish and Greco-Roman world. It permeated not just the religious texts of the day but also may have impacted the content of daily prayers.<sup>30</sup> Hence the question is this: in what way and to what extent, if any, is an individual an active agent in his/her own conversion? Conversely, in what way and to what extent, if any, is God the active agent in the religious conversion of an individual? Determining the role of each (i.e. the individual

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<sup>28</sup> Of course, whatever it is they mean by ‘saved’ cannot be answered at this point.

<sup>29</sup> Paul’s antithetical statements regarding divine grace and human works (Rom. 11:6) compared with his more positive statements regarding human agency (e.g. Phil. 2:12-13) have sparked heated debates spanning the length of Christendom itself. Barclay states that ‘In the long and rich history of reception of Paul, his statements on agency have spawned extremely violent debates – most notably in Augustine’s debates with Pelagius, and subsequently in numerous disputes between Protestants and Catholics, internal arguments among Catholic theologians, and bitter controversies between Protestant sects’ (2008, 2).

<sup>30</sup> In personal correspondence with D. Instone-Brewer, I learned that, in the *18 Benedictions* prayer, number five has two textual traditions, one saying ‘Cause us to repent and we will repent’ and the other saying plainly ‘we will repent’. Instone-Brewer thinks that this is an indication of a divine/human agency controversy in 1<sup>st</sup> Century CE Judaism. Cf. Chapter Three.

and God) as well as the relationship these roles play together (whether synergistically, monolithically or something else) is the goal of this question.

Since determining agency is an important aim and goal of my dissertation, I will pay particularly close attention to the notion of ‘repentance’ in conversion. Indeed what both Luke and Paul meant by ‘repentance’ in the context of conversion may be a key variable in determining how they understood agency. Repentance itself had various meanings in the ancient Jewish and Greco-Roman world (cf. Chapter Three) yet it was used consistently to describe the conversion event. Hence, determining the range of the meaning of repentance available to Luke and Paul is an important part of my task. Determining how their usage of repentance fits with or is distinguished from prior streams of thought about repentance is vital in our quest to construct a theological profile on conversion. Moreover, coming to an understanding of how Paul and Luke use repentance may also provide insight into their notions of anthropology. Was repentance understood as a gift or as a requirement from the divine already imbedded in human nature? Was repentance believed to be fundamentally a call to God, and thus a phenomenon mostly separated from human capacity, or was it fundamentally a call to oneself (albeit in light of the reality of God) - a summoning of the *true* self that already existed in the individual?

#### 1.4 Methodology and Presuppositions

The central focus of my study will be a theological analysis of Luke and Paul’s notion of conversion rather than a psychological one. That is, I will concentrate on their *idea* of conversion, not so much the practical observable manifestations of conversion. My interest is in their theology of conversion more than the social and psychological reality of conversion. While Chester was quite right to say Paul’s notion of conversion was really ‘soteriology in action’ (2003, 53), the present study will focus on the theological/soteriological aspect of Chester’s equation rather than the sociological/psychological realities of conversion.

An important point to make regarding my methodology is what I mean by trying to understand the ‘thought of Luke/Paul’. Because this thesis is a theological study of conversion rather than an historical study of it, there may be points when a more

traditional historical/sociological approach would point out that Luke and Paul have slightly different concerns than those highlighted in this thesis. Indeed, if one understands the historical setting and spends the time to establish a theory of a particular social situation of a text, that then would indeed make a huge impact not only on how one reads the text but also on how one extracts the theology of it as well (cf. Watson 2007). The limitations of my approach – focusing on the theological more than the historical and sociological – diminishes the possibility to actually understand the whole of the setting of Luke’s and Paul’s context as they were writing and thus gives less confidence in knowing their actual ‘thoughts’. Hence, at points, it may very well be that case that my questions and the agenda of this thesis will overtake the actual agenda of Paul and Luke respectively. However, this is not merely an exercise in *eisegesis*. Rather, as the title of this thesis suggests, these are theological *and* exegetical explorations of conversion in Luke and Paul. While I have given priority to my theological observations and reflections in Luke and Paul produced by the questions above, I also endeavor to be led to these theological observations and reflections based on the theological/rhetorical product given to us by Luke and Paul. Therefore, it is a careful grammatical, exegetical, and concept-oriented terminological analysis of the texts under examination that will provide the foundation for my theological observations. While it may be an overstatement to claim to understand Luke’s and Paul’s concepts of conversion, I certainly endeavor that by the end of this exploration, while limited in nature, we will have been led there, to some extent, by Luke and Paul themselves.

Paul and Luke are the two most prolific writers in the NT. Thus, any attempt to compare their systems of thought will be in constant danger of over-generalization. Yet, just as environmental scientists select small strategic samples of soil to test for pollutants rather than testing every square inch of the contaminated plot to ascertain a scientific conclusion, so, too, I plan to select important samples of the writings of Luke and Paul. The limited nature of my method, however, decreases the possibility to claim these texts are in fact ‘representative’. Yet, in each chapter I will demonstrate that these selected texts have, in no way, been randomly chosen. Rather the texts under examination will be shown to be very important texts in the Lukan and Pauline corpus precisely as they concern the topic of conversion. That is, they show themselves, to some degree, to have

a ‘paradigmatic’ significance while at the same time not representing the whole of Luke’s and Paul’s thinking of conversion. Hence while I cannot claim that these texts are representative portions of Luke’s and Paul’s notion of conversion great effort will be given to show that they are important samples of their notions of conversion nevertheless. As the title of my thesis points out, these are *some* theological and exegetical explorations of conversion in Luke and Paul.

The process of text selection is important in order to show that the texts are, in some ways, notably significant to Luke and Paul as it concerns their notions of conversion. This is especially the case with Luke’s writings because of his medium of story (Green 1995, 3). That is, if common elements of conversion can be found in several of his conversion stories, then a single story that has most or all of these common elements might then be considered a significant text that is rightly noted as outstanding as it relates to conversion. This is also a major method in discovering Luke’s actual theology. Themes in Luke that come up repeatedly in his narrative give scholars more confidence in determining important aspects of Luke’s theology compared to when themes arise only once or twice (Mendez-Moratalla 2004).<sup>31</sup> For Paul, this is not *quite* as important an issue, because his medium allowed him to deal with this topic of conversion more head-on than Luke’s medium did. However, there does need to be a justification of the Pauline texts under examination in order to make the claim that they are important in Paul’s overall thought on conversion.

My section on Luke (3 chapters) will be longer than my section on Paul (2 chapters). The burden of proof lies in the reasoning that Luke’s theology can be detected in the analysis of *numerous* stories. For Paul, since his letters allowed him to communicate more straightforwardly, we need less of his texts to demonstrate (within reason and within the length-limits of this dissertation) what he believed regarding conversion.

The question now regards the method of comparing these two writers. Mohrlang’s monograph *Matthew and Paul* presents one method of ancient comparative study (1984).

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<sup>31</sup> Marshall points out the tension in studying the ‘theology’ of Luke by noting that in Acts, Luke gives his own accounts of speeches in so doing making it difficult to know if these speeches were Luke’s theology or that of the early church figure he was describing. Marshall suggests that ‘we are probably to assume that he thought that his own view did not seriously differ from theirs’ (1999, 7). However, if similar themes are repeated in these speeches then it is not a stretch to speak of a truly Lukan theology.

His work is an analysis of ethics in Paul and Matthew. Mohrlang's chapters on 'Law', 'Reward and Punishment', 'Relationship to Christ and the Role of Grace', 'Love', and 'Inner Forces' each end with a comparison of Matthew and Paul on these topics. While this multiple comparison method has some advantages (i.e. the broader scope may provide a more rounded depiction of Matthew's and Paul's notion of ethics), one wonders how Mohrlang is able to assess Paul's and Matthew's central ethic accurately and thoroughly based on a general survey of the respective topics. Indeed, it is difficult to know for sure if these individual themes on ethics, as Mohrlang has construed them, represent Matthew's and Paul's *own* categories of ethics. Alternatively, my approach will comprise two parts. Part One will address Luke and conversion. Part Two will address Paul and conversion. After delving into the theological heart of what both Luke and Paul say regarding conversion, I will then move to the actual comparison and final conclusions based on the previous two parts above.

At the risk of being considered epistemologically naïve, I endeavor to extract the theological core of Luke's and Paul's notion of conversion.<sup>32</sup> Therefore, in my analysis of the Gospel of Luke, I will utilize redaction criticism with a view to discovering the distinctive features of his theology. The benefit of redaction criticism is that, if done well, it can equip one to gain insight into the theological motives that shape Luke's handling of his material. Following in the footsteps of Conzelmann (cf. 2.6), I wish to show that Luke's arrangement of his Gospel reflects a theological motive and thus is useful in understanding his thoughts on conversion. However, while the alterations made by Luke are the featured 'evidence' of his theology, the theology itself is to be extracted from the texts as a whole rather than *just* the alterations.<sup>33</sup>

This dissertation is a theological analysis of the 'text as it stands' rather than an historical analysis of the text in order to ascertain what 'actually happened' historically. The rhetorical/theological product (i.e. Luke, Acts, and each of Paul's 'authentic'

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<sup>32</sup> However, this is based on the limited method of this particular study.

<sup>33</sup> Of course, far too much has been assumed by adherents of redaction criticism as was helpfully pointed out by Gaventa (noted in Marshall's essay 'How Does One Write a Theology of Acts?' 1999). By mentioning redaction criticism here, I only wish to point out some of the obvious differences between Luke and the other synoptic writers which show, among other things, an unusually large emphasis on repentance (cf. Chapter Three).

epistles)<sup>34</sup> are the subject of my investigation, rather than being a tool by which I try to see beyond the ideology of these texts into the history of the first century CE world.<sup>35</sup>

When writing about ‘the thought of Luke’ on conversion, I will draw from both the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles. While I assume a *basic* unity between these two books, I also endeavor to appreciate the differences between them.<sup>36</sup> In his impressive edited volume, *The Unity of Luke-Acts*, Verheyden presents essays on the role of the Spirit (Fitzmyer 1999: 165-183), Christology (Tuckett 1999, 133-164) and Abrahamic Covenant Traditions (Brawley 1999, 109-132). Each of these, in their own way, suggests a basic theological unity between Luke and Acts. However, in the essay ‘The Jews in Luke-Acts’ Rese shows that Luke’s treatment of the Jews in Luke is in some ways different from that in Acts. There may be basic theological unity in Luke-Acts but also a measure of diversity between these two volumes that needs to be accounted for in my theological analysis. On the whole, however, I think O’Toole is correct to suggest that ‘one truncates the thought of Luke’ if only the Gospel or Acts is used (1985, 353). I find it necessary to have important selections from both Luke and Acts in order to capture the thought of Luke on conversion.

There is *some* evidence that the writer of Luke-Acts was, in fact, a person named Luke who was involved in the ministry of Paul as early church tradition points in this direction (Eusebius’s *Eccl. Hist.* 3.4).<sup>37</sup> Whether or not, and to what extent, Luke knew

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<sup>34</sup> In my study of Paul, I will limit my research to the standard seven unquestioned Pauline epistles (Galatians, Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians, Philemon).

<sup>35</sup> As Jasper has put it, ‘[b]y focusing upon *text* rather than *context*, these literary readings of the Bible claim to overcome the hermeneutical problem of the “two horizons”, that is, the gap between the ancient text and the modern reader. By concentrating on the literary qualities of the biblical text, the reader encounters with new immediacy their power and mystery’ (1998, 27).

<sup>36</sup> This was the helpful warning in Parsons and Pervo’s monograph *Rethinking the Unity of Luke and Acts* (1993); they did not argue for different authors of Luke and Acts but only that scholars should take care in assuming too casually the thematic unity of Luke and Acts. The recent work of Patricia Walter, however, does question the authorial unity of Luke and Paul, as is suggested by the title of her book, *The Assumed Authorial Unity of Luke and Acts: A Reassessment of the Evidence* (2009). Walter’s method of statistics however, which she suggests proves her different authors theory ‘beyond a reasonable doubt’ – is largely unconvincing even among scholars who may be sympathetic to her quest (2009, 191; cf. Pervo’s comments in *Review of Biblical Literature* 2009).

<sup>37</sup> As Parsons states ‘The extrabiblical evidence that these two books are by the same hand dates as early as the last third of the second century, when both the Muratorian Canon (the earliest known list of writings deemed canonical by the church) and the early church father Irenaeus, bishop of Lyons, identify Luke as the author of both the Third Gospel and the book of Acts’ (2007, 2). Of course, it is not necessary for my thesis whether or not ‘Luke’ was in fact the author of Luke-Acts. I only mention this evidence above to

Paul's letters is more difficult to judge, however. Most assume that due to their apparently different theologies, Luke must not have been familiar with Paul's letters (e.g. Kümmel 1975). Walker argues vigorously, however, that Luke *was* familiar with Paul's letters but that Luke placed Paul's theology in the preaching of Peter rather than Paul (except in Acts 13:39) (1985).<sup>38</sup> However, for the purposes of my dissertation, whether or not Luke knew Paul personally or had read his letters, it is clear that Luke's writings are fundamentally his own. Hence, my comparison between Luke and Paul is one that represents two largely independent thinkers of the early Christian movement.

While I wish to reconstruct the actual thoughts and theology of Paul and Luke regarding conversion as stated in my aims and objectives and within the limitations of my theological method, I nevertheless hope to be self-aware and conscious of the biases that I will undoubtedly bring to the text in the course of this study. My upbringing, educational background, and religious convictions will unquestionably influence how I read these texts even as I endeavor to engage with Paul and Luke as objectively as possible. Therefore, I cannot, with a clear conscience, claim that my presentation will be free from bias. In fact, I cannot claim to be a 'disinterested scholar,' for I certainly hope my own theological perspective can add an element of life and color to the discussion, while at the same time, not distort the picture. In language borrowed from Bockmuehl (1998), I hope my research will be akin to an investigative reporter who strives to get actual video and first-hand accounts of what Paul and Luke actually believed. Yet, I also recognize that I will eventually deliver this report in my own words and from my own perspective.

### *Conclusions*

The fallout from Baur's *Tendenzkritik* created a fractured theological relationship between Luke and Paul. Since then many have tried to understand their theologies in light of each other, producing mixed results. While Taeger penetrated deep into their

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assess what some have thought regarding the identity of the writer of Luke-Acts. From this point on I will refer to 'Luke' as the writer of Luke-Acts regardless of his actual identity.

<sup>38</sup> Luke did this for the sake of Paul's reputation – if Peter was really the originator of the Gentile mission, then Paul's missionary journeys and churches he planted were legitimized. Thus Luke's depiction of the early church is one in which the original Apostles and Paul were in fundamental congruence (cf. Walker 1985, 17).

anthropologies, he left open the notion of conversion to be explored more thoroughly. Since a detailed theological analysis of conversion in the theologies of Luke and Paul has yet to be conducted, I have selected it as the subject of this dissertation. While pitfalls abound in the sociological study of conversion in antiquity, these hazards can be avoided by studying how two individuals in antiquity conceived of conversion theologically.

I will analyze the theology of conversion based on the writings of Luke and Paul. Consequently the story of Paul's conversion in Acts is considered purely Lukan by virtue of it being a part of his literary/theological product – Luke/Acts. This will help bypass some of the methodological problems in previous approaches to conversion in Paul and Luke. I am equipped with three basic theological questions that will be used to help probe Luke's and Paul's perception of conversion: What is the change involved in conversion? Why is conversion necessary? Who is ultimately responsible for conversion? Answering these three basic questions will go a long way in helping us discover how Luke and Paul understood the reality of religious conversion in the early Christian Church.

While the extent of the historical relationship between Luke and Paul may never be known for certain, we can make strides in understanding their theological relationship. We still have the literary products of Paul and Luke themselves, even if many scholars no longer trust Eusebius's depiction of their historical relationship. While Baur's work led to the divorce of Paul and Luke, a fresh analysis of their theologies may help us to clarify their theological relationship. Theologically speaking, are Luke and Paul foes, friends or something else entirely? To answer this question, we now dive into select streams of scholarly discussion that reveal where the discord between Luke and Paul traditionally has been and these streams will help frame our fresh area of exploration between them.

## CHAPTER TWO

### CONTOURS OF CONVERSION IN PAULINE AND LUKAN SCHOLARSHIP

*I have only desired to cite works which either played a part of some value in the development of Pauline study, or were in some way typical. The fact that a work has been left unmentioned does not by any means necessarily imply that it has not been examined.*

- Albert Schweitzer

Quoted from his preface to *Paul and His Interpreters*, xi.

Albert Schweitzer inspires and intimidates in his confidence to review only the works on Paul that were significant as well as paradigmatic of the broader field of Pauline studies. Schweitzer's claim is the aim of any review of scholarship: a massively researched document that is nevertheless thoughtfully selective in its final product. It is intimidating because of the inherent responsibility placed on the scholar's shoulders, in whom others will trust, to give a fair representation of individual scholars reviewed as well as providing a broad-brush account of a particular academic field. To be forthright, I do not have total confidence to achieve what Schweitzer set out to accomplish in his work nearly one hundred years ago. Significant works on Paul and Luke are far too numerous for this scholar to read and consider them all. Indeed, any such claim of exhaustive knowledge of significant works in these areas of study reveal one's ignorance of the absolute vastness of the expanding academic fields of Pauline and Lukan studies. Instead of offering a broad array of Pauline and Lukan scholarship, I have limited my review to four significant Pauline scholars and seven important Lukan scholars. Each of the reviewed scholars below have contributed in their own way and to varying degrees in our quest to understand how Paul and Luke conceived of conversion theologically.

In this review I have three objectives that I will endeavor to achieve related to the selected scholars. My first objective is to broaden, intensify and deepen the three theological questions posed in Chapter One. (1) How have scholars answered for Luke and Paul respectively what sort of change is involved in conversion? Related to this is discovering how scholars have understood terms such as ‘faith’, ‘transformation’ and ‘repentance’ in relation to conversion. Was there something to be believed in for conversion to occur? How deep of an ontological change is necessary for conversion to happen and, furthermore, to what extent, if any, was there any ontological continuity between someone before conversion and after conversion? (2) Why should someone convert in the first place? What was the reason/motivation for conversion and what difference did it make if they did or did not convert? (3) Who was *responsible* for conversion and how did the interplay between human and divine agency work in Luke and Paul? While some scholars will address more questions than others, each one will help to answer at least one of the above queries.

The second objective in this chapter is to sharpen how the answers to the questions above compare and contrast between Luke and Paul. I will highlight scholars whose discussions of Paul or Luke come into obvious contrast and comparison with each other. I will then try to rub these contrasts together to discover where the tension has been between Luke and Paul in these scholarly considerations. I will also highlight some scholars who give an overt comparison between the theologies of Paul and Luke.

My third objective is to determine which *texts* in the Lukan and Pauline corpus show most explicitly Paul’s and Luke’s theologies of conversion and where they compare/contrast with each other most clearly. It is my hope that the result of this chapter will provide a good understanding of where the most relevant passages are in Luke and Paul that exemplify their thoughts on conversion.

It must be noted that many significant scholars have been left out, not least, E. P. Sanders. He is not included for two reasons: (1) I deal with his contribution to the understanding of Paul and repentance in Chapter Seven and engage with him on a number of other occasions throughout this project. Thus, while he is not a featured scholar in this review, he is in no way being ignored. (2) Sanders is perhaps the most reviewed Pauline scholar of the past 35 years, and so I do not feel the need to retread

what has been sufficiently stated about his obvious impact on Pauline studies (e.g. Best 1982; Dunn 1983, 1985; Gundry 1985; Udoh 2009) and the weaknesses of his work (e.g. Cooper 1982; Williamson 1984; Schreiner 1985).

Less appreciated today, however, are two older scholars to whom Sanders was responding, Bultmann and Käsemann. If Pauline studies were a mountain range, Bultmann and Käsemann would surely be two of the highest peaks (Riches 1993, esp. 70-88 and 201-203). Bultmann's massively influential work *Theology of the New Testament*, represents perhaps the greatest exegetical and theological triumph in Pauline studies in the twentieth century.<sup>1</sup> Indeed Riches suggest that 'his work on Paul, in his essays and in the *Theology of the New Testament*, was the most influential single body of work in New Testament studies' (1993, 125). My hope in beginning with a review of these two scholars is that, as a result, we can better understand the scholarly framework of Paul's theology of conversion. Moreover, these two scholars have done much to set the agenda regarding how conversion in Paul is to be understood and have shown (esp. Käsemann) how he contrasts with the theology of Luke.

The other two Pauline scholars I review in this chapter have made a unique contribution to the field of Pauline studies in general, and his notion of conversion in particular. Segal (1990) suggests that Paul's conversion experience influenced his own theology massively. Paul's conversion was the byproduct of his encounter with the *kavod* of God and, as such, his theology of conversion involved a radical process of being transformed by God's glory. Chester (2003) engages in a theological and sociological study of conversion as it was fleshed out for Paul and his incorrigible church 'plant' in Corinth. In this review we will see how he contributes to our understanding of agency in Paul specifically in relation to Paul's 'calling' language in Rom. 9.

In my section on Luke, I have selected seven important scholars in the field of Luke-Acts studies. The issues these scholars raise are directly related to the theology of conversion in Luke-Acts. The seminal work by Cadbury (1968) addresses the motivation for conversion for Jews and Gentiles while arguing for a de-emphasized role of the cross in Luke's notion of conversion. In his significant monograph *The Theology of St Luke*

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<sup>1</sup> As Dahl comments regarding Bultmann's work that it goes 'beyond mere description to profound interpretation. It is a great achievement' (Dahl 1974, 112-113).

(1961) Conzelmann gives theological grounding for why Luke describes conversion in far less apocalyptic terms than Paul did. Dibelius (1956) offers a thesis based on Acts 17 regarding an unfiltered Lukan theology that shows the ontological unity of an individual before and after conversion. Esler's work *Community and Gospel in Luke-Acts* (1987) provides a reason why Luke emphasized the 'fruits of repentance' rather than just the offer of eschatological salvation. Marshall/Stenschke (1970, 1998) show in Luke the necessity of conversion and Ravens/Moessner (1995, 1998) argue the Luke understands conversion in light of a 'Jewish-style' repentance which is an 'old way' of salvation.<sup>2</sup>

We will begin our exploration of conversion in Luke and Paul with Bultmann's influential thesis regarding Paul and conversion.

### 2.1 R. Bultmann<sup>3</sup>

Paul converted to Christianity through the kerygma of the early Hellenistic Church and according to his own testimony, needed little support from the other apostles to validate his conversion and call (Gal. 1:1, 11-17). Bultmann claims that Paul brought to the fore various difficulties within the early kerygma of the church and was likely the first to marshal the loose ends of Christianity into an intellectually ordered whole. In this regard, argues Bultmann, Paul can rightly be called 'the founder of Christian theology' (1955, 187).<sup>4</sup> One's acceptance of the kerygma was reduced to an acknowledgment and agreement that 'in the cross of Christ' God passed judgment on one's 'self-understanding' (1955, 187). According to Bultmann's reconstruction of Paul's pre-conversion Judaism, his 'self-understanding' consisted of a works-righteousness by which he earned the right through the law to boast before God (Rom 2:17, 23; 4:2; 1 Cor. 1:29, 31; cf. 2 Cor. 11:30 and 12:9). More than any conflict with particularities of the law, for Paul the kerygma undermined the fundamental assumption of the law itself. That is, the law, as it turns out, cannot be used meritoriously in personal salvation. The main

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<sup>2</sup> Important studies on Luke's notion of repentance and conversion by Nave (2002) and Mendez-Moratalla (2004) are covered, at some length, in Chapter Three.

<sup>3</sup> Bultmann's writings on Paul are far too broad to review in this context; thus I will limit my review to his 'The Theology of Paul' in *Theology of the New Testament* Vol. 2 (1955). Cf. Cahill (1977) for a wide-ranging review of Bultmann's overall theological impact (cf. also Gray 1974).

<sup>4</sup> A claim strongly disputed in the recent monograph by Eisenbaum entitled *Paul was Not a Christian* (2009).

objective in this investigation of Bultmann is to decipher how he believed one *did* obtain this ‘salvation’ - and thus to bring to light his Pauline conception of conversion.

For Bultmann, Paul’s notion of conversion was quite different from how conversion traditionally had worked in the Judaism of Paul’s day. Paul’s antithesis between faith and law made it inadequate to use traditional conversion language associated with Judaism – ‘repentance’ being the primary example of this difficulty.

Neither is it adequate to understand faith as trust, founded on repentance, in God’s gracious forgiveness which brings the sinner back to the way of the Law which in his transgressions he had forsaken...The very rarity of the terms ‘forgiveness of sins’ and ‘repentance’ in Paul and the similar rarity of ἐπιστρέφειν (‘turn to’ – only at I Thes. 1:9 and II Cor. 3:16 in Paul) indicate that the movement of will contained in ‘faith’ is not primarily remorse and repentance. Of course, they are included in it; but it is primarily the obedience which waives righteousness of one’s own...Phil. 3:7-9 is not the self-condemnation of Paul’s previous life as one soiled by trespasses....Rather, it describes his sacrifice of all that had been his pride and ‘gain’ in existence under the Law. It is evident that ‘faith’ has the character of obedience and is an act of decision (1955, 317).

The meaning of repentance, which Bultmann believed to be a genuine act of the will (1955, 214), was *not* contrary to the notion of faith, but was subsumed within it. According to Bultmann, Paul believed this was so because it matched his own conversion experience.<sup>5</sup> Paul’s ‘was not a conversion of repentance; neither, of course, was it one of emancipating enlightenment. Rather it was obedient submission to the judgment of God, made known in the cross of Christ, upon all human accomplishment and boasting. It is as such that his conversion is reflected in his theology’ (1955, 188). The preaching of the cross confronted Paul and led to his conversion. This also informed Paul’s theology of

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<sup>5</sup> In Chapter One, I draw attention to the methodological problems with Bultmann’s beginning with an historical reconstruction of Paul’s conversion and then proceeding to his theology of conversion based on that reconstruction.

conversion - a theology that called humanity to make a decision.<sup>6</sup> One must either accept God's judgment or reject it and face the consequence of God's wrath.

Bultmann builds his notion of conversion as 'decision' upon his understanding of Paul's anthropology. The aspect of the individual that makes 'decision' possible is wrapped up in Bultmann's notion of the 'self',<sup>7</sup> which he believed to be the truly unique feature of humanity. According to Bultmann, *soma*<sup>8</sup> is the 'whole person' (1955, 192) or the 'self' (1955, 195).<sup>9</sup> Bultmann uses *soma* as 'self' to draw out a Pauline conception that it is possible to render the 'self' as the object of one's own action (e.g. 1 Cor 7:2; 9:27; 13:3; 2 Cor. 5:10; Rom 6:12ff; 8:3; 12:1; Phil 1:20).<sup>10</sup> One can, at least theoretically, have control over the 'self' or, alternatively, one can lose the 'self' and make it 'the subject to whom something happens' (1955, 195). Hence Bultmann's exploration of humanity is that it has a 'double possibility' (1955, 196). That is, either one has control of the 'self' or is 'estranged from himself' (1955, 196). Yet if it is determined that one is estranged from one's 'self', then that means one is separated from the good which one truly desires.

Bultmann then explains that humanity's problem is its incapacity to find its 'self'. As Bultmann states, '*Man has always already missed the existence that at heart he seeks*' (1955, 227; emphasis his). In spite of humanity's inability to find the 'self' it continues to seek after it, nevertheless, which only makes the problem worse. Humanity seeks the self within the realm of creation rather than seeking it from God who is the Creator (Rom.

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<sup>6</sup> Cahill describes this aspect of Bultmann's thinking quite well, 'It is in the world of interior experience that "the moment", "now", "decision," and "authenticity" have their meaning. One cannot distance himself from these concepts without distorting the reality they stand for. The word is addressed to the hearer in a moment...The psychological moment does not form a continuum of any kind; therefore obedience to the word is not a habit or a permanent possession but rather depends for its existence on affirmations made in discrete moments. Theological understanding must develop conceptually, which preserves the integrity of the internal world, transmits the demand of the word in the moment, and stimulates the potential believer to a critical appropriation of his existence' (1977, 258).

<sup>7</sup> It is here where Bultmann becomes quite vulnerable to charges against him as overly individualistic. Indeed in his conception of the self there are no strands of thought which try to integrate the individual with obvious social aspects of the self (e.g. Rom. 12:4, 5; 1 Cor. 12:20).

<sup>8</sup> I have adopted Bultmann's transliteration style in this edition of his book whereas I will use the Greek elsewhere in my dissertation.

<sup>9</sup> Bultmann's analysis of Paul's anthropology is based on an impressive study of Paul's key anthropological terms in his section titled "Man Prior to the Revelation of Faith" (1955, 192-269). Cf. however, Gundry's work, *Sōma in Biblical Theology* (2005) which was written against Bultmann's rendering of *soma* as 'person' in favor of reading it as referring to the physical body.

<sup>10</sup> Bultmann leans heavily on Rom. 7:15-25 in his unique rendering of the 'self' (cf. his essay 'Romans 7 and the Anthropology of Paul: Existence and Faith' 1960).

1:25). ‘Hence, the ultimate sin reveals itself to be the false assumption of receiving life not as the gift of the Creator but procuring it by one’s own power, of living from one’s self rather than from God’ (1955, 232).<sup>11</sup>

The only hope for humanity to find its true self is moving to ‘the situation under grace’ (1955, 268). Grace is placed in direct antithesis to works of the law (1955, 281) because the law increases the problem of seeking the self within one’s own resources. This is why the letter ‘kills’ (2 Cor. 3:6) – knowing the law provokes rebellion in the core of humanity and leads to death. Indeed, the intent of the law was never to help one find one’s self but was to bring death *so that* humanity may encounter the one who raises the dead – to meet the Creator himself (1955, 267). This life from the Creator is given as a gift of grace.

The question now is how exactly does this conversion from law to grace actually happen in the life of an individual? For Bultmann it takes ‘effect as a compelling and transforming power, when it can be understood as directed at man, reaching him, happening to him – i.e. when the challenge to accept it as salvation-occurrence thrusts him into genuine decision’ (1955, 294-295). This decision erupts in an individual when one is confronted specially with the kerygma which is a ‘herald’s service...[a] personal address which accosts each individual, throwing the person himself into question by rendering his self-understanding problematic, and demanding a decision of him’ (1955, 307). The converting act, then, comes about with the decision to respond in *faith* to the confronting ‘word’ of Christ.

What Bultmann means by faith is that it is both *obedience* and a ‘faith *in...*’ something in particular (emphasis mine). It is a ‘self-surrender to the grace of God which signifies the utter reversal of a man’s previous understanding of himself – specifically, the radical surrender of his human “boasting”’ (1955, 300). But it is also simultaneously a ‘confession’ one surrenders while also believing in certain facts. Faith has a ‘dogmatic’

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<sup>11</sup> Thus the ‘ontological possibility of being good or evil is ontically the choice of either acknowledging the Creator and obeying Him, or of refusing Him obedience’ (1955, 228).

quality to it.<sup>12</sup> The key to Bultmann's conception of conversion is his understanding of Rom. 10:9-10:

Because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.

For Bultmann converting faith includes confessing that 'Jesus is Lord' and hence offering one's complete obedience to him. It is also 'believing' that God raised him from the dead which shows what exactly one must *believe in* in order to be converted. It is here in Rom. 10:9-10 that Bultmann argues the *whole person* (i.e. the mouth [external] and the heart [internal]) appropriates one's salvation (the person is 'rightwised' [εἰς δικαιοσύνην] which causes his 'salvation' [εἰς σωτηρίαν]) and is converted.

While Bultmann does not deny that this decision to convert is itself, in a sense, a gift of grace (1955, 329), to what *extent* does Bultmann allow Paul to explain God's agency in conversion? Bultmann's thoroughgoing notion of the self is clear enough above, but how does he explain the relationship between the agency of God and that of the individual precisely at this moment of decision? The text block below allows Bultmann to explain this relationship in his own words:

If such statements about God's 'foreknowing' and 'predestining' or His 'electing' and 'hardening' be taken literally, an insoluble contradiction results, for a faith brought about by God outside of man's decision would obviously not be genuine obedience. Faith is God-wrought to the extent that prevenient grace first made the human decision possible, with the result that he who has made the decision can only understand it as God's gift; but that does not take its decision-character away from it.

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<sup>12</sup> 'Faith, therefore, is not "piety" or trust-in-God in general. Rather, it has a 'dogmatic character....What is heard contains a knowing' (1955, 318); Cf. Campbell (2009) who argues for the exact opposite meaning of faith which will be discussed at length in Chapter Eight.

For Bultmann, Paul's thinking on conversion that transcends the notion and control of the self is dangerous and blatantly contradictory. Yet, it is precisely here, in the notion of God's agency in conversion especially in Rom. 9, where Bultmann's notion of self and conversion may be in conflict with Paul's notion of conversion. It is in Rom. 9 where Paul states explicitly that one becomes a child of God *not by choice* of the individual but exclusively by the choice of God himself (esp. Rom. 9:16). Hence Bultmann does not explain the relationship between God's agency on Rom. 9 and the apparent human agency in Rom. 10.

Furthermore, does Paul, in some sense, call into question an aspect of Bultmann's notion of the self? Bultmann argued that in conversion there is no 'magical or mysterious transformation of man in regard to his substance...' (1955, 268). Indeed, 'his new existence stands in historical continuity with the old...' (1955, 269). That is, being under faith allows humanity to be at one in its true existence. However, Paul's notion of 'new creation' (2 Cor. 5:17) does not factor heavily into Bultmann's discussion here. Bultmann does not explain how Paul could also describe conversion in the more radical monolithic act of making something from nothing (Rom. 9:20-23). Hence, we are left with a question regarding Bultmann's equation of salvation as that which is fundamentally a *reunion with one's true self* enacted by a *decision made by the self*.

As our exploration continues we will see Käsemann challenge Bultmann's notion of the continuous self. After that we will see Chester argue, in contrast to Bultmann, that conversion is principally a matter of *God's* decision, not humanity's decision.

## 2.2 E. Käsemann

For Käsemann, it is with regard to the notion of New Creation and in regard to the notion of the continuous self where Bultmann went wrong.<sup>13</sup> As Käsemann explains:

The notion of an inherent continuity of life is alien to Paul's thinking. In places where we should speak of development, the idea of miracle takes hold in Paul, the

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<sup>13</sup> Käsemann points out that Paul did not follow the Jewish understanding of the continuing *imago dei* in humanity. In light of this, there is need of New Creation – a new work which makes man able once again to have a relationship with his Creator. Thus while the Jews 'maintained that a divine likeness still remained', Paul was convinced that 'only Christ has and is *imago dei*, an image which is only given back to us with faith' (1971, 8).

miracle which bridges the gap between different things. Thus baptism marks the death of the old man and miraculous beginning of a new life under the banner of the resurrection. That is why in Gal 2:20 he declares: 'it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.' In the same way, in Rom. 7:10 the fall is described as being the death of the original creature. Adam is a different person before and after the fall (1971, 8).<sup>14</sup>

Hence Bultmann was incorrect to make 'the individual the starting point of Pauline theology even when we are considering Paul's concept of salvation history, which is certainly related to man' (1969, 65). Conversion for Käsemann is not a reunion with the self. 'Man never belongs to himself; he always has a lord whose power is manifested through him. We might also put it as follows: we live in and from spheres of powers' (1971, 9). This is why the notion of Baptism in Rom. 6 is so important for Paul because it shows one dying to old powers (death and sin) and coming to new life under a new power (the Creator); indeed baptism shows one to be a product of New Creation.

According to Käsemann, conversion begins not with a better understanding of the self but of the preaching of the cross that is 'directed against all religious illusion' (1971, 35).<sup>15</sup> The cross is not a haven from hostilities, but is God's laser-guided missile against humanity's arrogant religiosity. Käsemann is mindful that for Paul the world was not a place of transcendence but was a war zone where flesh is broken and blood is spilt. 'The world is not neutral ground; it is a battlefield, and everyone is a combatant' (1971, 23). He notes Paul's comment in Gal 6:14 that 'the Christian's experience is most deeply

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<sup>14</sup> '...to Paul discontinuity is the mark of both existence and history, not only in what is to hand in them but also in their encounters with salvation. It is only God who gives continuity, the God who, as creator, does not abandon his creatures, not even after the fall and far less under the token of promise and grace. In the whole of history, continuity only results from the divine faithfulness; and hence it manifests itself in miracle' (1971, 9).

<sup>15</sup> There is basic agreement between Bultmann and Käsemann regarding how one actually converts – to respond in faith to the preached word. In line with Bultmann, Käsemann insists on preaching as the primary tool for conversion. Anything less engaging would detract from the message about the cross. 'Assurance of salvation *only* comes through preaching' (1971, 50 emphasis mine). This experience of salvation then, is over and against a construct of salvation by which people simply adhere to certain facts of history. Such a person 'is bound to fall into uncertainty of salvation...' (1971, 50). Käsemann is of the perspective that faith based too heavily on history turns itself into the type of religion that the cross actually fights against. He characterizes a strong history of salvation as being 'primarily the sum total of certain dogmatic convictions and a piety which puts particular ideals into practice or immerses itself in particular mysteries – in short a form of religiosity' (1971, 52).

stamped by the fact that through Jesus' cross the world is crucified to him and he is crucified to the world' (1971, 37).<sup>16</sup>

It is at the cross where the Creator works with an empty chaotic void to produce salvation. There are no raw materials to work with and neither is God aided by the creature's *self-help* (*contra* Bultmann). In terms of soteriology the cross points out, 'true man is always the sinner who is fundamentally unable to help himself, who cannot by his own action bridge the endless distance to God, and who is hence a member of the lost, chaotic, futile world, which at best waits for the resurrection of the dead' (1971, 40). And from the view of this unmatched creative event, one's attempt at reaching God and perfection is cast in its proper light. That is, in view of the cross, religion and piety is revealed to be nothing short of the very height of arrogance.<sup>17</sup>

It is in the later development of the New Testament, most notably Luke, where salvation history modifies Paul's theology of the cross.<sup>18</sup> Having to deal with the fact that the *eschaton* had not come, Paul's disciples (whom Käsemann believed Luke to be among), were forced to domesticate the notion of the cross in order to make it function harmoniously within the church (1969, 239; cf. Conzelmann below). In an effort to shield Paul from the perception that he was an 'individualist and Christian freebooter', Luke painted Paul as one who receives his message and marching orders from the church in Jerusalem. In Acts Luke's theology is imported to the character of Paul – a theology that

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<sup>16</sup> For Paul someone who is 'in Christ' is also *crucified* with Christ (Gal 2:19). Furthermore, this crucifixion with Christ is not an ethereal, esoteric pain but that which bears marks of that crucifixion in the flesh. As Käsemann states regarding Paul: 'He was unable to separate faith from these stigmata' (1971, 38), and as Christians 'we only manifest Jesus' life if we carry his death about with us' (1971, 37; cf. 2 Cor. 4:10ff.).

<sup>17</sup> It is here where Bultmann's seeking of the self which produces more judgment matches Käsemann's notion of religion and piety.

<sup>18</sup> However, Käsemann grants that Paul did have a *notion* of continuity in salvation history (as opposed to the New Creation discontinuity) but that it was extended primarily to Israel. Paul wanted Israel to convert to Jesus but the full number of the Gentiles had to occur first. Käsemann states: '[t]his impression is heightened when one notes the goal and hope clearly outlined in Rom. 11.13ff. Paul is convinced that Israel will be converted when the full number of the Gentiles is won for Christ. He reverses the prophetic promise, according to which the Gentiles come and worship when Zion is redeemed from earthly humiliation in the endtime...world history cannot end until those first called have also found their way home as the last' (1969, 241). In using the notion exemplified in the teaching of Jesus that 'the first will be last', Israel too will find her way back to the kingdom. As Käsemann states: 'Since creation, God has acted no differently with Jews and Gentiles. His being is the justification of the ungodly and hence the raising of the dead and creation out of nothing. For he acts under the token of the crucified Christ, whom Israel too cannot escape' (1969, 75). It is in this light that Käsemann sees Paul as a sort of John the Baptist – one who is the forerunner of the end of the world (1969, 241).

there is ‘salvation only within the Church, whose history, thanks to divine guidance, shows a continuous progression, and it is precisely into this history that Paul is drawn’ (1969, 240). The clearest picture of Luke’s theology of ‘continuous progress’ is found in Acts 17. Käsemann states that ‘[f]or Paul the world is not...the sphere of general sympathy...Without Grace, which makes mutual service possible, it remains what it was at the beginning – a chaos of conflicting powers warring against one another, even, or especially, in the religious sphere...The apostle does not make the cosmic order one of his themes, as in Luke’s Areopagus discourse...It does not join on to and restore what is already in existence; it revolutionizes the world and the hearts of men through a new birth’ (1971, 9).<sup>19</sup> Hence Luke’s Paul in Acts 17 and his speech to the Athenians that God’s plan *from the beginning* was for them to progress in history so as to *seek after him* is, according to Käsemann, foreign to Paul’s own theology.

Despite this difference between Luke’s notion of the continuity of the cosmos in Acts 17 and Paul’s notion of discontinuity, Käsemann sees continuity between the Lukan story of the prodigal son in Luke 15 and Paul’s overall notion of justification by faith. ‘Salvation, always, is simply God himself in his presence for us. To be justified means that the creator remains faithful to the creature, as the father remains faithful to the prodigal son, in spite of guilt, error and ungodliness; it means that he changes the fallen and apostate into new creatures, that in the midst of the world of sin and death he once more raises up and fulfills the promises we have misused’ (1969, 75). Hence Käsemann sees both contrast (Acts 17) and continuity (Luke 15) in Paul’s and Luke’s notion of conversion. There is contrast in regards to their respective notions of the cosmos specifically in relation to whether or not God’s special creation is needed for conversion to occur. Yet, there is a notion of harmony in that both Luke and Paul picture a God who is faithful to his own children in spite of their sin and rebellion.

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<sup>19</sup> While Käsemann obviously believes this theology to be at odds with Paul’s, he does not paint as polarized a picture as one may think. In observing Paul’s notion of the church as the body of Christ, he suggests that Paul actually ‘paved the way for the early catholic view’ (1969, 242). As he explains:

Just as the apostle prescribed for his successors the horizon of their mission, so he also presented them with the basic theme of their theology. He was not by any means assimilated into their salvation history solely as a prisoner of their illusions. They did not comprehend his distinctiveness, but they found in his personal and theology legacy that which illuminated their own reality (1969, 245-246).

We started this exploration by looking into Bultmann's notion of the self and decision based on his understanding of Rom. 10. We have seen in Käsemann a rejection of a continuous self in Paul's thinking which he suggests is more in line with Luke's notion of the continuous cosmos. Now we will look to Chester who explores the very territory in Paul which made Bultmann quite nervous: Rom. 9 and God's agency in conversion.

### 2.3 S. Chester

Chester's *Conversion at Corinth* tackles the complicated subject of conversion, relates this to Paul's conversion experience and into this weaves a fascinating discussion of the role community plays in conversion. Along the way, he uses his fresh insight into *calling as conversion* as a means by which to unclog the stalemate between participationist and forensic readings of Paul.

Chester's discussion of *call* in Paul is unquestionably one of the most important in this monograph and is critical to his overall thesis. Chester claims that Paul's inherited understanding of calling rapidly evolved into a unique and fascinating concept subsequent to his conversion. Indeed, 'Paul is unusual precisely in that he takes up *and develops* the language of calling' (2003, 63). Since Paul rarely used the common terms of conversion in his letters and since he 'does not seem to distinguish between beginning the Christian life, remaining within it, and completing it', it is necessary to find in Paul's own language how he conceives of this event (2003, 59). Chester states that for Paul, *calling* language is most useful when denoting the 'divine dimension of conversion' while 'alternative sets of vocabulary' denote the human dimension of conversion (2003, 85). In Chester's estimation, Paul is mostly concerned with 'the God who calls' rather than the 'relative positions of the human beings who are called' (2003, 87). Therefore, in contrast to Bultmann, concepts such as 'faith, hearing and obedience' are, in the estimation of Chester, secondary in the mind of Paul when it comes to conversion.

Chester developed a set of questions to drive his discussion of calling. Two questions are especially important: 'What is revealed about God by the understanding that he is the one who calls?' and 'If God calls, is there an expecting and matching human

response?’ (2003, 65). To answer these questions he first goes to Rom. 4:17 and then to Rom. 9-11.

Rom. 4:17 states: καὶ καλοῦντος τὰ μὴ ὄντα ὡς ὄντα (and calling into existence the things that do not exist). Chester suggests that ‘the calling referred to here is God’s act of creation’ (2003, 77) and there is little question that this phrase refers to faith (v. 16). However, to which *aspect* of faith does this refer? Is it related to Sarah’s womb (v. 19), Abraham’s willingness to sacrifice Isaac (v. 18), or to Jesus’ resurrection itself (v. 24)? To answer this question, he notes that the whole scope of Rom. 4 is the inclusion of the Gentiles into the people of God. Gen. 17:5, ‘I have made you the father of many nations’, functions for Paul as a proof text that Abraham himself is the ‘father of all who have faith in order to demonstrate the legitimacy of the law-free gospel for Gentiles’ (2003, 79). Chester then looks to Calvin who states:

He (Abraham) was, however, past procreation, and therefore it was necessary for him to raise his thoughts to the power of God who gives life to the dead. There is, therefore, no absurdity if the Gentiles, who are otherwise barren and dead, are brought into the fellowship... We have here, moreover, the type and pattern of our general calling, by which our beginning is set before our eyes (not that which relates to our first birth, but which relates to the hope of the future life), namely, that when we are called of God we arise out of nothing (2003, 79).

For Chester the main reason why Paul chose the metaphor of creation was not to refer *just* to the individual aspect of faith that causes conversion but to refer to the ‘big-picture’ process of conversion itself. In support of this, he then shows a similar idea in Paul in 1 Cor. 1:28. In writing to his converts in Corinth he asks them in v. 26 to ‘consider your calling, brothers’ (βλέπετε γὰρ τὴν κλήσιν ὑμῶν, ἀδελφοί). In so doing Paul then describes their conversion as a process in which God chose the ‘things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are’ (τὰ μὴ ὄντα, ἵνα τὰ ὄντα καταργήσῃ). The converts in Corinth were ‘granted existence on his higher authority’ (2003, 79). Thus, Chester, in accordance with Käsemann, argues that conversion is God’s calling into existence something that did not previously exist – an act of New Creation.

The most prolific place of calling language in Paul is found in Rom. 9-11. While Chester states that chapter 9 is less about conversion and more about Israel's unbelief – it was precisely *God's* role in the non-conversion of Israel that was the issue for Paul. In 9:12, Paul recounted that God chose Jacob before he and his brother, Esau, were even born. While such a choice by God might leave him open to being called unrighteous (9:14) – it was for Paul a reminder that God is in a *unique* position as the Creator. Just as a potter had the right to make what he desired out of raw material – so too God has the right to bring into existence whatever he desires (9:19-24). 'Because God is the creator he enjoys unfettered freedom in relation to calling. Once again, Paul argues in a manner which makes it plain that the God who calls is the creator, and the act of calling is an expression of this aspect of God's character' (2003, 81).

Since Paul used creation to refer to conversion, then the person being converted is, by virtue of his relationship with the creator, completely dependent upon the will of the maker. In other words, if something does not exist, then it cannot have any effectual response to God. In light of this, then, what do we make of Chester's second question regarding a matching human response to God's call?

Chester argues that there is not a corresponding response of man in relation to God's call. 'None of the other verbs used by Paul to refer to his readers having come to be in Christ do so, despite the fact that some appear well suited to the task of denoting a response. Πιστεύω (believe) never stands in relation to καλέω κτλ...' (2003, 81). This latter point may be debatable, however, as the second pillar of his argument regarding God's creating and converting call in Rom. 9 leads to an apparent description of how one converts and is 'saved' in Rom. 10:10 (cf. my discussion on Bultmann above which points to this verse). In that verse, it is in the heart one believes resulting in righteousness (καρδία γὰρ πιστεύεται εἰς δικαιοσύνην) and it is also here that calling language is explicitly used in light of Paul's previous discussion of God's call in Rom. 9. And in Rom. 10:12 it is the Lord who bestows riches on all who 'call on him' (πάντας τοὺς ἐπικαλουμένους αὐτόν). In Rom. 10:13, quoting Joel 2:32, Paul states 'everyone who calls (ἐπικαλέσεται) on the name of the Lord will be saved'. Hence it appears that Paul *does* use human calling language in relation to God's call.

Even though Rom. 10:10-12 is not considered by Chester, his overall point stands, which is that the response of an individual is not ‘constitutive’ of God’s call (2003, 85). Indeed, Chester points out that the only time there is a negative response to God’s call – the rejection of the Gospel by Israel – Paul states nonetheless that God’s gifts and calling are ‘irrevocable’ (11:29). Yet the question remains, to what extent does the first cause in the conversion process relate to and enliven the ultimate consummation of conversion?

To this point we have explored Bultmann’s notion of the self, Käsemann’s insistence on New Creation and Chester’s argument for divine agency in conversion. Our final Pauline scholar, Segal, will provide a different angle to explain conversion as a mystical transformation. In so doing, he will provide an insightful contrast between Paul’s and Luke’s notion of conversion.

#### 2.4 A. Segal

Segal’s fascinating work, *Paul the Convert*, analyzes Paul’s conversion experience as a profoundly apocalyptic Jewish event. His analysis, reliant on Jewish sources and modern social science, suggests that Paul writes from the perspective of a Pharisaic Jew who had been radically changed by an ecstatic experience of the glory of God.<sup>20</sup> Paul discovers that God’s glory is not a *what* but a *who* - the risen Christ. Segal suggests Paul’s experience, far from being contra-Jewish, is actually best understood within the context of Jewish apocalyptic and mystic experiences. Segal, following Sanders (1977), suggests that after Paul’s conversion he possessed the solution for which he was not looking and therefore adjusted his worldview in order to make this experience intelligible both for

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<sup>20</sup> For Segal, Paul’s prophetic call ought not to negate his status as a true convert. By understanding Paul as a convert Segal wishes to ‘stress the wrenching and decisive change of Paul’s entrance to Christianity’ (1992, 6). In doing this, Segal links Paul’s experience with the modern phenomenon of religious conversion observed by many within the social sciences. While Segal acknowledges a wide diversity of views in modern studies of conversion, he nevertheless maintains the general notion that conversion involves ‘radical change in a person’s experience’ (1990, 6). Yet, this *change* need not be caused or even precipitated by a damaged psyche. Accordingly, Segal praises the work of Stendahl for attacking psychoanalytical portraits of Paul as a man burdened with guilt (Stendahl 1977). As the title of his book would suggest, however, Segal parts with Stendahl’s thesis that Paul was called but not converted. Segal argues that a major feature of Paul’s ‘decisive change’ was his mission to convert the Gentiles and that receiving one’s mission need not devalue the conversion itself. While Segal concedes that commission is largely absent in the modern studies of conversion, this should not downplay his conversion experience. Segal states: ‘From the viewpoint of mission Paul is commissioned, but from the viewpoint of religious experience Paul is a convert’ (1990, 6).

him and his community.<sup>21</sup> Segal's thesis shows, 'that Paul's writing, thought, and theology are shaped by his personal, religious experience' (1990, 6).<sup>22</sup>

An important aspect of Segal's thesis is that conversion was not as rare and unusual an event as many scholars suggest (e.g. Nock). He notes that along with the spread of imperialism came a deluge of religious choices. Suddenly religions needed to compete with one another. It follows, therefore, that the phenomenon of conversion from one religion to another and from one sect to another within the same religion became a regular event. Concerning religious decisions within Judaism, he points to Deuteronomy 30 (esp. v. 19), which, at least theoretically, gives Jews a choice regarding which religion they wish to adhere to and a choice regarding the depth of their devotion to their religion (1990, 30-33). Thus, making a religious decision is not something new but indeed something very ancient within Judaism itself, and it would not be a foreign idea in the thinking of Paul.<sup>23</sup>

For Segal this religious decision involved one having *faith* in Christ (1990, 3). He insists that for Paul, faith indicated a number of related issues, but most importantly faith was a drastic reorientation and commitment to believe in Christ *apart from the law* (in congruence with Bultmann above; 1990, 121). Based on Paul's life prior to his experience with the risen Christ and his writings and ministry subsequent to it, Segal put together a nice schema that shows why faith was so important to Paul:

If the law is a medium of salvation, as Paul had believed when he was a Pharisee,

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<sup>21</sup> While Segal insists that Paul was massively influenced by his Gentile communities, he nevertheless must be recognized as a former Pharisee and as a convert to a Jewish apocalyptic sect (1990, 7). Paul is therefore an ancient voice of both Pharisaic Judaism (even if it is through his polemic against it) and Jewish apocalyptic.

<sup>22</sup> Similar to my criticism of Bultmann and Campbell in Chapter One, Segal creates an historical reconstruction of Paul's own conversion and he interprets Paul's notion of conversion through his (Segal's) reconstruction.

<sup>23</sup> In making this point, Segal notes that three of the most well known first-century Jews (Paul, Josephus and Philo) each documented competing sects within Judaism and commented on conversion from one to another. Each one also happened to choose a different sect. Moreover, the rabbis were known to receive converts. Hillel, for example, received a convert and taught him 'what you do not like to have done to you, do not do to your fellow. This is the whole of the Torah; the rest is explanation of it. Go learn it' (b. Shabbat 31a) (1990, 97). Therefore, these choices between sects and the different experiences they offered not only show that conversion happened within sects in Judaism but they also underscore 'the importance of individualism in the first century' (1990, 33).

(b) Then there can be no crucified Christ.

(a1) Since he knows from his mystical experience that there is a divine, crucified messiah,

(b2) Then Torah cannot be the medium of salvation in the way he originally thought (1992, 123).

Based on the schema above Segal argues that faith was the key experience needed in Paul's thought on conversion. It was faith, not following the Torah, which was the key defining feature of the Christian community (1990, 128; cf. Rom. 10:4). According to Segal faith was an interchangeable term with conversion (1990, 128). Faith was the mystical event and process of spiritual transformation in which the believer encountered Christ and this transformation mirrored Paul's own experience. As Segal states, 'Paul reflected on his personal experience in such a way as to make it a new model, raising faith to the level of a basic stance in life, a synonym for conversion' (1990, 128).

Segal argues that the culmination of conversion happens at baptism. In Paul's community, this rite was even *more* important than other communities because it was a once-for-all event. According to Segal, baptism makes 'the believer participate in the saving event of Jesus' resurrection from the dead, which is nearly contemporaneous with the action of justification' (1990, 179; Rom. 6:3-11 and Rom. 10:9-10). Segal concludes regarding the relationship between faith and baptism:

Faith and baptism belong together, because baptism is the social ceremony marking faith as present, signifying that the believer has entered Christ; undergoing baptism evokes the experience of death and rebirth in Christ, a sharing in the resurrection...In this sense Paul's Christianity is an alternative religion, analytically complete in its own terms, based on Paul's experience within Pharisaism but transformed by his faith in Christ (1990, 181-182).

Now that we have discussed Segal's understanding of faith as conversion, what aspects of this are related to how Luke understood conversion? Segal argues that Luke's description of Paul's conversion (which extracts themes of prophetic calling from several Hebrew prophets, e.g. Jer. 1:5-11 and Isa. 6:1-9) reflects the book of Ezekiel in that it describes the 'likeness of the image of the glory of God' (2:1-3). Luke wrote to show that Paul also saw the glory of the image of God and that God's glory *was* the risen Christ (1992, 9). Just as Ezekiel was commissioned to go to rebellious Israel as her prophet after seeing God's glory, so too, Luke's describes Paul being commissioned to go to the rebellious Gentiles after his experience with God's glory.<sup>24</sup>

Yet there is a significant difference between Paul and Luke regarding the *nature of change* this glory actually performs, as it appears the nature of *transformation* itself between Luke and Paul is quite dissimilar. In the transfiguration of Jesus, Segal points out that Luke is the only account of the Synoptics that did not use transforming language (Matthew and Mark both use μεταμορφόω). Luke chose rather to say that the appearance of Jesus' face was different (ἕτερος) and that his clothes were gleaming brightly (Luke 9:29). In contrast to Luke when Paul mentioned transformation in Rom. 12:2 (μεταμορφόω), Segal suggests that 'this process is the transformation meant by Paul when he discusses his own conversion' (1990, 22). And hence it is the transformation that one experiences in the midst of having faith in Christ.<sup>25</sup>

The final difference we can point out that Segal makes between Luke and Paul lies in their differing motivations for writing. For example, Paul wished to be affirmed as a true apostle. One of the ways this was done was by claiming a unique experience by which he was given this position. Segal notes that modern studies show that when 'claims for ecstasy occur in groups peripheral to power, they tend to function as bids to short-circuit the legitimate organization of power' (1990, 15-16). In this case, those in

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<sup>24</sup> A possible similarity between Luke's and Paul's accounts of his conversion is that they both refer to the glory of God in relationship with Jesus. In Luke's account in Acts 9:3, Paul is blinded by light which is identified as the risen Christ. Likewise in Paul, he notes that Jesus' glory shines out into the darkness in order, 'to give the light of knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ' (2 Cor. 4:6). Segal concludes that Paul's apostolate, 'which he expresses as a prophetic calling, is to proclaim that the face of Christ is the Glory of God' (1990, 61).

<sup>25</sup> The relationship between glory and transformation is that the glory of God has a transforming element by which individuals are changed from one state of existence to another. That is, 'the language Paul uses is not merely that of analogy or imitation; it is that of transformation...from one state of being to another, in which he has become the same substance as Christ through his death' (1990, 22).

legitimate power were the apostles who followed Jesus before his death and resurrection. Luke, on the other hand, simply wanted to show the progression of Christianity to the Gentile community (1990, 14). Thus he presents Jesus' 'realistic appearances' similar to other Greco-Roman apologies in a fashion that would persuade Gentiles to turn to Jesus. Paul's experience, which is in line with Jewish apocalyptic, was used to validate his apostleship, while Luke uses Jesus' resurrection appearance to convince Gentiles of Jesus' divinity and power (1990, 16).

At this point, let me summarize our findings thus far in light of our three stated objectives noted in the introduction. For Bultmann the change involved in conversion revolves around his understanding of the 'self' that is confronted with a *decision* to accept or deny the judgment of God. For Chester and Käsemann the change in conversion is not principally a matter of choice but rather of God's choice of New Creation. For Segal the change in conversion occurs by faith, which is defined as mystical transformation of the self consummated by the rite of baptism. The motivation for conversion for Bultmann and Käsemann is that God's judgment is either on the individual or on Christ at the cross and it is obvious which one *ought* to choose. As we saw in Chester's discussion of 'call' the question of agency in conversion falls heavily on the divine side of the equation, whereas Bultmann's construction falls profoundly on the human side of agency. Ironically (and in accordance with our third objective), both Chester and Bultmann rely on opposite ends of the same discussion of Paul in Rom. 9-10 thus highlighting this text as a very important one to be discussed if we are to understand Paul's notion of conversion. Käsemann argues that Paul's understanding of New Creation is in stark contrast to Luke's conception of the continuous cosmos described in Acts 17 thus highlighting this text as an important one to explore further. However, Käsemann suggests that the prodigal son in Luke 15 is in harmony with Paul's overall notion of justification by faith thus highlighting that famed parable as potentially important territory to be traveled in this dissertation.

Cadbury also sees Luke 15 as important text to be explored in order to understand Luke's notion of conversion. So it is his work to which we now turn our attention.

## 2.5 H. Cadbury

Perhaps no other scholar casts as large a shadow on Luke-Acts research as does Cadbury's work in the first half of the twentieth century.<sup>26</sup> Nearly every serious monograph in Luke-Acts references him as a major contributor in the field of Luke-Acts studies. While several aspects of his work could be highlighted, I will limit it to the theological relationship between Luke and Paul (in accord with our second objective)<sup>27</sup> and the religious motivation of Luke (in accord with the second question [why convert?] of our first objective). As a result of noting these aspects of Cadbury's work, I hope the landscape of Luke's notion of conversion will be seen much easier.<sup>28</sup>

Cadbury contrasts Luke and Paul with respect to three important theological issues: the cross, the resurrection, and the parousia. The way in which Cadbury compares these differences between Luke and Paul demonstrates Luke's motivation for Gentiles to convert while pushing Jews toward conversion at well. These motivations, however, are quite different between Jews and Gentiles.

According to Cadbury (and in accordance with Käsemann) the cross was not a central theological issue for Luke. Luke used the death of Jesus primarily as something for which the Jews were responsible. Of course, Jesus' death was in God's plan, but the Jews were nevertheless culpable for 'nailing him to the cross' (Acts 2:22). For Luke '[t]he cross of Jesus' was 'no stumbling block as it was to Paul the Jew' (1968, 280).

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<sup>26</sup> I will be using the 1968 reprint of his classic *The Making of Luke-Acts*, which was originally published in 1927.

<sup>27</sup> Cadbury notes that Luke's work 'shows many points of contact with the next most voluminous New Testament writer, the apostle Paul' (1968, 274). Yet he concludes, albeit with significant reservations, that 'Paul's rather unique theology is shared understandingly by his biographer' (1968, 281).

<sup>28</sup> Cadbury was one of the first scholars to take seriously the urban setting of Luke-Acts. Noting that Jesus' own ministry was largely rural, Cadbury points to the unusual attention paid to cities in Luke's Gospel (1968, 247). When Cadbury turns his attention to Acts the emphasis on the metropolis is even more explicit. What can be learned by the observation that '[t]he book of Acts deals almost entirely with cities' (1968, 246)? Cadbury answers that question by looking closely at the writer of Luke-Acts. Cadbury proposes that the evidence in Luke-Acts can tell us several things about the writer. For example, Luke was a savvy and culturally astute individual. Luke was a traveled, experienced and worldly person who, moreover, developed important political and social associations. Furthermore, both Luke's 'contacts' (1968, 239) and 'cosmopolitan outlook' (1968, 240) point to a dramatic development in the progression of 'the way'. 'Christianity' was showing itself to be a vibrant movement in the heart of first-century city life, and Luke was an example of that sociological phenomenon. Cadbury suggested that Luke tried to 'make himself at home in all parts of his narrative, even in Palestine where his style has a more Semitic flavoring' (1968, 242). Thus, even though Luke was Hellenistically inclined, he was a thorough enough historian to survey and investigate many of the locations mentioned in his stories. According to Cadbury, Luke's statement that he 'investigated all things carefully' (Luke 1:3a) can be trusted.

Furthermore, the cross did not provide the 'ground of hope and glorying' as was the case for 'Paul the Christian' (1968, 280).

In contrast to the role of the cross, for Luke, 'the resurrection is therefore the significant thing about Jesus. His death is only the prelude' (1968, 280). Indeed the resurrection of Jesus is the repeated element that links Luke's two volume narrative (Luke 24 and Acts 1:3-9) not Jesus' death. In Peter's sermon in Acts 2 Jesus' death is not the means of atonement but rather that which makes the Jews guilty before God. Likewise, it is the resurrection of Jesus which shows that God is on Jesus' side whereas the Jews were now under God's judgment. The Jews rejected God's son and now, according to Cadbury, God rejects the Jews. Cadbury explains: '[t]he rejection of God by the Jews carries for Luke as its corollary the rejection of the Jews by God' (1968, 256).

Luke's so-called anti-Semitism described in works such as Sanders's *The Jews in Luke-Acts* (1987) find an admirable forerunner in Cadbury's theory. While Cadbury reminds his readers that Luke was no 'respector of persons', the 'persistent wickedness of the Jews' (1968, 258), however, paints all other groups as superior to Jesus' chief persecutors. Cadbury's reconstruction is inflammatory and anti-Semitic *if* it is true. However, some have pointed out that Luke's depiction of the Jewish role in killing Jesus is not a picture of God's outright judgment on Jews but rather a major point of motivation that Jews, according to Luke, ought to repent and turn to their rejected Messiah (cf. Moessner below). The result of Cadbury's thesis provides an answer to the theological question regarding the need for conversion. According to Cadbury, the motivation for conversion especially for Jews is that they are under God's judgment because of their role in killing Jesus.

The converting response of 'repentance' and the experience of the 'remission of sins', for both Jews and Gentiles, were *not* related to the death of Jesus. Rather in Jesus' return and the judgment he would bring one finds the motivation for repentance and having one's sins forgiven (1968, 282). For example, in Acts 17, Paul's universal call for repentance to the Athenians was predicated on the fact that Jesus was going to return with God's judgment. Also in Acts 2 it is the present Lordship of Jesus and the implied threat of his coming judgment that evokes the worried response of the Jews (Acts 2:37) and

prompts Peter's offer for the 'forgiveness of your sins' (Acts 2:38). In this, Luke 'marks a notable difference from the emphasis of Paul' (1968, 288).<sup>29</sup>

The most pressing theological and religious motivations for Luke were his concern for the Gentiles' reception of the Gospel and a pronouncement of God's judgment on those who rejected Jesus: the Jews. Luke's central concern for writing, according to Cadbury, was that his Greek audience would respond positively to the Gospel. However, the way in which Luke endeavours to gain 'their acceptance of Christianity' is to compare stories of outsiders' reception of Jesus with stories of Jews rejecting Jesus and the Gospel (1968, 254).<sup>30</sup> Cadbury then suggests that the apex of Luke's work against the powerful Jewish leaders of his day was the story of the 'returned son' in Luke 15. The 'climax' of the 'miscalled...Prodigal Son' is the 'rebuke by contrast of the respectable but unsympathetic older brother' (1968, 259).<sup>31</sup>

In summary, Cadbury suggests that Luke wrote for the purpose of convincing the Gentiles to accept the Gospel and that he did this by showing God's judgment on those who reject the Gospel (i.e. the Jews). In doing this, however, Cadbury provides a motivation for conversion for both Jews and Gentiles – the coming judgment of Jesus. The three major texts that show Cadbury's thesis are Acts 2, Acts 17 and most importantly Luke 15.

## 2.6 H. Conzelmann

In stark contrast to Cadbury's notion of eschatology which provided motivation for conversion, Conzelmann argues that for Luke it was the *delay* of the return of Christ which shaped Luke's notion of conversion. In his influential monograph *The Theology*

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<sup>29</sup> Cadbury rightly states that Luke had no 'aim to present a systematic statement of doctrine' (1968, 274). Cadbury points out, however, that 'the data available give the impression that the evangelist held, indeed took for granted, quite a considerable series of theological tenets...' (1968, 274).

<sup>30</sup> Cadbury draws a stark contrast between the motivation of the writer of Matthew and of Luke. Matthew wrote 'for the lost sheep of Israel' while Luke wrote for the fringe of Israel and those outside of Israel altogether. Interestingly, Cadbury suggests that in many ways, 'the author of Jonah finds a worthy successor in the third evangelist' (1968, 258).

<sup>31</sup> He explains further, '[t]he joy in heaven over one repentant sinner is something which the impeccable and long-standing observer of commandments can never understand. Probably Luke's motive here is to demonstrate not so much God's love and forgiveness for the outcast, as Jesus' rebuke of self-righteous pride' (1968, 259). In a similar way, Luke's well-known emphasis on the poor was not so much for the betterment of those who were oppressed. Luke's purpose 'betokens a concern for the oppressor...as a technique for social betterment' (1968, 263). Indeed, Luke's concern was to 'appeal to conscience and sense of duty in the privileged classes rather than the appeal to the discontented...' (1968, 263).

of *St Luke*, Conzelmann shows that a diminished eschatology is Luke's distinguishing theological characteristic. Using the tool of redaction criticism, Conzelmann systematically shows Luke's theological interest in 'de-eschatology'. According to Conzelmann, Luke's writings demonstrate a transition from a belief about salvation consisting of an imminent return of Christ at the *end* of history to that of a 'history of salvation' which focuses more on the 'continuous saving action of God *in history*' (Telford 2002, 134; emphasis mine). Conzelmann suggests that Luke divides up this history of salvation into three dispensations: *the time of Israel*<sup>32</sup>, *the sacred time of Jesus*<sup>33</sup> and *the time of the Church*.<sup>34</sup> Hence, as it concerns conversion, Luke needed to explain how someone who was living in *the time of the Church* obtained the salvation that was offered in *the time of Jesus*. In order to understand how Luke did this, Conzelmann points to three aspects of Lukan theology which affect conversion: the plan of God, *types* of salvation and repentance.

The special emphasis on the 'plan' of God is Luke's particular motif to explain *why* Jesus had not yet returned in glory as the early church expected (e.g. Acts 2:23; 4:28). Luke's work assured the church that nothing was wrong—the delay of the eschaton accords with God's blueprint. Instead of gaining understanding regarding *when* Jesus was to return, Luke emphasized that one of the most important functions of the Holy Spirit. That is, Luke's point in Acts 1:4-5 is that the Spirit serves as a 'substitute' for the 'knowledge of the Last Things...' (1961, 136), hence, it is altogether unnecessary to know when the parousia 'will take place' (1961, 136).<sup>35</sup>

In his chapter 'The Centre of History', Conzelmann explains Luke's Christology in light of his unique eschatology. Luke narrates Christ to be 'in the center of the story of salvation' in which there existed true freedom from Satan (1961, 170). Conzelmann

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<sup>32</sup> E.g. Luke 3:23-38, 16:16, 24:13-27, 44-49

<sup>33</sup> E.g. Acts 1:21-22, 10:36-43

<sup>34</sup> E.g. Acts 1:6-9

<sup>35</sup> Since Conzelmann argues so strongly for this notion of God's plan, he concludes that the 'plan of salvation is exclusively God's plan' (1961, 173). Thus, Jesus' function within God's plan is more as an 'instrument' than one based on Jesus' own power (i.e. Acts 1:7) (1961, 173). Furthermore 'the part played by Jesus in redemptive history and his status has no metaphysical basis, but is entirely the gift of God' (1961, 174). This is seen most clearly, says Conzelmann, by the fact that '[t]he raising of Jesus from the dead is clearly not characterized as a "resurrection", but as an act of "being raised"' (1961, 175). Thus Luke does not emphasize Jesus' own divine agency but rather focuses almost exclusively on God's agency in salvation.

credits Luke as the first to place Jesus' ministry *in* an historical context. Luke, in effect, takes the 'today' out of Jesus' unique salvific ministry and expresses it as 'belonging to the past' (1961, 170). In this way Jesus' ministry brings a 'type of salvation', but, for those *in the time of the Church*, it does not bring *actual* salvation (Luke 9:18ff; 1961, 185).<sup>36</sup>

In light of the plan of God and understanding Jesus as bringing a type of salvation that occurred in a bygone era, how is it that one gains salvation? For Conzelmann, the division between the *time of Jesus* and the *time of the Church* is bridged by having the Spirit of God in the life of an individual (Acts 1:8, 2:4, 17-18, 33, 38, 8:7). Therefore, the manifestation of salvation is 'in a period strictly defined as to its beginning and end', but which can be currently enjoyed 'through the operation of the Spirit' (1961, 195). Hence the coming of the Spirit in Acts 2 is the key to understand Luke's notion of conversion.

Conzelmann's construction of Luke's theology impacts his understanding of one's response to the Gospel in the following way: it is no longer a climatic *once for all eschatological event* but is rather a two-part psychological/ethical process. Conzelmann notes Luke's combination of μετάνοια with ἐπιστρέφειν in Acts 3:19 as the key to understanding how conversion works in Luke. He argues that these terms are not a 'rhetorical repetition' as many have suggested, but are, instead, two different aspects of same thing. The notion of μετάνοια is used because of its etymological rooting (νοῦς) in the mind; *not* as a sort of individual end-time event as Conzelmann believed it was used in the earliest forms of Christianity. Ἐπιστρέφειν, on the other hand, is the evidence of the change of behavior; that is, it is the conversion of one's way of life. Luke needed to emphasize this aspect of conversion because Christians, as it turned out, were actually living out their lives and hence an observable change of behavior was important in verifying whether or not someone was actually a follower of Jesus.

Because the 'end' had not occurred Luke crafts a notion of conversion which de-emphasized its other-worldly character and focuses more on the mental and ethical fruits of conversion. While coming from a very different perspective than Conzelmann, Esler makes a remarkably similar observation.

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<sup>36</sup> As Conzelmann states: '[t]he appearance of Jesus in Israel is on the one hand a typical foreshadowing of the future mission of the Church, and on the other hand also the historical basis of it' (1961, 185).

## 2.7 P. Esler

In his influential monograph, *Community and Gospel in Luke-Acts*, P. Esler highlights what he considers to be the ‘social and political motivations of Lukan theology’(1987).<sup>37</sup> In contrast to Conzelmann, who argued that the ‘social and political’ aspects in Luke are a result of his theology of redemptive history, Esler wishes to show the intimate and mutual connection between theology and socio-political realities. As Esler asks: ‘What if Luke did not sharply differentiate the theological realm from the social and political, but saw them, in fact, as closely inter-related?’ (1987, 1). In so doing, Esler seeks to understand Luke’s motivation for why he emphasized *not* just individual personal salvation but a salvation that produced certain social *fruits*.

In this volume, he develops what he calls a ‘socio-redaction criticism of Luke-Acts’ (1987, 1). This method endeavors to achieve two goals: (1) to isolate Luke’s characteristic theology and (2) to probe ‘deeply into [Luke’s] social and political setting’ (1987, 2-3). While Conzelmann’s redaction criticism is a useful tool for gaining insight into Luke’s theology, ‘[it] has not acquired’, argues Esler, ‘the conceptual equipment needed to satisfy the second requirement – the analysis of social context’ (1987, 3). Esler turns to the social sciences, therefore, for the second aspect of his methodology.

Esler notes several social-scientific findings regarding budding religious and political movements. These studies suggest that infant movements tend to go through a legitimating process in that the followers need to be reassured of their distinguishing beliefs and behaviors. This is especially so when the minority group faces opposition from more established and socially accepted groups. Based on these studies, Esler proposes a theory that Luke-Acts was written in order to legitimize an early Christian community. Moreover, the established and socially accepted group Luke was writing against was associated with Judaism. Therefore, his thesis is that Luke wrote Luke-Acts in order to ‘explain and justify, to “legitimate”, Christianity...’ (1987, 16).<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> This quote is taken from the subtitle of his monograph.

<sup>38</sup> Esler’s analysis is certainly plausible, in light of how Luke characterizes Jews. In accordance with Cadbury’s thesis, Jews are not a marginalized and persecuted sect in his two volumes but rather represent the seat of power and persecution of the minority in ‘the way’.

Esler states that Käsemann has described apocalyptic as ‘the mother of Christian theology’ yet Esler believes that Luke would combat Käsemann’s claim. Luke was concerned not with the in-breaking apocalyptic salvation, but salvation that benefits the ‘least of these...’

But not for Luke’s theology of the poor. The author of 1 Enoch, it is true, held out to his poor and oppressed Jewish audience a prospect of purely eschatological salvation. In Luke-Acts, however, this Jewish tradition is fundamentally modified. In addition to eternal bliss, Luke offers the poor this-worldly redemption. A theology of salvation along these lines represents a flight from the eschatological perspective...[Luke shows] his unusual compassion for the poorest members of his community and of society generally, together with his passionate belief that the gospel was not gospel unless it offered them immediate relief for their physical miseries and gave them, perhaps for the first time, a sense of their own dignity as human persons (1986, 199).

In connection with Esler’s insight above, we may see why Luke described conversion in more ‘earthly’ terms such as repentance. He desired for people to experience conversion so that they can actually enjoy the benefit of it.

While Esler questions the total adequacy of Conzelmann’s redaction criticism, it is interesting to note that they both observe the same phenomenon in Luke’s notion of conversion – a conversion that is not one of words only but of tangible change which benefits others in society. Of course, Esler argues for social motivation and Conzelmann argues for theological motivation (in relation to the second question of our first objective) but both see the result of this motivation being the same: a salvation rooted in ‘this-worldly redemption’ not just a redemption that is to come. Hence both Conzelmann and Esler answer our first theological question regarding the change in conversion as being a change which is *not* just an individual ‘internal’ or ‘theological’ transformation but rather an external observable conversion that is beneficial to others.

## 2.8 M. Dibelius

No less influential than Cadbury, Conzelmann and Esler are the works of Dibelius. Just as Conzelmann used redaction criticism to construct a Lukan theology and just as Esler used a socio-redaction criticism to uncover Luke's motivation for writing so, too, Dibelius crafted a hybrid of form criticism<sup>39</sup> for his work on Acts in the early 1920s (later compiled in 1956). His work on style and literary criticism contributed greatly to the understanding of Luke's theology, especially in Acts. This 'type' of criticism emphasized that Acts represented a 'greater depth of original composition' than in Luke's gospel (1956, 2). As such, due to his greater freedom as an author, it is in Acts that the oddities of Luke's theology are most evident.

Most notably, Dibelius argued that as a result of observing the 'peculiarities of style', one can grasp where the theological climax of Acts occurs (1956, 26). He states that the zenith of Acts is reached in Paul's famous speech on the Areopagus in Acts 17 (1956, 26). It is here 'we can see a distinct climax as the relationship with God is described ...God is not far from us' (1956, 54). Dibelius's conclusion regarding the climax of Luke's theology is even more startling: 'When we consider the Areopagus speech as a whole, we see that it has a rational character which is foreign to the New Testament' (1956, 58). For 'the Areopagus speech is a Hellenistic speech with a Christian ending' (1956, 58).

Even with the notion of repentance evoked, it is a kind of repentance which 'consists ultimately of recalling that knowledge of God which, by virtue of his nature, belongs to man' (1956, 58). Dibelius, therefore, concludes not surprisingly, that the 'real' Paul must not be confused with the 'Paul' in Acts 17. Indeed, 'the theology of the Areopagus speech is absolutely foreign to Paul's own theology...' (71).

While Dibelius may be correct to argue that Luke's theology is different from that of Paul's theology, is Luke's emphasis on the 'rational character' of conversion in Acts 17 unique to Luke's description of Paul's Athens adventure? Beginning in Luke's Gospel he gave the promise of providing 'certainty' for his reader in what he had believed about the gospel (Luke 1:3-4). Is not Luke's narration of Paul's attempt to convert Agrippa (Acts 26:28: In a short time would you persuade [πείθεις] me to be a Christian?) a 'rational' description of conversion? Despite these questions Dibelius's

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<sup>39</sup> Inspired by the form criticism of H. Gunkel on the Old Testament.

thesis regarding Luke's theology in Acts 17 is hugely influential. Acts 17 is where both Käsemann and Dibelius agree scholars can find an unfiltered Lukan theology – one that is in deep contrast to Paul himself.

#### 2.9 D. Ravens/D. Moessner

In his monograph, *Luke and the Restoration of Israel*, Ravens argues that Luke's notion of repentance is inextricably linked to the Jewish covenant. In contrast to Dibelius's notion of Lukan repentance which was rooted in Hellenism, Ravens argues that Luke's notion of repentance is best understood within the parameters of Judaism. For Jews in the first century BCE, repentance was the process of restoring individual 'sinners' back into relationship with God (1995). In this way the use of repentance in Luke is quite similar to the covenantal usage of **שוב** as articulated by Holladay (1958; cf. Chapter Three). Ravens explains:

We cannot overestimate the vital importance of repentance in Judaism because, together with restitution and the sincere resolve not to sin again, it was the way for the sinner to remain within the covenant. Repentance expressed the sinner's desire to return to God and it was therefore an essential step on the path to forgiveness of sins. It was thus a vital part of the Day of Atonement, both when the temple existed and after its destruction in 70 CE (1995, 139-40).

With this general idea of repentance within Judaism in the first-century CE, Ravens argues that 'for Luke the motive for repentance appears to be the same as it is in Judaism: the restoration of the sinner' (1995, 144). Pointing to Luke's 'Great Commission' passage in 24:46-47<sup>40</sup> Ravens comments:

In preaching repentance the church's understanding of Jesus is to be firmly grounded in the Jewish Scriptures. Here, for the first time, the Lukan Jesus extends the Jewish way of atonement to all nations because of, and in the name

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<sup>40</sup> 'Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance (μετάνοιαν) and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.' Compare Matt. 28:18-20.

of, Christ. Luke does not regard the death and resurrection of Jesus as a new way of salvation but as the turning point that enables the 'old' way of repentance to be offered to all (1995, 144).

Jesus is certainly the savior sent by God, but he does not bring a new way through his own death; instead Jesus brings about the extension of the old way. Whatever Luke may say about the morals or the attitudes of some Jews, he nowhere questions or condemns the efficacy of their way of atonement in the ways we find in Paul's letters or Hebrews. Repentance therefore retains its central role as the way back into the covenant and it is still 'the sovereign means of atonement' (1995, 169).

Köstenberger and O'Brien agree with Ravens that this basic message is 'not new'. However, they explain that, just because Luke develops this notion of forgiveness by repenting starting from John through to the ministry of Jesus, the point of the final summons to repent is that it is 'announced in Jesus' name, it is grounded in his death and resurrection and is to be universal' (Köstenberger and O'Brien 2001, 127). Thus while the format of repentance is the same, the power of its effectiveness is now derived from something new, the resurrection.

Similar to Ravens' covenantal model of repentance, Moessner sees repentance in Luke/Acts in light of an explicitly 'Deuteronomistic dynamic of history' - a religious pattern of repentance and judgment. He applies this pattern to Luke/Acts (Acts in particular). The progression below (A, B, C and D) is his Deuteronomistic history scheme.

- A. Israel's history continues as one long, unremitting story of a stubborn, disobedient people.
- B. God has sent his messengers, the prophets, to plead repentance lest they bring upon themselves judgment and destruction.
- C. Nevertheless, Israel has en masse rejected all these prophets, even persecuting and killing them, and has done so quintessentially with Jesus.

D. As God had rained destruction upon them in 587, so he will again, but now the final judgment of destruction is for an unrepentant people (Moessner 1988, 101).

Moessner then applies the above scheme to Acts coming to the following conclusions:

A. Both believing Jews and non-believing Jews constitute and remain throughout Acts the one Israel, the people of God.

B. Believing Jews form the eschatological remnant. This remnant, along with growing numbers of Gentiles, which together comprise the church, functions as the vanguard that calls unbelieving Israel to repentance, and will itself be spared the final destruction of Jerusalem and punishment upon the whole people of Israel.

C. At the end of the plotted time, some Jews do respond to Paul's proclamation in Rome, as in other cities, and he preaches freely to all. The period of bearing 'testimony' before the 'days of retribution' is still in force. Therefore to speak of a Lukan vantage point from which repentance or belief for Jews is, for all intents and purposes, over is not only misleading but also has no warrant. With the pronouncement of certain judgment comes the implicit, 'Unless you repent'.

D. Nevertheless, the third and final pronouncement of final judgment bears an unmistakable force of warning to Israel. Although Tenet D is not uttered explicitly, the fact that Paul announces Tenets A-C before the period of preaching in Rome is described, leaves the reader with the inescapable impression that, within Luke's narrative world, not only is the plan of Acts 1:8 and its prolepsis at Pentecost realizable, but also that the 'day of retribution' upon an unrepentant people is straining to fulfillment (Moessner 1998).

Moessner highlights a broad repentance-judgment pattern in Luke's thinking, which is similar to that found in Deuteronomy.<sup>41</sup> Hence Moessner and Ravens argue that

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<sup>41</sup> And *prior* to Moessner, C. F. Evans (1955) suggested that Luke's entire central section was modeled on Deuteronomy, with parallels in sequence to consecutive passages in that book.

Deuteronomy lurks in the background of Luke's notion of conversion just as Segal suggests it does for Paul's notion of conversion.

Ravens also argues that repentance for Luke was fundamentally an old way of salvation which was cherished within Judaism years *before* the early church came into existence. This 'Jewish' repentance allowed the sinner who was far from God to return to God in forgiveness and reconciliation. This is in contrast to Dibelius's notion of repentance – originating in Hellenism – which consisted of a *recall* of one's knowledge of God that was innate in the individual.

We now turn to our final group of scholars, Marshall/Stenschke, who deal with the second question of our first objective regarding why someone ought to convert.

#### 2.10 I. Marshall/C. Stenschke

One of the leading scholars in the field of Luke-Acts studies is I. H. Marshall. Marshall, who is a famous advocate for Luke's merit as a creditable historian and theologian (1970), edited a work with D. Peterson called *Witness to the Gospel: The Theology of Acts* (Marshall 1998). As the title suggests, this work is dedicated to Luke's theological motives for writing and for appreciating Acts as a serious theological document.

In this volume there are helpful essays dealing with a range of theological issues in Acts.<sup>42</sup> However, C. Stenschke's essay 'The Need for Salvation' will serve as the one that best impinges on the topic of conversion. This essay, which echoes loudly Marshall's chapter 'What Must I do to be Saved?' in his volume *Luke: Historian and Theologian* (1970),<sup>43</sup> delves into an under-appreciated realm of Luke's thinking: anthropology.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> For example, D. Bock's essay 'Scripture and the Realisation of God's Promises' (1998). His work comprises a very helpful discussion on the complex relationship between Luke's understanding of history and his use of the Jewish Scriptures. Bock argues that Luke used a promise-fulfillment motif throughout his two-volume work.

<sup>43</sup> Marshall helpfully shows what he sees as the basic process of salvation in Luke: (1) divine initiative (1970, 188-192), (2) the resurrection and ascension which show Jesus' lordship (1970, 174), (3) the preached word (1970, 192), (4) repentance and confession of sin (1970, 193-195), (5) baptism/forgiveness of sins /gift of the Spirit (1970, 181, 197), (6) joining Christian community (1970, 202), (7) joy following one's conversion (1970, 202-204), (8) the breaking of bread (1970, 205), (9) sharing of goods, prayer life (1970, 206). Cf. Flanagan's article 'The What and How of Salvation in Luke-Acts' which points to Marshall's process of salvation above as a useful rubric in understanding Luke's notion of salvation (1979, 203-213)

<sup>44</sup> Anthropology is an important area of Lukan theology which we noted briefly in our discussion in Chapter One regarding Teager's significant work on the topic (1980; 1982).

In contrast to Dibelius's notion of repentance which emphasizes the ontological continuity of the individual before and after conversion, Stenschke argues that divine-human contact in Luke pictures a fundamental need for salvation in individuals. Each time an individual comes into contact with the divine in Luke, that individual immediately recognizes his/her fundamental insufficiency to stand before God. Stenschke notes that in post-war scholarship 'Luke's anthropology in itself has received little attention' to which Teager is a lone exception (1998, 126). Stenschke begins his essay by asking a series of questions 'Do all people need to be saved? Is their situation prior to being saved one that is better characterized as being "lost" or as being in need of some kind of correction or improvement?' (1998, 128). In order to answer these questions, he begins with a brief analysis of the question asked by the Philippian jailer in Acts 16:30.

After an earthquake freed Paul and Silas, the jailer asked, 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?' Noting that the jailer no longer planned to commit suicide because his prisoners had remained in their jail, the 'salvation' referred to cannot mean physical deliverance. Stenschke posits the probability that the 'salvation' asked for by the jailer was to be saved from the 'the punitive wrath of the gods' (1998, 129). The earthquake for him showed 'his actions to be contrary to divine will' (1998, 130).

Stenschke then suggest that this response is actually paradigmatic in Luke-Acts. For example, he notes the similar response by Peter in Luke 5:9. 'The miraculous catch of fish causes Peter to realise his own state in comparison to Jesus: "Get away from me, Lord, ἀνὴρ ἁμαρτωλός εἰμι"' (1998, 130).<sup>45</sup> Hence Stenschke affirms that the notion of the 'need of salvation' is important and under-developed in Lukan study. His basic conclusion, *contra* Taeger (1.1), is that 'people [in Lukan estimation] *in general* do need to be saved' (emphasis mine, 128).

### *Conclusions*

At this point we can draw some conclusions regarding the shape and context of scholarship on Paul's and Luke's notion of conversion. As mentioned in the introduction,

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<sup>45</sup> Another example is the response recorded in Acts to Peter's sermons. See, e.g. the response to Peter's sermon in Acts 2:36: 'the audience is 'cut to the heart' and inquires: 'Brothers, τί ποιήσωμεν?' (2:37).

the first objective of this chapter is to understand how other scholars would have answered the three theological questions posed in Chapter One. Bultmann answers the first question, ‘What is the change involved when one comes to faith?’, by showing that a decision by the ‘self’ is at the heart of this change. When one is confronted with the ‘word’ it leads to a fork in the road – one must decide for or against Christ. For both Käsemann and Chester, the answer to this question is not that conversion is about decision made by the ‘self’ but that the change involved is an event of New Creation explicitly outside of the power of the self. Bultmann argues that the decision one made in conversion is fundamentally an act of self – pointing to human agency in conversion. Segal suggests that what is involved in a converting change is the mystical transformation of an individual caused by the glory of God. He equates faith with the process of mystical transformation that produced salvation and argued that conversion is consummated in the rite of baptism.

For Esler, the change for Luke was one in which converting to Jesus was inextricably linked with external physical benefits. Salvation without meeting someone’s tangible needs was not really salvation at all. For Ravens, conversion entails a turning back to God and a sincere desire not to return to that sin – repentance. This is the way that sinful Jews always had turned back to God in the context of God’s covenant with Israel. Hence Luke used an ‘old way’ of salvation to describe the conversion process – one converts by repenting and in so doing finds forgiveness and restoration. For Dibelius, conversion for Luke was not really a change at all, but a retuning to humanity’s natural state as God’s offspring.

The second question posed in Chapter One concerns the necessity of conversion itself. For Stenschke, Luke believed conversion was necessary because humanity had a fundamental need for salvation. For Bultmann, Paul believed it to be necessary because the self is missing that which it truly desires, but always misses. For Käsemann, humanity is under the power of sin and as such in bondage. For Moessner, Jews need to convert in order to avoid the ‘day of wrath’ as outlined in Deuteronomy.

Bultmann answers our third question (Who is responsible for conversion?), by arguing that the decision process itself shows that human agency is the key element in conversion. If the self were not at the core of agency in conversion then real decision

loses all meaning and ceases to become authentic. For both Chester and Käsemann, God, as Creator, is the ultimate agent in the conversion event. According to Ravens and Moessner, repentance was the key element in the human response to God and, accordingly, they point to a human agency in conversion. Köstenberger and O'Brien point out, however, that it was only via Jesus' resurrection that repentance was effective toward conversion.

The second objective of this review was to see where the differences and similarities are between Paul and Luke. For Segal, the major difference between Paul and Luke regarding conversion was the essence of conversion itself. Luke understood conversion as an external event and Paul saw it as an internal mystical event. For Bultmann, the major difference between Luke and Paul was that repentance was not strong enough to explain all that was involved in converting faith and obedience. For Käsemann, repentance was more in line with a salvation history while for Paul conversion was an act of New Creation – an in-breaking into history. Cadbury shows that Luke highlighted the role of Jews in the death of Jesus and that Luke's overall theology was vastly different from Paul's. For example, Luke believed the death of Jesus was not in itself significant – it was the prelude to the resurrection and was used to accuse Jews of the death of Jesus. In contrast, he understood Paul to see the cross as the hope of all who follow Jesus. Conzelmann shows that repentance was a development in the theology of Luke in which conversion was no longer a once for all event. Esler's insight, however, showed Luke's concern for the plight of the poor and his desire to actually benefit those in need *in their lifetime*. Hence Luke's usage of repentance may have been important because he was concerned with the 'this worldly' benefits of converting to Christianity.

Regarding the important background texts for Paul and Luke (objective three), both Ravens and Moessner point to Deuteronomy as having heavily influenced Luke's usage of repentance (cf. Chapter Three). Interestingly, Segal also argued that Deuteronomy, which provided a concept of conversion within Judaism itself, was in the background of Paul's thinking as well.

The major texts in Luke regarding conversion were the story of the prodigal son (Käsemann and Cadbury; Chapter Three) and the story of Paul in Athens (Käsemann and

Dibelius; Chapter Four). For Conzelmann the Spirit is the key to conversion thus highlighting Acts 2 and the day of Pentecost (Chapter Five). For Paul, the most used text in conversion was Rom. 9-11 (Chapter Eight). In Rom. 9 we have explicit divine agency (Chester) in conversion using Pauline conversion language of ‘calling’. In Rom. 10, however, we see a corresponding calling language of an individual in light of God’s calling language (Bultmann). In Rom. 11 we see that God’s call is irrevocable (Chester). In several of our scholars the notion of repentance was considered very important for understanding Luke and was a way to contrast him with Paul. Hence as an important function of contrast in this dissertation I will undertake an analysis of Paul’s most explicit usage of repentance found in Rom. 2 (Chapter Seven).

We now turn to Luke’s theology of conversion with special attention paid to Luke 15. It is here Käsemann believes Luke’s and Paul’s theologies of conversion align. We shall try to see for ourselves whether or not this is the case.

## CHAPTER THREE

### LUKE, REPENTANCE AND THE PARABLE OF CONVERSION

*Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him. And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, 'This man receives sinners and eats with them.'*

Luke 15:1-2

*But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants."' And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him.*

Luke 15:8-10

Repentance for the forgiveness of sins is a major theme in Luke's two-volume narrative<sup>1</sup> as is the auditors' response to its proclamation.<sup>2</sup> Luke wrote about repentance more extensively than the other Synoptic authors, and repentance continued as a dominant theme in Acts as well. Méndez-Moratalla points out that Luke's *repeated* usage of repentance shows it to be central to his theology (2004, 18). As such, understanding the meaning of repentance according to Luke is vital in order to grasp his theology of conversion. While Méndez-Moratalla argues that Luke's intended meaning of repentance was 'fairly traditional' (2004, 18), simply because a belief may be 'traditional' or 'inherited' does not make it any more or less important in an individual writer's

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<sup>1</sup> E.g. Luke 17:3-4; 24:47; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 5:31; 8:22

<sup>2</sup> E.g. Luke 10:13; 11:32; 13:3; 16:30; Acts 11:18; 17:30

theological construct (cf. 1.4).<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, as will be discussed in this chapter, Luke's 'traditional' understanding of repentance was, in many ways, unique to him.

Luke celebrated the hope of repentance and portrayed it to be an integral part of Jesus' message. In Luke's 'Great Commission', 'repentance for the forgiveness of sins' was the central message of the Risen Christ (Luke 24:44) in contrast to the Matthean version in which repentance is totally absent (Matt. 28:18-20). In Luke's second volume this commission to call sinners to repentance was followed both forcefully and fearlessly in the preaching of Peter (Acts 2:38; 3:19), the apostles (5:29-31), and Paul (17:30; 20:21; 26:20). Luke bracketed his two-volume narrative with messages of repentance: John the Baptist's imperative in Luke 3:8, ποιήσατε οὖν καρποὺς ἀξίους τῆς μετανοίας<sup>4</sup> and Luke's Paul in Acts 26:20 urging both Jews and Gentiles, μετανοεῖν καὶ ἐπιστρέφειν ἐπὶ τὸν θεόν, ἀξία τῆς μετανοίας ἔργα πράσσοντας.<sup>5</sup> Only Luke's Gospel included Jesus forgiving a repentant criminal even in the 'eleventh hour' after the criminal's admission of guilt and request to Jesus to remember him in paradise (Luke 23:39-43). It is only in Luke's Gospel that we discover explicitly that Jesus' mission was not just calling sinners (Matt. 9:13; Mark 2:17) but calling sinners to repentance (Luke 5:32).<sup>6</sup> Using the most basic tools of redaction criticism, scholars deduce that Luke's addition of repentance here points to a theology in Luke which is, in some ways, different from Matthew and Mark – a theology in which repentance is held in unusually high esteem.<sup>7</sup>

Perhaps the most explicit depiction of repentance in Luke is the parable of the so-called 'prodigal son'<sup>8</sup> – a story famously unique to Luke. The setting of this story, Jesus being criticized for eating with notorious sinners, launches into a series of three parables each ending in a celebration. The last and most detailed story, the return of the lost son,

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<sup>3</sup> Moreover, this aspect of conversion contrasts with Paul who rarely mentioned the common terms for repentance (Rom. 2:4; 2 Cor. 7:9-10; 12:21). While some argue that *concepts* of repentance can be found in Paul (e.g. Harper 1988), the fact remains that repentance *language* was not used by Paul and thus is an area of contrast with Luke. Of course, there is a possibility that Paul and Luke have similar concepts of conversion while using different vocabulary to express them (cf. Chapter One, esp. 1.3).

<sup>4</sup> 'bear fruit worthy of repentance.'

<sup>5</sup> 'to repent and turn to God, performing deeds in keeping with their repentance.'

<sup>6</sup> That Luke added repentance in this context led Witherup to conclude that repentance is necessary along with forgiveness of sins in order for conversion to occur (1994, 46-56).

<sup>7</sup> A point noted by recent scholarship (e.g. Nave 2002). Also see Stein (1992, 404).

<sup>8</sup> The title 'prodigal son' goes back to the Vulgate (Fitzmyer 1985, 1083; Bock 1306). Bock entitles it the 'parable of the forgiving father' (Bock 1996, 1306).

ends with a celebratory homecoming given by his father. As an explanation, Jesus says that, likewise, the angels in heaven celebrate when just one sinner repents (Luke 15:10, 22-23).<sup>9</sup>

Thus even a cursory look through Luke shows he emphasized repentance. But how was his thinking about repentance related to his overall notion of conversion and in what way does it relate to Paul's notion of conversion? In order to answer these questions, we must first look to Luke's Jewish and Greco-Roman backgrounds and explore how he may have understood the notion of repentance. Only after we have done that, can we explore the notion of repentance in the context of Luke's own writings and discover how he uses and modifies it to articulate his understanding of conversion.

In my conclusion I will then give some preliminary-emerging answer to our three theological questions posed in Chapter One. In so doing, I recognize that much of my reading below will be shaped, to some extent, by these questions. Hence the purposes in this thesis will likely be slightly different from the actual historical/sociological purposes of Luke as he wrote. However, as pointed out in 1.4, it is our hope that Luke's writing itself will be our primary guide in discovering the answers to these theological questions.

### 3.1 Luke's Jewish Cultural Background

Traditionally scholars have understood the verb שׁוּב to stand behind the concept of repentance as found in the NT, including Luke-Acts.<sup>10</sup> The purpose of this section is to explore how שׁוּב was used in the Hebrew Scriptures (OT) and to extrapolate the relationship, if any, between it and Luke's notion of repentance. An effective place to start such a study is with the groundbreaking work on repentance by Holladay (1958).<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> On the connection between repentance and angelic celebration see Fletcher-Louis (1997, 72-107).

<sup>10</sup> 'The NT...employs μετανοέω to express the force of שׁוּב, turn around' (Goetzmann 1975, 357 in NIDNTT; cf. Lunde 2000). Healey points out, however, that the LXX translates שׁוּב as ἐπιστρέφω most of the time. This indicates that a possible shift in the covenantal understanding of repentance as expressed in the term μετάνοια 'took place during the Intertestamental Period, perhaps under Hellenistic influence...' (1992, 673). While this is difficult to prove, this underscores the importance of exploring the concept of repentance rather than just the terms. Yet, as I pointed out in 1.4, in order to do that, we must start with the terms themselves then work outwardly towards the concepts they describe.

<sup>11</sup> שׁוּב is also a very important term describing repentance in the OT. However because it usually refers to God rather than humanity, I will not engage with it to the level that I will with שׁוּב. Cf. Freedman's important work on this in his article 'When God Repents' (1998, 638-679).

In his Herculean work, Holladay provides an analysis of each occurrence of שׁוּב in the OT – a total of 1,064 occurrences. One of the results of his study was a ‘bare-bones’ definition of שׁוּב as expressed in the OT. He states that שׁוּב indicates movement ‘in an opposite direction in which one was going with the assumption that one will arrive again at the initial point of departure’ (Holladay 1958, 53). In other words, he concluded that the basic meaning of שׁוּב was ‘to return’. The fruit of Holladay’s analysis was the compilation of distinct categories of שׁוּב most of which refer to the physical movement of returning to a particular location or simply the act of turning around. However, Holladay observed a way שׁוּב was used that is particularly germane to this investigation. He pointed out that שׁוּב was used in a unique way to refer to the relationship between Israel and God, and as such identified a new category of שׁוּב called the ‘Covenant usage of שׁוּב’ (Holladay 1958, 116-157; cf. our discussion of Ravens in 2.9).<sup>12</sup>

Holladay shows that there are 164 usages of שׁוּב which explicitly refer to the covenant relationship between Israel and God. Of these usages, Israel is the subject 123 times. In other words, שׁוּב is used in this context almost exclusively to picture Israel as ‘returning’ or being called upon to ‘return’ to God. Only 6 of the 164 usages refer to God as returning to Israel, yet 5 of these 6 usages state that God’s return to Israel was contingent upon what Israel did in reference to her relationship with God.<sup>13</sup> Thus שׁוּב was used in the OT to refer to the explicitly religious return of a people to their deity.

### 3.1.1 The Use of שׁוּב in Jeremiah

Holladay finds the bulk of his evidence in the books of Jeremiah and Deuteronomy.<sup>14</sup> Holladay’s thesis is that Jeremiah should be credited as the first ancient

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<sup>12</sup> The connection between the covenant and repentance has long been acknowledged by NT scholars as enormously influential. Cf. J. Lunde who stated ‘repentance is associated in the OT with God’s chosen people. Thus one should understand the concept, usually expressed metaphorically by the Hebrew verb שׁוּב, to be grounded in the gracious covenant that God had previously established with Israel...’ (2000, 726). In line with Lunde, deSilva asserts that repentance in the NT ‘arose within the context of the covenant between God and Israel (1997, 1012). Cf. Wright (1992).

<sup>13</sup> Holladay concluded that ‘the covenant led Israel to think overwhelmingly more about his relationship to God than about God’s relationship to him’ (1958, 119-20).

<sup>14</sup> See also Holladay’s two-volume commentary on Jeremiah (1986, 1989).

writer who carved a clear concept of repentance using שׁוּב. While his *historical* argument has no bearing on my research, the *theology* of repentance he argues Jeremiah inaugurated, and its possible impact on the thinking of NT writers and Luke in particular, does have a bearing on my project. Holladay proposed that Jeremiah ‘saw apostasy and repentance as correlative...he saw them as aspects of the same act; a changeable people must change: it has changed enough, it must change’ (1958, 157).<sup>15</sup>

With the context of Jeremiah being that of the exile of Israel because of her ‘apostasy’ (Jer. 31:32 ‘my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband’), the notion of return from exile is combined and, at times, is almost indistinguishable from a more spiritual return to God. See, for example, Jeremiah 31:21b:

שׁוּבִי בְּתוּלַת יִשְׂרָאֵל  
שׁוּבִי אֶל-עָרֶיךָ אֵלֶּה

*Return, O virgin Israel*  
*Return to these your cities*

In this text Jeremiah refers to Israel’s obedient return to God while at the same time indicating a physical return from exile. As Huey points out, ‘the return was to have a spiritual aspect as well’ (1993, 277).

This idea of a ‘changeable people called to change’ became an important aspect of the corporate identity of the Jews. The very thing that had caused them to move away from God is what is called upon for them to return to God. Both the source of their problem and the hope that their problem can be remedied stemmed from their fundamental changeableness. Furthermore, it is not hard to see how this may have paved the way for them increasingly to cherish the concept of repentance. However, could such a concept of repentance, which emphasizes the ‘changeable’ and fickle character of human beings, have been in the mind of Luke while he wrote his two-volumes?

That Luke was familiar with and used Jeremiah in his Gospel is unquestioned. There are at least nine passages in Luke’s Gospel, which either directly refer or allude to

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<sup>15</sup> See, for example, the phrase in Jer. 3:14 ‘Return, turnable children’ (Holladay 1986, 120).

Jeremiah.<sup>16</sup> The most notable example is found in Luke 15: in particular, Jesus' parable of the man who finds a lost sheep (Lk 15:3-5). This Lukan story is likely derived from Jer. 31:10 in which God promises to gather Israel and 'keep him as a shepherd keeps his flock.'<sup>17</sup> As a result of experiencing discipline, Israel is *returning* (וָשׁוּבָה) back to the land while at the same time asking God to restore her relationship with him (31:17-18). Israel's restoration is then described in terms of her return to God (וָשׁוּבָה לַיהוָה) and a feeling of remorse for her disobedience (נִחַמְתִּי).<sup>18</sup>

In a very limited sense, Jeremiah's twin themes of repentance and shepherding mirror the notion of repentance and shepherding in Lk 15:3-5. Both characterize God as the shepherd and describe the disobedient as repenting and turning back to God. Yet, in a broader sense, can the double-entendre of Israel's return, being both physical and spiritual, be seen in the narrative of the prodigal son? His return home is also both physical and spiritual. He confesses his sin against his father and God and initiates an actual return back home. Furthermore, the initial act of his coming to his senses, mirrors a fundamental 'changeableness' as seen in Jeremiah. The son had experienced apostasy (he was dead) but later experienced repentance (he is now alive) – does this point to an aspect in Luke's anthropology that mirrors that of Jeremiah above?

### 3.1.2 The Use of שׁוּבָה in Deuteronomy

Deuteronomy is another book in which the author(s) employs the so-called covenant use of שׁוּבָה extensively. The Sinai covenant was 'wholeheartedly' received by Israel in Exodus 19:7-8, but by the end of Deuteronomy Israel's inability to keep this covenant was obvious (e.g. Ex. 32-34, Num. 14, Deut. 9). Indeed, the exile of Israel from the land would be 'inevitable apart from their full and preemptive repentance' (Merrill

<sup>16</sup> Lk. 1:15=Jer. 1:5; Lk. 1:70=Jer. 23:5; Lk. 1:77=Jer. 31:34; Lk. 12:20=Jer. 17:11; Lk. 13:35=Jer. 12:17, 22:5; Lk. 15:4=Jer. 31:10, 19, 20; Lk. 18:13=Jer. 31:19; Lk. 19:46=Jer. 7:11; Lk. 22:20=Jer. 31:31-34.

<sup>17</sup> Culpepper states that the repentance image of a sheep returning to the shepherd appears 'frequently in the post-exilic prophets as well as the Psalms' (1995, 296; cf. Ps 23:1-6). As such, in addition to Jeremiah it also likely evokes Ezek 35:15 'I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep...I will seek that which was lost' (Cf. Hendriksen 1978, 745; Barton 2000, 204). However, the image itself of a man finding a lost sheep is not an exclusively Jewish theme. Note, for example, that 'carrying the sheep on the shoulders might recall Greek statues of Orpheus' (Schweizer 1984, 244).

<sup>18</sup> On the theological connection between שׁוּבָה and נִחַמְתִּי see Fretheim (1988).

1994, 387). For Israel judgment would come, but would it come and leave them with no hope for future redemption? C. Wright argues that Moses here actually looks beyond exile to a time of restoration (2006, 341). ‘However, with great amazement and wonderful rhetoric (esp. Deut 30), Moses points beyond that Judgment to offer the sure and certain hope of restoration and new life if the people would return and seek God once more’ (Wright 2006, 341).

In Deuteronomy 30:1-10, the author uses שׁוּב 6 times, leading some OT scholars to consider this the most revealing use of שׁוּב in all the OT (Merrill 1994, 387). The writer also uses a *chiasm*, which I highlight by my arrangement of the text below.<sup>19</sup> The chiasm shows poetically what is at the center of an effective return to God, namely, that God is enabling a wholehearted love of himself (Giese and Sandy 1995, 79).

- A Recall these words and return (וּשְׁבוּ) to the Lord (30:1-2)
- B The Lord will restore you (וְשָׁב) and He will return (וְשָׁב)(30:3)
- C The Lord will bring you back to the land of your fathers (30:4-5)
- X The Lord will circumcise your heart which will enable you to love the Lord will all your heart and with all your soul (30:6-7)
- C You will return (וְשָׁבוּ) and heed the voice of the Lord (30:8)
- B The Lord will return (וְשָׁב) to take delight in you (30:9)
- A You will heed the Lord’s voice when you return (וְשָׁבוּ) to him (30:10)

שׁוּב in the text above was key to avoiding God’s judgment exemplified in exile from the land. שׁוּב was also Israel’s way of restoration once under God’s judgment. Repentance was key if Israel’s fortunes were ever to be restored.

But if Israel already proved herself incapable of living obediently, what confidence does this text provide that, if she did repent, she would not just fall into disobedience once again? Merrill writes that God promised ‘Israel to make them his people forever, [He] would bring about a spirit of repentance and obedience among them’ (1994, 387). In other words, the key to successful repentance (i.e. heart and soul devoted to God) was God enabling such an act (i.e. circumcising the heart).<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup> My arrangement is a modified ‘menorah pattern’ done by Christensen (2002, 736).

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Milgrom’s argument that personal heart change, felt repentance, is also at the center of the Jewish cult. He points out the numerous occasions when God berates Israel’s sacrifices because her heart was

Deuteronomy is also a book that Luke relies upon heavily.<sup>21</sup> For example, Luke quotes Dt. 6:5 twice which refers to loving ‘the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength’ (Lk. 10:27; cf. Lk. 11:42), the language of which is nearly identical with the repentance passage of Deut. 30 above. Indeed recent scholarship points out that Luke uses Deut 30 explicitly. In his article on restoration in Luke-Acts, Bauckham points to Luke 1:16, ‘He will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God,’ and argues that this ‘looks like an allusion to Deut 30:2 “[if you] return to YHWH your God”’ (2001, 447).

In his monograph, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, Wright argues that the story of the Prodigal Son is precisely the story of Israel’s return from exile and that Jesus is the agent of this return (1996, 125-144). He states: ‘Exile and restoration: this is the central drama that Israel believed herself to be acting out. And the story of the prodigal says, quite simply: this hope is now being fulfilled – but it does not look like what was expected. Israel went into exile because of her own folly and disobedience, and is now returning simply because of the fantastically generous, indeed prodigal, love of her god’ (1996, 127).<sup>22</sup> Of course, we cannot now determine whether or not Wright or Bauckham are correct in their arguments, but we can begin to observe that some influential scholars have not only drawn a line between Deut 30 and Luke’s theology of repentance, but also between the conception of restoration and specifically Luke’s story of the prodigal son.

### 3.1.3 Repentance in Jeremiah and Deuteronomy

The evidence above suggests that repentance was an important aspect of the relationship between God and Israel. In Jeremiah, we see that repentance and apostasy

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actually far from him. Such treatment from God shows the importance of internal repentance along with external sacrifices (1976, 782-84).

<sup>21</sup> Lk 1:6=Dt. 5:33; Lk. 2:41=Dt. 16:1-8; Lk 4:8=Dt. 6:13; Lk. 4:12=Dt. 6:16; Lk. 6:1=Dt. 23:25; Lk. 6:30=Dt 15:7,8, 10; Lk. 9:41=Dt. 32:5; Lk. 10:27=Dt. 6:5; Lk. 11:42=Dt. 6:5; Lk. 15:12=Dt. 21:17; Lk. 18:20=Dt. 5:16-20; Lk. 20:28=Dt. 25:5; Lk. 22:7=Dt. 16:5-8; Lk. 24:27=Dt. 18:15

<sup>22</sup> Wright then suggests that Jesus casts himself as the prodigal son who is returning home. ‘Thus, in a nutshell, the parable of the prodigal father points to the hypothesis of the prophetic son: the son, Israel-in-person, who will himself go into the far country, who will take upon himself the shame of Israel’s exile, so that the kingdom may come, the covenant be renewed, and the prodigal welcome of Israel’s god, the creator, be extended to the ends of the earth’ (Wright 1996, 133). Yet Bailey helpfully points out that Israel is not just pictured as the prodigal son but *also* as the son who remained home (2003, 196). He concedes that ‘exile and return is the main theme of the parable of the two lost sons’ but cautions that ‘any attempt at finding too close a parallel (or a set of parallels) between the exodus, the exile and the parable creates problems for interpretation’ (2003, 197).

both stem from a core human changeableness. Thus no matter how far Israel was from God, she generally possessed within herself an ability to change direction.<sup>23</sup> Likewise, walking with her God was no guarantee that she could not return in disobedience. Thus the key to lasting repentance was not gaining the ability to repent, which Israel clearly already had, but rather, was in the hands of God himself. While repentance was a change of heart and soul, according to Deuteronomy, *successful* and *lasting* repentance is pictured as ultimately God-given – he must circumcise the heart and soul. We also see that both Jeremiah and Deuteronomy are influences in Luke’s writing.

#### 3.1.4 Repentance among Luke’s contemporaries

By the Second Temple period repentance emerged as an important theological idea that was nevertheless expressed in widely diverse ways. My aim will be to understand the basic ways in which repentance was understood in the Second Temple period in order that we may discover how Luke’s notion of repentance compares and contrasts with that period. In Sirach 17 and the Wisdom of Solomon I will examine an apparent connection between repentance and the notion of gift. In Joseph and Aseneth and 1 Enoch I will look at how repentance was connected with Jewish apocalyptic conceptions of personal heavenly agency. In the 18 Benedictions I will also investigate a possible way that repentance was integrated into the prayer life of first-century BCE Jews. Finally I will explore two basic ways repentance was expressed in rabbinic literature.

#### 3.1.5 Repentance as Gift: Sirach 17 and Wisdom of Solomon

The second century BCE book of Sirach provides a notion of repentance more theologically developed than that which we find in the OT. In chapter 17 of this book, God is characterized as both creator and giver of good gifts (vv. 1-8). These gifts consist of the following things: God ‘endowed them [mankind] with strength like his own’; ‘He made for them tongue and eyes; he gave them ears and a mind for thinking’; ‘he filled them with knowledge and understanding and showed them good and evil.’ The reason

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<sup>23</sup> The exception is when God explicitly denies the repentance of Israel or an individual (Jer 15:1; Cf. Freedman 1998).

why the author mentioned these gifts was to show that ‘God has given human beings all the strength *they need* in order to fulfill the purposes of their creation’ (Skehan and Dilella 1986, 282). That is, humans have been ‘morally endowed with the discretion (i.e. freewill) to obey God’ (Skehan and Dilella 1987, 28). Thus, humans are to be held accountable for their actions. As it relates to Israel, due to the law, her sins were exposed and ‘whatever they do is as clear as the sun to him’ (v. 19). Vv. 24-26 shows the dynamic at play with repentance and God’s gift:

Except to those who repented he granted a return, and he exhorted those who were abandoning hope. Turn back to the Lord, and leave sins behind; Return to the Most High, and turn away from injustice (17:24-26)

They are first called to repent (μετανοέω), and God would *grant* them a return (ἐπιστρέφω) when they turn away from (ἀποστρέφω) unrighteousness (vv. 24-26).<sup>24</sup>

Israel needed God to act in order to make her repentance lasting and ultimately effective to reconcile her to God. V. 24 explains that the ones who repent are the ones God gives strength to return (v. 24). In other words, repentance is described as ‘divine grace and favor’ (Skehan and Dilella 1987, 284). Effective repentance is something that God gives which is why it is mentioned in the context of creation (cf. discussion of Chester and Käsemann in Chapter Two regarding conversion as an act of Creation).

### 3.1.6 Wisdom of Solomon 12

The notion of Gentile and Jewish repentance occurs in the twelfth chapter of the first century BCE book, The Wisdom of Solomon. In the case of Gentile repentance, the writer praises God for giving Gentiles opportunity for repentance (v. 20, μετανοίας). However, the writer’s appreciation of God’s patience lies not merely in the Gentiles’ fate,

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<sup>24</sup> Thus Sirach describes here a ‘prophetic call to repentance. Vv. 25-26 contain the various acts sinners must do and attitudes they must cultivate if conversion is to be sincere’ (Skehan and Dilella 1987, 284). Indeed, ‘return to the Lord (v. 25a; cf. 5:7; Mal 3:7) is the global invitation to repent. But one cannot return to the Lord unless one gives up sin and prays (cf. 39:5) and does one’s best to minimize one’s “offenses” (v. 25b)’ (Skehan and Dilella 1987, 284). Another benefit of repentance here (v. 28b) is that repentance is an act of rescuing oneself from death and in so doing, this allows yet another person to sing praise to the Lord. Thus, ‘repentance glorified the Lord’ (Mackenzie 1983, 80). Snaith is wrong to say that ‘Ben Sira’s remarks have lack of fervency and his reasons for commending repentance seem weak’ (1974, 90-91).

but also in the parallel notion that God might similarly be willing to extend his patience to the Jews. If God is patient with the Gentiles, so goes the logic of the writer, he would certainly give his own children the gift of repentance for sin (διδούς ἁμαρτήμασιν μετάνοιαν) (vv. 12:10, 19).<sup>25</sup>

In this case the gift provides an *opportunity* to repent, rather than enabling the act of repentance. It is difficult to tell if the gift of repentance here also effectively restores the relationship between Israel and God. It is interesting to note that for Luke, in the story of the prodigal son, the gifts of the father were given only *after* the son had resolved to return to the father (v. 17...v. 22).<sup>26</sup>

### 3.1.7 Heavenly Agents of Repentance: I Enoch 40:1-10

In I Enoch 40:1-10<sup>27</sup> Enoch experiences a vision of four angels who were numbered ‘among those who do not slumber’ (40:2). Phanuel, who is the fourth angel, is one ‘who is set over all actions of repentance unto the hope of those who would inherit eternal life’.<sup>28</sup>

And the fourth voice I heard expelling the demons and forbidding them from coming to the Lord of the Spirits in order to accuse those who dwell upon the earth. And after that, I asked the angel of peace, who was going with me and showed everything that was hidden, “Who are these four faces which I have seen and whose voices I have heard and written down?” And he said to me, “The first one is the merciful and forbearing Michael; the second one, who is set over all disease and every wound of the children of the people, is Raphael; the third, who is set over all exercise of strength, is Gabriel; and the fourth, who is set over all actions of repentance unto the hope of those who would inherit eternal life, is

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<sup>25</sup> As Winston states: ‘God wished to provide a model lesson for this beloved people in order to teach them that they should practice humility in their relations with others, and that repentance is always available to the sinner’ (1979, 243).

<sup>26</sup> However, at the end of the process, the father pronounced that the son, who was dead, has now been made alive – and clearly only the father has the power to do that.

<sup>27</sup> Chapters 37-71 of I Enoch are commonly known as the Similitudes. While it is difficult to know for certain, the Similitudes are thought to be a retelling of the Book of the Watchers (Chapters 1-36 of I Enoch; Himmelfarb 1993, 59). Because the Similitudes are the only section of I Enoch not to be discovered at Qumran, some scholars have given a later date for this section (Milik 1971, 333-78), but they are nevertheless regarded as having originated in the first century CE (Knibb 1979, 345-59; Mearns 1979, 60-69).

<sup>28</sup> Angels in Enoch’s visions are not dissimilar from the spectacular angel in Ezekiel 8-11, who showed the Son of Man visions of a world to come and the secrets of the heavens above. Interestingly, missing among the four angels in the passage below is Uriel, who led much of Enoch’s tour through the mysteries of the cosmos, in *The Book of the Watchers*.

Phanuel by name.” (So) these are his four angels: they are the Lord of the Spirits, and the four voices which I heard in those days.

The fourth angel in this vision, Phanuel, represents a personal agent of repentance.<sup>29</sup> Enoch connects the actions of repentance with an agent designated to oversee its effectiveness.

### 3.1.8 Joseph and Aseneth 15:6-8

Joseph and Aseneth is considered to be a pre-Christian Hellenistic-Jewish work showcasing Aseneth as a model proselyte with no ‘trace of the Christian Church as a competitor visible’ (Burchard 1996, 307).<sup>30</sup> It is a beautiful story of the repentance and conversion of a pagan woman to the Jewish religion. While the love story between Joseph and Aseneth is the vehicle that drives this narrative, her religious experience is the engine that ignited their relationship.

In Chapter 15, a heavenly man hears Aseneth’s confessional prayers (v. 3), acknowledges her repentance as authentic and writes her name ‘in the book of the living in Heaven’ (v. 4). He also gives her as a bride to Joseph (v. 6) and tells her she will drink of the cup of immortality (vv. 5-6). The heavenly man also changes her name to the City of Refuge because, ‘in you many nations will take refuge with the Lord God...and behind your walls will be guarded those who attach themselves to the Most High God in the name of Repentance.’ Here in the narrative, repentance is personified as a child of God and possessed the following attributes: beauty, meekness and gentleness.

The agent of repentance is located in the heavens and is described as the offspring (beautiful daughter) of the Most High. The feminine characteristics of Repentance are reminiscent of the Jewish notion of Wisdom, yet Repentance was given the special responsibility of beseeching God for the sake of those who come to Her. Repentance is also granted ‘forever’ to those on whom she waits.

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<sup>29</sup> Phanuel is mentioned again in 54:6; 71:8, 9, and 13. Phanueul, or Penuel, is a place-name Gen 32:30; Jg 8:8 and it is a proper name in Luke 2:36 (the father of Anna the prophetess; Black 1985, 201).

<sup>30</sup> The date of this book was originally believed to be late fifth century CE, and a Christian work, but some scholars currently believe it to be a Jewish composition dating it no later than the 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE and some as early as the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE (Burchard 1985, 177-247). However, some notable scholars disagree with him here such as Kraemer who argues for a much later date and for a Christian origin (1998).

There are several similarities between Repentance and the angel Phanuel from 1 Enoch, of which at least two merit mentioning here: (1) Both are located in the heavens, which indicates that they are in some way messengers of God and reside with him. (2) Both are intermediaries between the actions of repentance and the acceptance of repentance unto eternal life.

Luke, likewise, has an angelic connection with repentance. He twice mentions that angels in heaven rejoice when one sinner repents (Luke 15:7, 10).

### 3.1.9 The 18 Benedictions

It should, perhaps, come as no surprise that repentance emerged in one of the great Jewish prayers of Second Temple Judaism, the 18 Benedictions. Recent scholarship shows the likelihood that this prayer was made three times a day by observant Jews throughout the New Testament era.<sup>31</sup> Interestingly, in the fifth section of this prayer, the Palestinian and Babylonian traditions (represented below by the underlined texts) agree that one must (1) request God to *cause* the individual (or congregation) to repent and (2) affirm that the God of the Jews *desires* repentance.

הַשִּׁיבֵנו יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ  
וְנִשְׁבַּח  
הַרְשׁ יָמֵינוּ כַּקֶּרֶם  
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ  
הַרוֹצֵה בַתְּשׁוּבָה

Cause us to repent, Lord to you  
And we will repent.  
Renew our days as at the start  
Blessed are you Lord  
Who desires repentance.

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<sup>31</sup> D. Instone-Brewer pointed out that ‘the wording of one version of the Eighteen Benedictions, which is preserved in a Geniza fragment (T-S K27.33b), appears to assume that the Temple is still standing, in two lines which are usually not printed’ (2003, 25). He speculates that perhaps Jesus used this benediction (a.k.a ‘the powers’) when he argued concerning the resurrection that the Sadducees ‘know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God’ (Instone-Brewer 2003, 33-34). While this last point is very difficult to prove, the stronger point is that a version of this prayer may have been in existence in the NT era. For my purposes, if it is true that this prayer was a common feature of Jewish prayer life, then it is not too much of a stretch to imagine that Luke, a Gentile convert to the Jewish-rooted Jesus movement, would have been somewhat familiar with it.

The assumptions of this common prayer in first-century CE Judaism are telling. First, that repentance would be ‘prayed for’ on a regular basis indicates it was an important aspect of the relational component between first-century CE Jews and God. Second, the prayer is *not* that God would grant repentance (as in the Wisdom of Solomon) but rather that God would *cause* the Jew (or congregation) to repent. This points more towards an element of divine agency in repentance. Of course, that *the Jew* is praying for this indicates initial human agency. It is telling, nevertheless, that an assumption existed within Judaism that *God’s help* was needed in order to make repentance (or at least the sort of repentance that God desired) actually happen.

In what way is this complexity of human and divine agency also seen in Luke? Is it true that in some ways the son was the initiator of his repentance, but, in other ways, is it also true that, but for the father’s initiation of reconciliation, this repentance would not have otherwise worked?

### 3.1.10 Rabbinic Literature<sup>32</sup>

The intimate connection between repentance and a relationship with God is most evident when one explores Rabbinic Judaism. Schlesinger sums up well the value placed on repentance in Rabbinic Judaism, ‘[a]ll that the bible teaches of repentance has been greatly amplified in rabbinical literature’ (1905, 377). It is difficult to know for sure how prevalent the thinking of Rabbinic Judaism was in the NT era. However, some recent scholarship suggests that, while not all Rabbinic Judaism expresses thoughts reaching back to pre-70 CE, a case can be made that *possible* strains of Jewish thought on repentance in the NT era are indeed expressed in the Rabbis (e.g. Instone-Brewer 2004; Ravens 1995).

Some Rabbis rejoiced in the hope that repentance provided.<sup>33</sup> Repentance transforms deliberate sin into inadvertent sin (R. Simeon b. Laquish 10.A). Moreover, ‘[i]n rabbinism, repentance is a precondition of atonement’ (Neusner 1996, 525).<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Interestingly, the noun תשובה is not found in the OT but only in later rabbinic writings. Perhaps this lexical progression demonstrates that repentance was growing in importance during the Second Temple period.

Repentance was understood to be a gift from God as well. Indeed, it was one of seven things created by God before the creation (B. Pesahim 54a; B. Nedarim 39b). But in what way is repentance a gift according to this body of literature? Yer. Sanh 28b states: ‘Behold, the precious gift which I have bestowed on my world: though a man sins again and again but returns in repentance, I will receive him’. In this case it is the opportunity to repent before judgment that is the gift, not the enabling of repentance itself.

Some strands of rabbinical scholarship argue that repentance is a totally human-centric act. As Neusner argued, the power of repentance was ‘to win God over...Israel’s own redemption depends upon Israel’s repentance’ (2000, 1258). Dreyfus states even more boldly that ‘[i]t is within each person’s power to redeem himself or herself from sin by sincerely changing behavior and returning to God’ (1997, 1213). Thus, it is the assumption with this strain of rabbinical scholarship that the ability to repent existed within Israel, and furthermore, this pre-existing human ability to repent could be effectual and lasting so as to ‘redeem’ oneself.

### 3.1.11. Conclusion to Jewish Traditions of Repentance

The above sections show the connection between repentance and the restoration of Israel to God. It also shows a great diversity in the way repentance was understood to work. There was a belief that the capacity of repentance is within the person. ‘Changeableness’ is a part of humanness (e.g. the role of **שׁוּבוּ** in Holladay’s analysis). Just as one can turn away from God, so one can turn toward God. Some rabbinical literature explains that one can find effective (redeeming) repentance totally within human nature - no outside help or causation from God is needed. In other texts we see that lasting and effective repentance, however, is God-given (e.g. Deut 30:1-10). Similarly, God must ‘cause’ the real repentance to happen (e.g. 18 Benedictions). Other Jewish literature surveyed above described repentance as a gift, but in different ways.

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<sup>33</sup> Repentance is the ‘prerequisite for divine forgiveness: God will not pardon man unconditionally but wait for him to repent’ (Milgrom 1972, 73).

<sup>34</sup> Expressing thoughts similar to the Lukan Jesus (Luke 15:7 ‘I tell you that in the same way, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance’), those who repent are regarded as more special than those who have no need to repent (B. Berakhot 34b).

For some, it is a gift in that the *opportunity* to repent is a gracious act of God, but for others the *enabling* of repentance was considered a gift as well. We now turn to an examination of the Greco-Roman tradition of repentance in order to fill out our understanding of Luke's conceptual background of repentance.

### 3.2 Luke's Greco-Roman Cultural Background

Traditional scholarship characterizes Hellenistic usages of μετάνοια and μετανοέω to be purely intellectual terms, which have little to do with emotion or feelings. Norden states that μετάνοια and μετανοέω never meant 'repentance' in any pre-Christian Greco-Roman usage (1912, 123; Nave 2002, 40). Belm concludes that '[w]hether linguistically or materially, one searches the Greek world in vain for the origin of the NT understanding of μετάνοια and μετανοέω' ('μετάνοια, μετανοέω' TDNT 1964-76, 4:980; Nave 2002, 40). The working assumption in scholarship is that repentance in the ancient world never drifted far from the etymological force of the term (μετα=after; νοέω=to think), which meant to think differently about something after it has already happened but not necessarily to change one's actions or affect one's emotions. As Thompson asserts, 'μετανοέω in the classical period is purely an intellectual term' (1908, 10). If this is a proper characterization of the traditional scholarship on Greco-Roman repentance, the recent work of Nave has done much to combat it (2002). In this work he shows systematically how μετάνοια and μετανοέω are used in the Greco-Roman world. Similar to Holladay's work on כַּוֵּן, Nave undertakes the painstaking process of analyzing every occurrence of μετάνοια and μετανοέω in ancient literature from 500 BCE to 100 CE.<sup>35</sup> Nave's conclusions were that there were four different types of μετάνοια/μετανοέω: (1) to express a cognitive change of thinking (2) to evoke strong feelings of regret, (3) to describe repentance in order to avoid judgment and (4) to aid in the reconciliation of individuals.

#### 3.2.1 Μετάνοια and Μετανοέω as Change of Thinking

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<sup>35</sup> Interestingly, μετάνοια and μετανοέω were only used 95x between 700 BCE and 100 BCE, yet are used 1201x in the first two centuries of the Common Era (Nave 2002, 39).

In accordance with the majority of scholars, Nave contends that the core meaning of μετόνοια and μετάνοέω is a change of thinking. Xenophon writes in Cyropaedia 1.1.3<sup>36</sup>

Thus as we meditated on this analogy, we were inclined to conclude that for man, as he is constituted, it is easier to rule over any and all other creatures than to rule over men. But when we reflected that there was one Cyrus, the Persian, who reduced to obedience a vast number of men and cities and nations, we were then compelled to change our opinion (μετάνοεῖν) and decide that to rule men might be a task neither impossible nor even difficult, if one should only go about it in an intelligent manner.

The use of μετάνοεῖν here clearly denotes a change of mind. Before contemplating on Cyrus, Xenophon thought that men could not be ruled. After reflecting on Cyrus, he changed his mind and thought that it was possible to rule over man; it would just take intelligence to do so (Nave 2002, 42).

We see repentance used as a change of mind also in Josephus. In this first quotation, Josephus tried to persuade some rebellious Jews to change their minds about a desired revolt against the Romans:

And now I perceived innovations were already begun, and that there were a great many very much elevated, in hopes of a revolt from the Romans. I therefore endeavored to put a stop to these tumultuous persons, and persuaded them to change their minds (μετάνοεῖν); and laid before their eyes against whom it was that they were going to fight, and told them that they were inferior to the Romans not only in martial skill, but also in good fortune...(Life 17)

In this quotation, Josephus depicts Vespasian as trying to persuade the rebellious Jews to change their minds about fighting his army:

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<sup>36</sup> Translation from Brownson's Xenophon LCL.

And thus did Vespasian march with his army and came to the bounds of Galilee, where he pitched his camp and restrained his soldiers, who were eager for war; he also showed his army to the enemy, in order to affright them, and to afford them a season for repentance (μετανοίας), to see whether they would change their minds (μεταβάλλοιντο) before it came to a battle, and at the same time he got things ready for besieging their strongholds. And indeed this sight of the general brought many to repent (μετάνοιαν) of their revolt, and put them all into a consternation... (War 3:127-128)

In the way that the above quotations show that repentance was used to indicate a change of thinking, Nave argues that the prodigal's repentance follows suit. He notes that 'When the younger son recognizes that he is perishing....he changes his way of thinking and makes plans to return to his father' (2002, 182).<sup>37</sup>

### 3.2.2 Μετάνοια and Μετανοέω as Acts of Emotion

While Nave gives a baseline definition of μετάνοια and μετανοέω as 'change of thought' which leads (most of the time) to a change of behavior, he nevertheless shows that it is also used to demonstrate an emotional element. Take, for example, the section of Xenophon's *Hellenica* below:

Such being the case, are these generals to share the blame now with Theramenes and Thrasybulus, although it was those alone who blundered, and are they now, in return for the humanity they showed then, to be put in hazard of their lives through the machinations of those men and certain others? No! At least not if you take my advice and follow the just and righteous course, the course which will best enable you to learn the truth and to avoid finding out hereafter, to your regret (μετανοήσαντες), that it is you yourselves who have sinned most grievously, not only against the gods, but against yourselves (1.7.19).

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<sup>37</sup> Nave clarifies further 'Although this change of thinking is indicated by the phrase...("But when he came to himself") rather than by the verb μετανοέω, the literary context clearly suggests that the parable is about the repentance of the younger son' (2002, 182).

In this section Euryptolemus delivers an impassioned speech to the Athenians supporting the blamelessness of six generals who were falsely accused of a war crime. It was his hope they would regret this charge and acquit the generals. The μετανοέω referred to here carries with it a strong notion of regret, not just a cold intellectual changing of one's mind. If they killed these innocent generals, then they would be guilty of murder themselves – such guilt has a strongly emotional component. As Nave states '[i]t is ridiculous to think that Xenophon is using μετανοέω as an exclusively intellectual term' (2002, 49).

Similarly, Nave points to the fifth-century BCE orator Antiphon, who used μετανοέω in an emotionally charged way (*First Tetralogy*, 4.11-12):

But as I am innocent of all their charges, I adjure you on my own behalf to respect the righteousness of the guiltless, just as on the dead man's behalf I remind you of his right to vengeance and urge you not to let the guilty escape by punishing the innocent; for once I am put to death, no one will continue to search for the criminal. Therefore, honoring these points, release me in a manner that is pious and just, and do not regret (μετανοήσαντες) once you've recognized your error. For μετάνοια in cases such as this is useless.

In this case the repentance Antiphon refers to is the sort of useless worry that accompanies a guilty conscience. It is clearly more than a cold intellectual act of thinking differently about someone you've executed when you discover he is innocent. It is rather a consuming guilt, and racks both mind and soul. Nave remarks:

[I]t is only natural that a sense of remorse and or regret would accompany the realization that an innocent man had been wrongfully executed. Antiphon is trying to convince the court to do what is "pious and just" rather than "demonstrate remorse" once they recognize they have executed an innocent man. According to Antiphon, remorse at that point is useless (2002, 50).

In all of these cases, Nave is correct to assert that μετανοέω represents ‘clearly more than just an intellectual change of opinion’ (2002, 51).<sup>38</sup> They are emotion-filled responses as well as intellectual changes of thought. Likewise, as we will see with the prodigal, his change of thinking led to a very emotionally charged meeting between both him and the father. It also led to the negative emotional reaction of the older brother.

### 3.2.3 Μετάνοια and Μετανοέω as Tools for Forgiveness and Avoidance of Judgment

A second feature of μετάνοια and μετανοέω in Greco-Roman literature, which Nave draws out, regards the purpose of receiving forgiveness and as such avoiding various forms of judgment as a result. For example the teacher Bias tells his auditors to ‘despise fast talking lest you sin [ἀμάρτημα] for repentance [μετάνοια] follows’ (Septem Sapientes, Apophthegmata 6.5). This is interesting because the gist of Bias’ comment indicates that μετάνοια would be the proper response to a sin. The assumption, then, is that the μετάνοια would be useful in nullifying or letting go of the sin.

An example of repentance being useful for forgiveness is found in Dionysius’ recount of a speech given to Marcius. In this case Dionysius hopes that Marcius would forgive someone who wronged him (*Antiquities* 8.50.3-4):

For the gods themselves, who in the first place instituted and delivered to us these customs, are disposed to forgive offenses (ἀμαρτήμασι) of men and are easily reconciled; and many have there been until now who, though greatly sinning (ἐξάμαρτάνοντες) against them, have appeased their anger by prayers and sacrifices. Unless you think it fitting, Marcius, that the anger of the gods should be mortal, but that of men immortal! You will be doing, then, what is just and becoming both to yourself and to your country if you forgive her offenses; see that she is repentant (μετανοούση)...

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<sup>38</sup> In a third example Nave gives an instance in Dio Chrysostom that depicts an emotional experience of repentance by Aristotle regarding the disastrous resettlement of Stageira, which he had originally supported (*Orations* 47.9).

In this case being repentant was just cause (according to Dionysius, at least) for Marcius to forgive. If the gods forgive easily, then mortals ought to forgive as well,<sup>39</sup> especially when the one who has done wrong is repentant.<sup>40</sup>

Clearly Luke drew a connection between the prodigal's repentance and the forgiveness given by the father. The prodigal's penitent attitude toward his father expressed his desire to avoid the expected judgment of his father – that the son would still be dead in his eyes of his father. However, Luke shows that the son's repentance worked for both forgiveness and the avoidance of judgment.

### 3.2.4 Μετάνοια and Μετανοέω as a Source of Reconciliation

A third feature of μετάνοια and μετανοέω that Nave demonstrates is its usage as a source of reconciliation. He points out in Dio Chrysostom where μετάνοια, in concert with a change of 'vices', was key to reconciliation between parties (2002, 67). Consequently, μετάνοια in the ancient world 'meant affording that individual an opportunity to change his or her behavior and to become a better person' (2002, 67). For instance, Dionysius tells a story in which Tullius, King of Rome, was duped by Tarquinius' fake repentance for the purposes of 'reconciliation' (Diodorus Siculus *History* 9.5.22; 9.33.4; 11.4.6; 16.43.4). Tarquinius apparently knew that his μετάνοια, while spurious, would nevertheless aid in the process of reconciliation between him and the king. If the king were to be convinced that Tarquinius's μετάνοια was authentic then it seems to have been expected that he would initiate a reconciliation process with the 'sinner'.<sup>41</sup>

### 3.2.5 Conclusion to the Greco-Roman Background of Repentance

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<sup>39</sup> The same point made in Wisdom of Solomon 12 above.

<sup>40</sup> Nave highlights a passage in Plutarch in which μετάνοια and μετανοέω are used to avoid the punishment of the gods. 'When heavenly power casts them down and strips off their importance, there is in these calamities alone admonition enough to work repentance' (*How to Tell a Flatterer* 69).

<sup>41</sup> Plutarch writes that repentance might lead to reconciliation between the Romans and Camillus (*Camillus* 12.3.6).

Accordingly, after he had kissed his wife and son good-bye, he went from his house in silence as far as the gate of the city. There he stopped, turned himself about, and stretching his hands out towards the Capitol, prayed the gods that, if with no justice, but through the wantonness of the people and the abuse of the envious he was now being driven from his country, the Romans might speedily repent (μετανοήσαι), and show to all men that they needed and longed for Camillus.

In the ways briefly mentioned above, Nave suggests that the Greco-Roman world directly influenced the New Testament usage of μετάνοια and μετανοέω. Μετάνοια and μετανοέω are used in the NT to express emotion, to gain forgiveness and to initiate reconciliation.<sup>42</sup> Nave points to New Testament scholars who dismiss the Greco-Roman notion of repentance too flippantly and who ‘erroneously assert that there is little or no affinity between the usage of μετάνοια and μετανοέω in non-Christian Greek literature and its usage in Christian literature’ (2002, 2). Indeed, Nave admirably demonstrates similar benefits, reasons, and consequences of repentance in the Greek world as in the NT.

### 3.3 The Parable of Conversion

It will be argued that the prodigal son is central to Luke’s understanding of conversion. In light of Luke’s cultural background, we can now begin to explore Luke’s notion of repentance and conversion and see how he shapes and adopts previous strains of thought in order to craft his own view of conversion, using the prodigal to do so.

#### 3.3.1 Reading the Prodigal

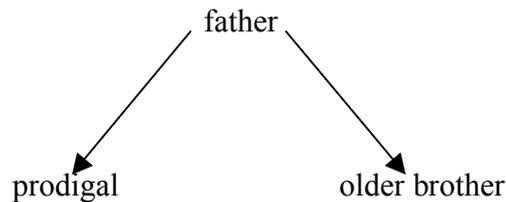
While there is a plethora of historical Jesus scholarship regarding repentance and Luke 15,<sup>43</sup> my purpose here is to judge how Luke himself described repentance and

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<sup>42</sup> There is a Lukan connection between repentance and forgiveness (Luke 17). There is an emotional aspect to repentance in Luke (Nave 2002, 220). And there is an idea that if God accepts a sinner, then so should people (Nave 2002, 229). Each of these Hellenistic aspects to repentance is highlighted by Nave.

<sup>43</sup> The so-called Jesus Seminar, which is comprised of dozens of American historical Jesus scholars, considered Luke 15 to reflect the historical Jesus because Jesus did not condemn the Jewish leadership. Sanders argued that the prodigal son is an authentic historical Jesus teaching and interpreted Jesus’ radical acceptance of sinners as a reflection of a *non*-repentance message of Jesus (1985, 174-211). Thus, Jesus’ conflict with the religious leaders stemmed partially from Jesus’ preaching against the normative Jewish understanding of repentance. Yet, the biblical evidence both textually and historically is clear that Jesus did, in fact, call people to repent, as did John the Baptist, who was before him. Nevertheless, Sanders correctly observed that Jesus’ message of repentance was very different from John’s message or the ancient Hebrew prophets’ message of repentance. Wright corrects Sanders’ overstatement by pointing to the explicit demands of praxis Jesus placed on his converts (1996, 248). In contrast, Schottroff argued in her article, ‘Das Gleichnis vom verlorenen Sohn’, that Jesus could not have told this parable because the outright caricature of Jewish piety, embodied by the older son, must have come from someone outside of the situation, as Luke undoubtedly was (1971, 27-52). However, this argument rings hollow because one of the rare points most historical Jesus scholars agree upon is that the historical Jesus was killed under the direction of Jewish leadership – certainly this shows that the historical Jesus was not averse to offending ‘Jewish’ piety.

conversion in this parable<sup>44</sup> – but to do so, we must be equipped with some interpretive tools. In his extensive work on the parables of Jesus, Blomberg shows that the prodigal son is a ‘simple three-point parable’ (1990, 172).



This type of parable fits within a ‘monarchic’ parable pattern in which a key authority figure (king, master or father) presided over two subordinates (servant, worker, or son) who then, in turn, behave differently from each other (1990, 171).<sup>45</sup> Oftentimes the underling who acted in an apparently shameful way was deemed by the authority figure to be better off than the other ‘more righteous’ subordinate – these were ‘parables of reversal’ (Crossan 1973, 53-78; cf. Blomberg 1990, 172). Arguing against older scholarship which suggested that a parable could only have one meaning (e.g. Wilcock 1979 and Arndt 1956 regarding Luke 15 in particular), Blomberg helpfully subdivides this passage into three episodes, each one focusing on a particular aspect of the meaning of the prodigal’s repentance:

11-20a: ‘Even as the prodigal had the option of repenting and returning home, so also all sinners, however wicked, may confess their sins and turn to God in contrition.’

20b-24: ‘Even as the father went to elaborate lengths to offer reconciliation to the prodigal, so also God offers all people, however undeserving, lavish forgiveness of sins if they are willing to accept it.’

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<sup>44</sup> Barton warned that attempts to get to the ‘real message’ of Luke 15, whether from the historical Jesus or just from Luke, are in danger of becoming ‘rationalistic and reductionist’ (2000, 200). My purpose in focusing on Luke’s thinking is not to reduce the meaning of the text but rather to sharpen our attention so as to fit within the aims of my dissertation, which are ideological/theological rather than historical.

<sup>45</sup> e.g. Luke 7:41-43; 12:42-48; 16:19-31.

25-32: ‘Even as the older brother should not have begrudged his brother’s reinstatement but rather rejoiced in it, so those who claim to be God’s people should be glad and not mad that he extends his grace even to the most undeserving.’ (1990, 174)

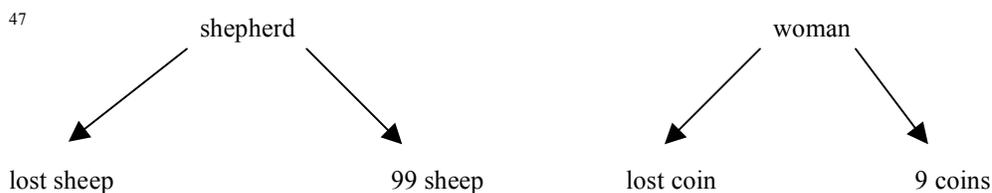
Thus, depending on the particular members of Luke’s audience, the meaning for them would be slightly different, which is, of course, part of the genius of using parables as a tool for communication.<sup>46</sup>

But how exactly do the three stories in Luke 15 relate to each other? While the story of the lost sheep (Luke 15:4-7) and the lost coin (Luke 15:8-10) are ‘three point stories’ in and of themselves (Blomberg 1990, 179),<sup>47</sup> how are they to be read in light of the prodigal son? Are they to be read as three different units or as a single unit? Bailey argues that they are to be understood as ‘three stories, one parable’ (2003, 54). They are clearly three different stories in that the characters and settings are all different in each section and narrative tools are used to show a division between each section (v. 8 ἢ τίς, v. 11 εἶπεν δέ). However, they represent a single parable because Jesus used the singular παραβολήν rather than the plural (v. 3; Bailey 2003, 54-57).<sup>48</sup>

### 3.3.2 Meeting the Prodigal

The narrative context begins with Jesus’ acceptance of sinners and tax-collectors - a strong Lukan motif that runs throughout his narrative (7:36-50; 10:38-42; 11:37-54; 14:1-24; 15:1-2; 19:1-10; cf. Blomberg 2005). More specifically, Jesus draws the ire of the Pharisees and scribes for allowing the τελῶναι and the ἄμαρτωλοί to draw near to listen to him (15:1-2a). Jesus responds to this accusation by telling three stories of lost

<sup>46</sup> Although Snodgrass (2008) questions whether Blomberg’s approach can be used uniformly, he affirms a very similar three-point pattern in Luke 15 to that of Blomberg (cf. Hultgren 2000).



<sup>48</sup> Thus I will refer to Luke 15 and the parable of the prodigal son as the same teaching even though, technically, Luke 15 has the story of the coin and the lost sheep in addition to the prodigal son.

items (a sheep in v. 4; a coin in v. 8; a son in v. 13) which were eventually found by their rightful owners (a man in v. 5; a woman in v. 9; and the father in v. 24). Jesus then twice compares the joyful reunion of the lost item to the rightful owner (v. 7, 10) to that of angelic joy, which erupts in heaven when one sinner (ἄμαρτωλός) repents (μετανοέω). The implication, then, of Jesus' eating with these sinners is that they are like the items that have been lost, but are now found. Tannehill points out that the table fellowship of the reconciled father and son is a 'parabolic mirroring' of the actual situation between Jesus and the sinners (1986, 171; Bock 1996, 1306). Sinners have repented and are in fellowship with God,<sup>49</sup> who is pictured as the loving, forgiving father (Kistemaker 1980, 216).

This story of the prodigal son starts with the younger of two sons asking his father for his inheritance. But to what extent, if any, the son's request is an insult to his father is open to debate. Bailey has argued that the son's request treats the father as if he were dead (1976, 165), but this has been vigorously opposed in more recent scholarship.<sup>50</sup> However, in light of the context, Bock is quite right to assert that the 'son clearly looks to sever his relationship to his father and go away' (Bock 1996, 1310). The key point, however, of this whole interchange is that the 'son's request is graciously granted' by the father (Bock 1996, 1310). Schrenk points out that this is Luke's way of picturing God's 'letting go' of a sinner who desires to leave him (*TDNT* 5:983-84; Bock 1996, 1310).

The son takes his inheritance and his life crumbles shortly thereafter. He travels to a distant land and quickly squanders his father's inheritance (v. 13). If the accusation of the older brother is any hint (v. 30), the younger son's 'wild living' was considered sinful for any Jew. After he spent his money, a famine struck the land and for the first time in this story, the son was in need (v. 14, lit. he began to lack, ἤρξατο ὑστερεῖσθαι). The young son who once had a family, homeland, and money now had nothing.

Bock points out that the son 'responds prudently' to this dire situation by seeking employment (1996, 1311). But is such a positive interpretation of the son's behavior here

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<sup>49</sup> How these new converts are then treated by 'those who need no repentance' (i.e. the Pharisees and scribes) is then the question left for the 'older son' (v. 32) to answer.

<sup>50</sup> Donahue counters Bailey by arguing that 4 million Jews were in the Diaspora at this time while a paltry half million were in Palestine. Thus, because of the economic situation, that a son would ask for his inheritance before his father's death was 'an ordinary request at the time' (Donahue 1988, 153; Méndez-Moratalla 2004, 135).

to be accepted? It seems more likely that rather than being seen as prudent, Luke characterizes this son's actions as truly hard-hearted in that it is remarkable the son has *not* yet returned to the father. Perhaps Luke pictures a son who needed even more heartache and abuse by the world than what he had already experienced in order to appreciate and long for his father. It is as if Luke is building the suspense of the story by making the reader ask, 'can this son be broken enough to consider a return to his father - is this son changeable?' Luke is not telling about an *easy* return to the father, but one birthed out of *total desperation* as we see in v. 15-16.

The son finds a job working for a Gentile who managed a pig farm (v. 15). The son is sent out to feed pigs, which as a Jew is highly dishonorable (Lev. 11:7, Deut. 14:8, Isa. 65:4; 66:17). As Bock states '[i]n effect, the son has taken the lowest job possible – one that no Jew would even want' (1996, 1311). Evidently, the son is not treated well by his employer because he is on the brink of starvation (v. 17). Indeed, the son 'longed' to be fed with the pigs (v. 16). Moreover, *no one* gave him anything as he was too low to be worth giving to (v. 16b).<sup>51</sup>

He begins to consider the irony that his father's hired servants have plenty of bread while he is starving. The son, in despair, acknowledges that he has sinned both against God and his father.<sup>52</sup> Eastman suggests that 'There is nothing here about repentance as a moral turn-around' (2006, 403), yet, the internal dialogue of the son given by Luke, does seem to suggest that the son was beginning a process of such 'turn-around'.<sup>53</sup> However, Eastman's main point is well taken that the 'initial key to the son's "repentance" is the father's abundance, and the means of their reconciliation is the free gift of relationship that the father gives as he runs to meet his son' (2006, 403).

The son *resolves* to confess his disqualification as a son to his father (v. 18). Strikingly, even when his father acted as if he would accept his wayward son *without* a

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<sup>51</sup> As Bock points out '*oudeis* is emphatic: "nobody" will help him; he is all alone' (1996, 1312).

<sup>52</sup> Joosten suggests an alternative reading of 'I have committed an enormous offense against you' in his article 'Peré, j'ai péché envers le ciel et devant toi'. Remarques exegetiques et textuelles sur Luc 15:18-21' (2003). Yet such an interpretation is forced and goes against the natural reading of the text.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. Sellev's article, 'Interior Monologue as a Narrative Device in the Parables of Luke', who argues that Luke presents Jesus as depicting internal monologue in his characters to show Jesus' insight into the thoughts and intentions of people (1992, 239-253).

confession,<sup>54</sup> the son confesses his sin and declares his disqualification as a son nevertheless (v. 21).

The confession pictures his repentance, coming to the father bearing nothing but his need. He plans to turn and come home, openly confessing his failure. His attempt to live carelessly and independent of any constraints is a failure. It has resulted in something less than a human existence (Bock 1996, 1313).

The reunion of the son and his father, which I will address more extensively in my explanation of ‘divine initiative’ below, was characterized by the father’s enthusiastic acceptance of his son. He considered his son to have died, but now by his return, he is alive. The son’s elder brother, however, was upset at his father’s generous treatment of the prodigal. The parable ends with the father repeating to the elder son that the prodigal was lost but has now been found – was dead but has now been made alive.<sup>55</sup>

Now that we have met the prodigal, we will seek to see to what extent this parable is paradigmatic in the thinking of Luke.

### 3.3.3 The Prodigal as Paradigmatic

In his monograph, ‘The Paradigm of Conversion in Luke’ Méndez-Moratalla conducts an analysis of the conversion stories in Luke including Levi (5:27-32), the Woman of the City (7:36-50), the Prodigal Son (15:11-32), Zacchaeus (19:1-10), the Criminal (23:39-43), and finally the non-conversion of a ruler (18:18-30). The most significant outcome of his research, as the title of his book suggests, is that ‘it is legitimate to speak of a *Lukan paradigm* of conversion’ (emphasis his, 2004, 217). He notes ten elements that are most common in Luke’s conversion stories. I will briefly highlight them below and then show in what ways they do and do not relate to the conversion story of Luke 15.

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<sup>54</sup> In v. 20 the father’s embrace ‘pictures the acceptance of the son before the son says a word’ (Bock 1996, 1314).

<sup>55</sup> In his article, ‘Die Rückkehr ins Leben nach dem Gleichnis vom verlorenen Sohn,’ Landmesser suggests that both sons actually turn away from the father, who was the source of life, yet he offers to both the gift of repentance and forgiveness (2002, 239-261).

1. *Divine Initiative*: He notes that '[t]he theme of God's salvific plan is a central motif in the Lukan narrative and, as part of that purpose, divine initiative becomes a relevant Lukan emphasis. To express such a salvific plan at work in and through Jesus, Luke uses the language of necessity (cf. 2.49; 4.43; 9.22; 13.33; 17:25; 19.5; 22.37; 24.7, 44 all unique to Luke except for 9.22), as it is the divine initiative that prompts the action' (2004, 217). Especially when it regards the low status of tax-collectors and sinners, 'Luke makes acceptance of them a consequence of the gracious divine purpose and initiative at work in his ministry which goes beyond both any social or religious claim and any predetermined boundaries' (2004, 218).
2. *Conflict*: He notes that because Jesus accepted those who were outside of 'conventional socio-religious values' this, then, became a major cause for conflict and opposition to his ministry from those who were portrayed as within the social and religious norms (5:30; 7:39; 15:2; 19:7). Indeed, 'in line with the polarized responses to God's salvific plan, those converting are considered outside the margins of acceptability according to both social and religious conventions, while those sitting and living within those margins do not convert but oppose the divine salvific plan' (2004, 218).
3. *Sinner*: He notes that '[s]inners are the goal of Jesus' ministry. This is what Jesus tells his critics, that he has come to call them to repentance (5.32). Divine initiative works in favor of those on the fringes of social and religious acceptability who, in turn, are depicted as those ready to acknowledge their sin and receptive (sic) towards the ministry of God's envoy' (2004, 219).
4. *Repentance*: He states, '[r]epentance becomes in Luke's conversion accounts both the expected consequence of the divine initiative and also the sole condition for forgiveness' (2004, 219). Furthermore, 'those despised as

sinners are the ones depicted as repenting, while those who see themselves as righteous remain unaltered' (2004, 219).

5. *Wealth and Possession*: He notes that Luke's emphasis on the proper use of wealth 'signals whether repentance is present or not (cf. 3.11. 13-14; 5.28; 8.1-3; 15.12-14, 29-30; 19.2, 8)' (2004, 219). He states that '[b]ehind the Lukan stress on repentance manifested in the attitude towards possessions lies the struggle between opposing and mutually excluding allegiances, not a plea for poverty. At stake is who becomes the master of people's lives, either mammon or God' (2004, 219).<sup>56</sup>
6. *Forgiveness*: While he admits that forgiveness in Lukan conversion stories is rarely offered, it is clear through the 'attitudes and actions of Jesus towards people that forgiveness has happened (cf. 5.29; 7.47-49; 15.20, 22-24; 19.5, 7; 23.43)' (2004, 220).
7. *Table-fellowship and Joy*: He states that 'it is at the table that both the joy of salvation is celebrated and Jesus' forgiveness is granted to those who repent' (2004, 220).
8. *Reversal*: He argues that since Jesus welcomed in those considered outside of the social and religious norms, Jesus 'reformulates values held by leading socio-religious groups. Honour and community acceptance are now attained through repentance' (2004, 220). Furthermore, he states, 'Lukan conversion stories have become not simply a challenge and reinterpretation of generally accepted socio-religious values but their reversal for those who convert' (2004, 220-221).

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<sup>56</sup> A similar point is made by Holgate who argues that Luke 15:11-32 'relates directly to the Lukan theme of the right use of possessions' (1999, 68).

9. *Climactic Pronouncement*: ‘all conversion stories conclude with a pronouncement by Jesus, linking the main scope of ministry and the main theological emphasis of the story.’ (2004, 221; Luke 15:7).
10. *Christological Emphasis*: He states that ‘In sum, it has been in the encounter with Jesus that forgiveness has been granted and salvation bestowed. It is in the way people favourably respond to God’s initiative towards them in Jesus that salvation is obtained. He is acknowledged as saviour.’ (2004, 221; Luke 15:1-32)

In Luke 15 all ten of the above elements of conversion are at play, while some are more explicit than others. The first element, divine initiative, is perhaps the most complex in the story of the prodigal son. In some ways the son is the initiator: while the son is in a far off place, he ‘comes to his senses,’<sup>57</sup> realizing that he would be better off as a servant of his father because at least he would be fed (Luke 15:17). The son resolves to return home, rehearses his confession of sin and then takes the journey. Thus, up to a point, the son is the initiator of the action – he is the initial driving force behind his own eventual conversion. In v. 20, however, the father jarringly becomes the central figure in the narrative (Bock 1996, 1313). When the boy is still at a great distance, it is the *father* who instigates their reconciliation. The agenda of the son is instantly overtaken by the agenda of his father. On two occasions the father interrupts the plans of the son (v. 20 ‘*but* while he was still a long way off’; v. 22 ‘*but* the father said to the servants’). ‘The father’s compassion outruns the son’s repentance, and the speech of repentance is cut off mid-sentence’ (Ringe 1995, 208). The father wanted his *son*, not another servant. Then he emotionally runs toward his son, and in so doing, he casts aside all cultural norms of proper behavior for a Middle Eastern father (Blomberg 1990, 176; Jeremias 1963, 130). He then calls for a celebration: they would kill the fattened calf to express his joy (v. 23). Thus there appears to be both human and divine agency in the prodigal son. In some ways, the son is the initiator in that he must first acknowledge that he is lost and needs to go home. However, the father is the initiator of the process that actualizes his

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<sup>57</sup> For the connection between this phase and repentance see element # 4 below.

reconciliation. Moreover, only the father can pronounce that his son is back from the dead (cf. element # 9).

Méndez-Moratalla's second element of conversion in Luke is the role of conflict. The story begins with conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees and scribes over his generous treatment of sinners (15:2).<sup>58</sup> It ends with unresolved conflict between the father and the older son.

The third element of conversion is the notion of sinners. As we see in Luke 15, Jesus deals with sinners twice. The first mention of sinners is seen in that Jesus' crowd was considered sinners by the religious elite (15:2). Second, the final story of the prodigal depicts the son describing himself as one who 'sinned against heaven...' (15:18, 21).

The fourth element of conversion is the use of repentance. The notion of repentance is explicitly mentioned by Jesus (15:7, 10), which is easily connected to the repentance of the sinners and tax-collectors. But what can we make of the prodigal son's 'repentance'? Starving, alone and longing to be fed as a pig, the son, at last, begins to consider a return home (v. 17) as he literally came to himself (εἰς ἑαυτὸν δὲ ἔλθων), which is a counterpart to the English idiom 'coming to one's senses' (Bock 1996, 1312; J. Schneider, TDNT 2:668; Fitzmyer 1985, 1088-89).<sup>59</sup> But what exactly is meant by the phrase εἰς ἑαυτὸν δὲ ἔλθων? Three basic options are (1) the son did not really repent, (2) the son did repent, or (3) the son engaged in a pre-repentance. (1) Donahue argues that the point of Luke 15 is not to emphasize repentance but rather to show 'the joy of finding and of being found' (Donahue 1988, 151). He continues that 'neither the sheep nor the coin "repents"'. The one who is seeking provides all the dramatic action in the parable' (Donahue 1988, 151). Thus Luke does not depict the son as repenting as much as he is showing a son being found. (2) Stein suggests, in contrast, that coming to one's senses is a 'Hebrew/Aramaic expression for "repented"' (1992, 406; as argued by Strack/Billerbeck: 1922, vol. 2, 215 and Jeremias: 1962, 130). Thus Luke shows the son

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<sup>58</sup> That Jesus would eat with them shows a willingness to defy the Jewish purity code for membership in some Jewish sects (Kee 1992, 113). Indeed, οὗτος ἀμαρτωλοὺς προσδέχεται καὶ συνεσθίει αὐτοῖς (15:2b).

<sup>59</sup> Interestingly, for Luke, returning to the Father is a result of doing what is most natural - in one's *right* mind, one will return home.

to have clearly repented. In line with this is Stern, who stated that ‘the son repented’ and that he was no longer a sinner. Having first returned to *God*, the son longed to return to his family’ (2006, 189). (3) Bailey counters that Luke’s oddly worded phrase suggests that typical repentance was *not* what he had in mind. Since Luke never before hesitates to use common language for repentance, this likely indicates that there is some variation of meaning at work here. Bailey states that it is rather a statement that at some point he would repent but has not yet repented (1983, 175). Likewise de Witt describes the son’s repentance as more of a ‘pre-repentance’ (1981, 49) or as Green puts it ‘shades of repentance are clearly evident’ (Green 1997, 581). Hence repentance is in play for the son but it did not culminate with ‘conversion’ until he reengaged with his father.

The third option is preferred because it shows the complexity of the story: it *is* a story about being found (Donahue), but it is not *just* a story of being found, as it shows the complexity of the son’s thinking regarding his desire to return home. Likewise, this *is* a story about repentance (v. 7, 10); yet, the son’s repentance could, at best, win his acceptance as a hired servant, *not* as a son. It was not until the father received him (taking over the narrative in the process) that the son learned of his *full* reconciliation – his father deemed him to have returned from the dead.

The fifth element of conversion relates to change in attitude regarding wealth and possessions. The son’s confession to the father that he would be a servant and not require any money fits with Méndez-Moratalla’s element #5. The son who wanted money and left home (15:12-13), returned home asking not for money, but to be a servant (15:19): this is a sign of real conversion.

The loving response of the father indicates that forgiveness (element #6) occurred (15:20, 22). The father’s full acceptance of the son is obvious as the son is given a robe, shoes and a ring (v. 22).<sup>60</sup> The context in which Jesus told these parables was that of table fellowship (element #7) and each parable concludes with a celebratory meal and great joy (15:6, 9, 23).

In Luke 15 there is at least a partial reversal (element #8): the Pharisees and scribes are told that the sinners and tax-collectors are actually repentant and in fellowship with God. The *inclusion* of the ‘outsider’ did not necessarily mean the *exclusion* of the

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<sup>60</sup> The ring may represent the son’s reentry into the family (Bock 1996, 1315; Grundmann 1963, 313).

‘insider’. The ‘older son’ is not asked to leave the family, but is rather asked *to join* in the party and rejoice in the inclusion of his younger brother.

There is also a final pronouncement (element #9) given by Jesus through the words of the father. Indeed, the father’s explanation for the celebration is perhaps the most insightful comment regarding Luke’s notion of repentance and conversion: the father’s son was dead, but now, by his return home, is alive (vv. 24, 32). The tenth element of conversion, Christology, is seen from the outset of the narrative: it is explicitly through their relationship with Jesus, that he deems the sinners to have repented and come home to the Father.

#### 3.3.4 The Prodigal and Luke’s theology of Repentance

Given the above evidence, it is certainly plausible that the story of the prodigal son is representative of Luke’s thinking regarding repentance. Whether or not Méndez-Moratalla’s paradigm of conversion is totally sustainable, it is striking to read chapter 15 in line with all of the elements of conversion as categorized by Méndez-Moratalla. Thus, I think he is justified in renaming this parable ‘A Parable of Conversion’ (Méndez-Moratalla 2004, 131-152). Furthermore, I think it is reasonable that if we extract Luke’s notion of repentance as expressed in this parable, then it will go a long way in building our profile of Luke’s theology of conversion.

#### *Conclusions*

At this point we can draw some conclusions regarding Luke’s cultural background of repentance as well as Luke’s expression of repentance in the story of the prodigal son. It has been demonstrated that repentance as expressed in the OT represents a ‘changeableness’ that exists within humanity. Just as one is able to turn away from God, so too, one can turn toward God. However, it has also been shown that lasting and effective repentance is in some way caused by God. God either circumcises the heart directly or provides a more ambiguous ‘gift’ of repentance, which is expressed by giving the power to enable repentance or by providing time for someone to repent.

Human and divine agency in repentance is expressed diversely. Within Rabbinic Judaism some suggest there to be a very strong human agency in conversion even to the

point where one can ‘redeem’ oneself by repentance. However, we also see within other strains of Rabbinic Judaism as well in Sirach 17 that repentance is itself a work of God’s creation, thus pointing to a strongly divine aspect of agency. In the 18 Benedictions repentance was understood as something that God both desired as well as caused to come about. However, that the individual is praying for this repentance showed an aspect of human agency as well.

It has also been argued that repentance in Greco-Roman traditions was used for showing a change of thinking, deep emotion, prompting forgiveness and reconciling two parties. Nave’s analysis of repentance shows some striking similarities between the broader Greco-Roman traditions of repentance and Luke’s concept of repentance. Not the least of these is the connection between repentance as a change of mind and Luke’s depiction of the prodigal son changing his mind and returning to his father. In terms of agency, repentance was viewed as a human-centered event to achieve reconciliation between parties and as an aid in working toward forgiveness.

We now turn to Luke 15 and see in what ways we can detect both Jewish and Greco-Roman elements of repentance. First, the son’s attitude toward his father parallels Israel’s changing attitude to God. Just as the son turns away from his father, so Israel turns away from God. Just as the son repents and turns toward the father, so too, Israel repents and turns toward the loving arms of God. When Luke allows us to read the mind of the prodigal, we see that his repentance began with a change of thinking: he came to his senses. This repentance, however, was not just an emotionless change of thought. When the son returned to his father, the father runs, cries and kisses the son. The son emotionally confesses his disqualification as a son, while at the same time the father embraces him as *his* son. The son’s repentance, as expressed by his physical return home, immediately results in the father’s forgiveness; the father’s gifts to the son leave no doubt that reconciliation has occurred. However, the son’s repentance and turn toward his father is actually overtaken by the father, which shows a complexity in agency. While the son made the first move of turning toward his father, the father’s sudden run towards his son and his ignoring of the son’s request actually demonstrate what it takes for effective lasting repentance (i.e. conversion) to occur. The father must *cause* repentance to be effective so as to be redemptive and permanent.

Finally, we have seen that this story of the prodigal son is in some ways paradigmatic of Luke's thinking on conversion. Leaning on the impressive work of Méndez-Moratalla we do indeed see several connections between the common elements of conversion in all of Luke's Gospel to that of his story of the prodigal son. While at this point we cannot have confidence that we now have a complete picture of Luke's overall theology of conversion, I think we can conclude reasonably that we have made an important first step toward this goal. To this end, we may note some preliminary emerging answers to our three theological questions posed in Chapter One. First, we have noted that the change involved in conversion concerns Luke's notion of repentance which assumes a fundamental changeableness in humanity. Second, we have seen at least one motivating factor for conversion expressed in Luke's prodigal son: the bitter fruit of life lived without the Father; it is in the midst of pigs far from home when the son comes to his senses. Third, we have a complex understanding of agency at play in Luke 15. While it is the son who comes to his senses, his return to the father would count only for him being a servant. It is the father, once he sees the son, who takes over the narrative and asserts his agency in declaring him as his son. Indeed, the father affirms that his son *was* dead, suggesting a measure of ontological disunity, and is now declared to be alive.

The question now is: if and to what extent does Luke's understanding of conversion in Luke 15 parallel with that of Gentile conversion in Acts 17? Does Luke believe that the Jewish God is Father to everyone? In what way are all humans 'God's offspring'? In order to answer these questions we go to Acts 17 to find whether conversion for Pagans is depicted as a son being welcomed home by his loving Father.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### ACTS 17:16-34 AND GENTILE CONVERSION

*Therefore, being sent on their way by the church, they were passing through both Phoenicia and Samaria, describing in detail the conversion of the Gentiles, and were bringing great joy to all the brethren.*

*Acts 15:3*

*that they should seek God, in the hope that they might feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, for 'In him we live and move and have our being;' as even some of your own poets have said,*

*'For we are indeed his offspring.'*

*Acts 17:27-28*

From first to last, perhaps no other theme shines as brightly in Acts as that of Gentile conversion. Beginning in 1:8 with Jesus' words concerning the witness of his disciples to the 'end of the earth' and concluding in 28:31 with the Apostle to the Gentiles preaching the Kingdom of God unhindered in Rome, there is little doubt the writer of Acts endeavors to show that 'to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life' (11:18). Indeed, at crucial points in the progression of this narrative, Luke highlights a dramatic 'turning to the Gentiles' (13:46; 18:6; 28:28) as a fulfillment of Isaiah 42:6 and 49:6: 'I have placed you as a light to the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the end of the earth'. In many ways the purpose of this chapter is the same as that of Paul and Barnabas, quoted above: I plan to describe in detail and extract the major ingredients of Gentile conversions in Acts. Furthermore, if common elements of conversions of the Gentiles in Acts can be found, I hope to describe what they are and determine if they help us understand Luke's overall theology of conversion better.

It will be the contention of this chapter that, as a result of an analysis of Gentile conversions (4.2), it is the story in Acts 17:16-34 of Paul's experience in Athens which provides the clearest and most detailed picture of Gentile conversion. As we discovered in Chapter Two, the theology expressed in Luke's story of Paul's encounter with the Athenians in Acts 17 is a source of controversy in NT scholarship and it is also believed by some that it is here where we can discover unfiltered Lukan theology. For example, according to Dibelius, the theology in Acts 17 is foreign to the NT: 'the Areopagus speech is a Hellenistic speech with a Christian ending' (1956, 58) and as such has all the makings of a Lukan invention. Likewise, Käsemann argues that Paul's appeal to the Athenians' status as being God's offspring points to an old-creation theology rather than the 'new creation' theology of Paul himself (1971). Hence in this investigation we will endeavor to show Luke's theological assumptions surrounding the conversion event in Athens. In so doing, building on the results of Chapter Three, we will begin to craft a theological profile of Luke's notion of conversion. Referring to our theological questions in Chapter One, we will try to answer why Luke believed conversion in Athens was necessary in the first place. What was wrong with the Athenians that caused them to need to be converted? In this passage I will pay particular attention to the spiritual condition of the Gentiles before conversion. I will also investigate the theological nature of the message itself that 'Paul' (i.e. Paul as narrated by Luke) directed to this Gentile audience in hopes of their conversion. Central to this message was Luke's belief that Gentiles were the offspring of the Creator and that they could indeed be persuaded to return home (Acts 17:28; cf. Luke 15). Finally, in my conclusion I will address the notion of causation, i.e., what the exact relationship is between human and divine agency in this conversion story.

I am most concerned with these *theological* questions due to the limited focus of this dissertation as outlined in Chapter One. Hence I am not able to interact with the shape of Acts as a whole nor am I able to conduct a broad-scale historical-sociological study to discover *Sitz in Leben* of this text. As such, claims to discover Luke's actual thoughts on conversion must be tempered by the reality of my limited method. If one were to engage in more detailed historical-sociological study, it would be likely that some of what I discover in the ensuing discussion would be in need of correction. However,

since my agenda is primarily the discovery of theological observations based on my three questions, these observations, rather than the historical reality they represent, are the major focuses of this study. Hence what I mean by trying to understand ‘Luke’s’ notion of Gentile conversion in Acts 17 must be understood within the limitations of my method and ought not to be understood to claim the whole of Luke’s actual thoughts as he wrote this account.

But before we get to the theological questions, I must first address the predicament in scholarship which casts doubt on whether or not Acts 17:16-34 is really a conversion story. Secondly, I will explore to what extent this passage represents the theology of Gentile conversion. After these initial questions have been sufficiently laid to rest, I will then turn my attention to Acts 17:16-34 itself.

#### 4.1. Is Acts 17:16-34 a Conversion Story?

In his observation of multiple conversions in Luke’s second volume, Harnack noted: ‘[t]he book of Acts describes many a person being converted all at once, by a sort of rush’ (1908, 384). The response to Peter’s inaugural sermon in Acts 2 certainly supports his remark, as it was both immediate (2:41, τῆ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ) and plentiful (τρισχίλιοι).<sup>1</sup> But what do we make of an instance in which Luke presents a response to the preaching of an apostle that is less immediate and reaps many fewer souls such as what we find as the result of Paul’s Areopagus speech? Is it a less important conversion story if only a few people are converted rather than multitudes?

Some consider Luke’s account of Paul’s famed visit to Athens not a prime example of Gentile conversion, but an atypical evangelistic encounter. Conzelmann, for example, suggests (unlike Charles 1995 and Flemming 2002) that Luke included this account to point out to believers that even Paul had difficulty converting intellectuals, and so Christians ought not to feel badly if they cannot get them to convert either.<sup>2</sup> For

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<sup>1</sup> We see similar responses throughout Luke’s narrative (e.g. Acts 5:14; 14:21).

<sup>2</sup> As Conzelmann stated, ‘This address was not meant to be a general pattern to be repeated everywhere. On the contrary, Luke intends to show how this unique Paul *at that one time* dealt with the philosophers in Athens in a unique discussion. If the philosophers were not even converted by a sermon of Paul, they will certainly not be converted today. Thus the Christians find their own experience substantiated: these circles do not respond to Christian missions even “today”; the truth of the faith is established in spite of its being rejected by the wise’ (1968, 227). Of course, some who heard Paul did indeed respond to him (17:34: κολληθέντες αὐτῷ ἐπίστευσαν) as this chapter will demonstrate.

others, Paul simply ‘misfired’ in this speech, and two converts are all he had to show for it. For example, Hunter’s chapter entitled ‘The Areopagitica’ argues that the audience’s scoffing reactions point to Paul’s ultimate mistake in handling his experience in Athens (1975, 223-227).<sup>3</sup> Or did Barrett capture the idea by asking, ‘[a]re the men, including Dionysius the Areopagite, who believed, and Damaris, represented as no more than a meagre harvest; or does Luke mean to say, Even [*sic*] in Athens there were converts’ (1974, 70)? In other words, does the fact that conversion happened at all in Athens become a sign that Luke believed it to be a positive event?

If Luke’s Athens story was meant to be a positive example of Gentile conversion, what, then, are scholars to make of the lack of numbers in this conversion? Would only having two names mentioned as converts indicate an overall disappointing result for Paul in Athens? Furthermore, does the apparent time delay between Paul’s address and the Athenians’ final conversions indicate that Paul’s purposes were not immediately achieved? Perhaps. However, some suggest that a sudden mass conversion was not Paul’s intention from the outset. While Sandnes states confidently, ‘[n]o one would question that God’s final purpose, according to this speech, is conversion for the Gentile audience in Athens’, he also points to the possibility that the limited number of conversions was also a part of the ‘plan’ (1993, 14).

Luke could have employed a couple of styles of rhetoric for Paul in which to address the Athenians. Noting that at least part of Paul’s audience in Athens was critical in nature (as opposed to facing a ‘well disposed audience’, in which an orator would employ an *exordium* style of rhetoric),<sup>4</sup> the rhetorical strategy, *insinuatio*, would be the recommended one (Aristotle, *Rhet.* 3.14.16; Cicero, *Her.* 1.4.6) (Sandnes 1993, 15).<sup>5</sup> The speaker using this method would, until absolutely necessary, hide whatever issues he believed the audience would find repugnant, which in this case would be Paul’s notion of

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<sup>3</sup> Hunter here draws on a wealth of scholarship dating back as far as Ramsay’s suggestion in 1894 during his Morgan lectures at Auburn Theological Seminary that it ‘would appear that Paul was disappointed and perhaps disillusioned by his experience in Athens’ (1949). Cf., however, Stonehouse’s response to Ramsay in his ‘Paul before the Areopagus’ (1957, 32-33). Also see Winter’s recent argument against the notion that Paul’s address in Athens was a failure (2005, 38-59). For other more optimistic readings of the Areopagus event see Bailey (1990), Charles (1995), and Flemming (2002).

<sup>4</sup> See D. Zweck’s essay on the possible *exordium* used by Paul at Athens (1989).

<sup>5</sup> This ‘subtle approach’ is a method of rhetoric in which one uses an ‘indirect way’ to gain favor of an audience by using the art of concealment (Sandnes 1993, 15).

resurrection (17:32: Ἀκούσαντες δὲ ἀνάστασιν νεκρῶν οἱ μὲν ἐχλεύαζον) (cf. Gray 2005). Indeed, '[a] speaker facing a critical audience should not speak frankly of his primary aim' (Sandnes 1993, 16). The purpose of this method, which was used extensively by Socrates, was not to win over one's opponents right away, but rather to provoke greater curiosity and thus to promote further discussion (1993, 25). If this method was indeed in Luke's mind here, then, given that part of Paul's audience responds in v. 32, ἀκουσόμεθά σου περὶ τούτου καὶ πάλιν, this is precisely the response Luke's Paul was endeavoring to provoke (1993, 24-25). Their subsequent belief (ἐπίστευσαν, 17:34) indicates to the reader that Paul's Socratic method was indeed the correct one. Luke's message, then, is not that conversion in Athens is impossible, but that rhetorically astute methods of evangelism might be needed to produce conversions.

While some of those who listened to Paul's message in Athens did not believe it, there appears to be a function even for their unbelief. Those who did not believe provided a contrast to those who did believe. Barrett, and many others,<sup>6</sup> note that the two philosophical schools, the Epicureans and the Stoics, named in Paul's audience provide a sharp distinction from one another beginning in v. 18 with a τινὲς δέ construction and culminating in vv. 32-34 with a μὲν...δέ construction (οἱ μὲν ἐχλεύαζον...τινὲς δὲ...κολληθέντες αὐτῷ ἐπίστευσαν) (Barrett 1974, 71).<sup>7</sup> There is a Lukan intentionality in how he pits these two groups against one another. Thus, '[p]rior to the apostle's speech the author indicated that some members of the crowd were genuinely interested in the message, even though it struck them as unusual' (Croy 1997, 28). Hence, while one group mocked at the end of Paul's speech, Luke wished his readers to see that at least some in the more receptive group attached themselves to Paul (17:34: κολληθέντες αὐτῷ).<sup>8</sup> Luke's grammar shows that the conversions in Athens were no mere afterthought, nor was it a meager spiritual side-note to an otherwise disappointing

<sup>6</sup> E.g., Neyrey who suggests the Epicureans function as the foil in the narrative (1990). The general audience of Paul (and Luke) would disagree with them and thus side with the Stoics who were in the group that apparently asked Paul to tell them more about this new teaching.

<sup>7</sup> Neyrey suggests that Luke intends us to understand the Epicureans, who initially called Paul a 'babbler', as the group who 'mocked him' and the Stoics, who formerly evaluated him as a 'preacher of foreign divinities', as those who reacted more positively. He concludes that '[t]he speech itself, then, is bracketed by contrasting opinions about Paul's doctrine' (Neyrey 1990, 128).

<sup>8</sup> This group subsequently believed his message, thus being converted to Christianity. While it is true that they did not react with an emotional 'what must I do to be saved?' (Acts 16:30), it was their openness to hear more that led to their eventual belief (Croy 1997, 28).

trip to Athens. Moreover, there appears to be a trend in Luke's narrative in which the audiences that received a message had a mixed, bi-polar reaction.<sup>9</sup>

The propensity to conversion of those who attach themselves to philosophical schools is another factor to consider in deciding whether or not this is a positive Gentile conversion account. Surprisingly, there has been no significant research on the connection between the philosophically inclined audience in Athens (v. 18) and their possible propensity to religious conversion. It is well documented that conversion *to philosophy* was a common social phenomenon in Greco-Roman antiquity.<sup>10</sup> Nock's essay, 'Conversion and Adolescence', notes that individuals in their 'middle and later years of life occasionally involved a turning to philosophy, whether as vocation or as refuge, and increasing age sometimes led to a greater seriousness in relation to religious observances and emotions' (1972, 480). Although attempting to assess the age of Paul's audience would be foolhardy, it is worth noting a possible connection between Luke's narrative aside that the Athenians were preoccupied with 'hearing something new' (v. 21) and the fact that philosophy had 'converting power' with some in antiquity. Would the fact that they enjoyed philosophy indicate an openness to consider converting to Christianity, which claimed to be superior to philosophy, while at the same time using philosophical methods to 'prove' this very point?<sup>11</sup> If this is the case, then Luke added the Athens event not to show it as an odd and ultimately unrepeatable conversion account

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<sup>9</sup> E.g. Acts 2:5-13; 4:1-4; 5:33-34; 11:1-2; 13:44-45. In his recent article, 'Paul prédicateur dans les Actes des Apôtres,' Quesnel shows that in three of Paul's speeches before his arrest (Acts 13:16b-41; Acts 17:22b-31; Acts 20:18b-35) his success was only partial (2001, 469-481). Cf. J. Kodell's work 'Luke's Use of *LAOS*' (1969) as well as Cunningham's *Though Many Tribulations* (1997).

<sup>10</sup> See esp. Nock's definitive work on the topic (1933). Also see Talbert's essay, 'Conversion in the Acts of the Apostles: Auditors' Perceptions' (2003), in which he attaches a cognitive and moral aspect of conversion to philosophy in a brief analysis of Lucian's *Nigrinus* (137-38). Chester notes the connection between calling and conversion to philosophy. Chester notes that '[p]hilosophy stands out because, although not dogmatic or exclusive, it did demand a certain lifestyle, and it did have a sense of mission in the quest for truth. Individuals who were previously quite definitely not philosophers might become so.' (2003, 70-71).

<sup>11</sup> Jaeger observed that the Christian mission forced missionaries to use Greek forms of speech and literature, including 'protreptic' forms of dialogue, borrowed from Greek philosophy. Protreptic was a style of classical rhetoric, originating from the Sophists but expanding to all major philosophical schools, in which a particular philosopher would gain adherents by highlighting the shortcomings of rival philosophical schools. He notes that 'various schools tried to find followers by making protreptic speeches in which they recommended their philosophical knowledge or *dogma* as the only way to happiness...Even the word "conversion" stems from Plato, for adopting a philosophy...' (Jaeger 1961, 10). And he concludes, pointing to the Areopagus address that 'Christian missionaries followed in their footsteps, and, if we may trust the reports found in the Acts of the Apostles, they even borrowed their arguments from these predecessors, especially when addressing an educated Greek audience' (Jaeger 1961, 10-11).

but rather to demonstrate to his reading audience that the philosophically inclined may be more open to the gospel than other groups of non-believers. Moreover, their propensity to conversion would fit with a Lukan tendency to show that converts to Christianity were often times already heading in the right direction but lacked only specific information about Jesus.<sup>12</sup>

For the above reasons, we can see that the Athens story is indeed a conversion account. Below we will attempt to determine if the Athens conversion story could serve as a paradigmatic Gentile conversion story for the whole of Acts.

#### 4.2 To What Extent is Acts 17:16-34 an Important Gentile Conversion Account?

In order to answer the above question, a brief survey of Gentile conversions in Acts is needed. While there are several Gentile conversions recorded in Acts, there are surprisingly few conversion accounts in which individuals turn from Greco-Roman religion to Christianity. In the vast majority of Gentile conversions, the convert was previously involved in a Jewish community and considered the Jewish scriptures to be an authoritative text. I will give four examples of this below: (1) The Ethiopian Eunuch, (2) Cornelius, (3) Sergius Paulus, and (4) Lydia. There are only two examples of a proper Gentile conversion in which the convert actually turns from a Greco-Roman religion to Christianity: the encounter of Paul and Barnabas with the Lycaonians and the conversions at Athens. It will be shown that the Athens conversion story actually contains and expands on many of the common elements of conversion seen in the above Gentile conversion stories, thus making it the ideal representative text of Gentile conversion in Acts.<sup>13</sup>

(1) The first Gentile conversion in Acts, which occurred through the ministry of Philip, was that of the Ethiopian eunuch (8:25-40).<sup>14</sup> In this case, Philip met the

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<sup>12</sup> Cf. discussion of the Ethiopian Eunuch below.

<sup>13</sup> In his monograph, *Luke's Portrait of Gentiles Prior to Their Coming to Faith* (1998), Stenschke demonstrates the pitfalls of previous studies of the Areopagus Speech (i.e. Dibelius and Gärtner) that draw conclusions about Luke's theology only from this passage without considering the previous accounts by Luke about Gentiles coming to faith. He states, 'the approaches of both Dibelius and Gärtner have not taken account of Luke's other references to Gentiles prior to faith' (1999, 23). With Stenschke's wise observation in mind, I endeavor to show in this section how the Areopagus narrative relates to Luke's other Gentile conversion accounts.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Gaventa's discussion of the Ethiopian eunuch (1986).

Ethiopian eunuch as he was traveling home after having worshipped (προσκυνέω) in Jerusalem (8:27) and while he was reading the prophet Isaiah in his chariot (8:28). Interestingly, it was the Ethiopian eunuch who, after admitting he needed a guide for understanding a difficult passage, invited Philip to join him in his chariot (8:31). It was the Ethiopian who eagerly sought the identity of the mysterious figure mentioned in Isaiah 53:7-8 and, after learning that it was Jesus, it was the Ethiopian who himself asked if he could be baptized (8:36). Every step of the way, the Ethiopian was the driving force of his own conversion. He only lacked the necessary information in order to become a Christian. Once he learned that the Isaianic savior was Jesus, he quickly confessed him as the Son of God and was converted (8:37). However, Philip received an explicit divine command via an angelic agent, which instructed him to go the road in which he would meet the Ethiopian. Hence, while the Ethiopian was the driving force in his conversion, Luke also depicts an explicit divine agency, which put this process in motion.

(2) Long before the centurion, Cornelius, met Peter and was converted to Christianity, he already feared God, gave alms to the Jewish community and prayed continually to God (10:1). Indeed, it was in response to the prayers of this Gentile, that God sent him Peter (10:3-4). Once he heard what Peter said about Jesus, he received the Spirit and was baptized (10:44-47).<sup>15</sup>

(3) In chapter 13 we have the story of Sergius Paulus, who, like the Ethiopian and Cornelius, was already attracted to Judaism, although it is said he followed a *false* Jewish prophet (13:6). Nevertheless, since he was a man of intelligence (συνετός), he quickly discerned Barnabas and Saul's word to be trustworthy, resisting Elymas' attempt to corrupt his new-found faith (13:8).

(4) When Paul engaged with Lydia shortly after the 'Macedonian call' in chapter 16, well *before* her conversion, Luke counted her to be a 'worshipper of God' (σεβομένη τὸν θεόν) (16:14) who was spending Sabbath at a place of prayer (16:13). In this case, which is distinct from the previous examples, Luke notes specifically concerning her conversion that the Lord opened her heart to believe (ὁ κύριος διήνοιξεν τὴν καρδίαν) (16:14).

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<sup>15</sup> Cf. Gaventa's discussion of Cornelius as well (1986).

In all these examples above, the Gentile convert had a previous attraction to Judaism. Also, in all of these cases, the converts either were the driving force in their own conversion, or at least put themselves in a position in which they could hear the good news about Jesus (e.g. Lydia). Also, in the conversions of the Ethiopian and Sergius Paulus, both ‘intelligence’ and curiosity are the driving forces which cause their conversions to come about. Indeed, it is the unsuccessful conversion of Agrippa that we see the role of the intellect as the key feature causing conversion to happen or preventing it from happening.

In his defense before Agrippa, Paul recalls Jesus’ commission to him that he was to go to the Gentiles in order to ‘open their eyes so they [might] turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God’ (26:18). Yet the response of Agrippa to Paul’s attempt to convert him is telling: ‘in a short time would you persuade me (πείθεις) to be a Christian?’ (26:28). In other words, at least as it concerns the convert, it boils down to an act of persuasion, a primarily cognitive event. It is also interesting that in his attempt to persuade Agrippa to become a Christian Paul tried to convince him that he really did believe the prophets; indeed, Paul insisted ‘I know that you believe’ (26:27). Demetrius, the silversmith, also perceived the conversions experienced in Paul’s mission to be both about persuasion and about Paul’s own causation to bring these conversions to fruition: ‘Paul has persuaded (πείσας) and turned away a great many people, saying that gods made with hands are not gods’ (19:26). It is *Paul* who was responsible for the turning (μετίστημι) of these individuals and his tool of conversion was persuasion (πειθῶ).

It is only in chapter 14 when we see the first example of conversion of Gentiles who actually turn from a Greco-Roman religion to Jesus worship. In this story, a crippled man hears Paul’s message and as a result has πίστιν τοῦ σωθῆναι (14:9). After this man is healed his fellow Lycaonians proclaim concerning Paul and Barnabas that ‘the gods have become like men and have come down to us’ (14:11). Indeed, it is in response to being offered a sacrifice by the priest of Zeus, that Paul and Barnabas tear their clothes revealing a deep desire that the Lycaonians convert to Jesus-worship (14:13-14). They begin their proclamation by stating that the gospel means that they must ‘turn (ἐπιστρέφω) from these vain things to a living God’ (14:15). They then explain that while there was a time of ignorance in which God ‘allowed all the nations to walk in their

own ways' (14:16) this same God has nevertheless revealed himself to them by his faithful goodness in providing rain, food and gladness (14:17). Yet their explanation is cut short as they continue trying to stop the Lycaonians from sacrificing to them.

Now that we have given a brief survey of Gentile conversion, the following similarities can be adduced to show that Acts 17:16-34 can serve as a legitimate paradigm of Gentile conversion. As previously stated, many of the converts mentioned above have been shown by Luke to be already heading in the right direction. Certainly this is the case in Acts 17:16-34, as we will see that they were seeking after God and trying to worship him while only lacking the right information about Jesus. In Acts 14:16 Paul mentions that there was a time of ignorance for the nations of earth. In Acts 17:30 we will see Luke through Paul use this idea of ignorance and connect it with the coming judgment, declaring that the time of ignorance was over at the resurrection of Jesus. In the example of the Ethiopian and Sergius Paulus, the role of the intellect and the self-motivated seeker was highlighted. As will be shown, the intellectual environment of Athens permeates the whole of Acts 17:16-34 and they show themselves to be seekers of truth.<sup>16</sup> Also, in the case of the Ethiopian and Cornelius, the text highlights their *own* agency in conversion. In the case of the conversions in Athens, we will see the agency of both Paul and the Athenians as the highlighted forces leading to conversion.

#### 4.3 Ingredients of Gentile Conversion in Acts 17:16-34

In this section I will begin to extract the major factors at work that led to conversion at Athens. I will note how Luke described Paul's audience before conversion, highlighting the intellectual atmosphere of Athens and looking at the role that dialogue played leading up to their conversion (4.3.1). I will note also the nature of their seeking after God as well as their religious ignorance before conversion (4.3.2). Afterwards, I will look to the content of Paul's converting speech highlighting its major theological aspects (4.4). Then I will explore the nature of the Athenians' reaction to Paul's speech (4.5).

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<sup>16</sup> Noting the small converting response Stenschke concludes his discussion on Act 17 with the curious comment that 'The best-educated Gentiles on Luke's pages appear as spiritual "write-offs". It becomes clear that more than correction is needed' (1999, 224). While his last statement is true (*contra* Taeger 1980), that ought not to minimize Luke's apparent emphasis on the role of the intellect in *salvation* for the Gentiles.

#### 4.3.1 Athenians Before Conversion: Intellectual Atmosphere

In 17:16, Luke moved from Paul's ministry in Berea to his experience in Athens. The μὲν οὖν construction beginning in v. 17 not only indicates a transition in the narrative (Haenchen 1971, 517; Witherington 1998, 513) but, by virtue of its position in the sentence, highlights the role of Paul's dialogue.<sup>17</sup> Luke employed the term διαλέγομαι frequently in describing Paul's mission. For instance, it is used in 18:4 when Paul was in the synagogue in an attempt to persuade the Jews and Greeks (διελέγετο δὲ ἐν τῇ συναγωγῇ κατὰ πᾶν σάββατον ἔπειθεν τε Ἰουδαίους καὶ Ἕλληνας). Likewise, in 19:8 Paul entered a synagogue and was διαλεγόμενος καὶ πείθων τὰ περὶ τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ θεοῦ. While Paul's dialogue may not have been exciting to listen to (cf. 20:9 when Eutychus fell asleep listening to Paul's dialogue), it suggests a forum for engagement.<sup>18</sup> As Paul continued his ministry from the synagogue<sup>19</sup> to the streets of Athens, his use of dialogue continued as an important theme. As Legrand states: '[w]hile this speech does not hide the Christian call to conversion, it is no mere challenge of the Greek view. There is a meeting and a dialogue. Christianity and Athens speak the same language even if they do not put the same contents in the words. It is Kerygma and Sophia that meet on Mars Hill' (1985, 349).

It is in the ἀγορά that Luke highlighted the encounter between Paul and the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers. Luke noted that it was the philosophers, among 'those who happened to be there', who actually responded to Paul (συνέβαλλον)<sup>20</sup> by asking him questions (v.18). This interchange could indicate hostile overtones, such as when it was used in Lk. 14:31, when kings 'συμβαλεῖν' before war. However, it might have a more benign sense of 'conversing' or 'conferring' which is how it was used in Acts 4:15 when the Jewish council 'συνέβαλλον πρὸς ἀλλήλους' about how to handle Peter and John's miracle of the crippled man. Wall takes it too far by arguing that Luke scripts a 'collegial exchange toward a constructive end...an honest exchange with "scholarly

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<sup>17</sup> Διελέγετο μὲν οὖν...

<sup>18</sup> *Contra* G. Schrenk, TDNT 2:94-95, who argued that this was a term for a simple address.

<sup>19</sup> While on other occasions, Paul preached at the synagogue (Acts 13:14, 43; 14:1; 17:1, 10; 18:4, 26; 19:8), here it is 'dismissed in a sentence...the notable scene in Athens was the Agora' (Barrett 1998, 828). Cf. Croy's similar comment (1997, 22).

<sup>20</sup> This is a thoroughly Lukan term, used 3 times in Luke and 4 times in Acts (Barrett 1998, 829).

peers” (2002, 242).<sup>21</sup> While there appears to have been no physical violence,<sup>22</sup> this was, for Paul, a fight, as we will see below in the exchange of the loaded terms: σπερμολόγος and δεισιδαίμονεστέρους. Hence, to some extent, ‘the gloves were off’ in this interchange and, though it did not degenerate into violence, this might have been a real possibility (cf. below Josephus’ description of the Athenians’ execution of a priestess who introduced new gods).

The Athenians called Paul a σπερμολόγος (v. 18) and much speculation surrounds the intended meaning of this term.<sup>23</sup> It was used literally of birds eating seeds (Plutarch *Demetr.* 28, 5), indicating a sort of person who survived by picking up scraps of knowledge in a marketplace (Robinson 1975).<sup>24</sup> Barrett suggests it is more akin to indicating a ‘third-rate journalist’ who collects his sources haphazardly (1998, 830). Understood in this way, the Athenians thought that Paul made his living picking up scraps of knowledge and putting them together poorly. Philo seems to use the term in this way in describing sarcastically one of Gaius’ ‘excellent and sapient’ advisors: ‘that member of the aristocracy Helicon, slave, scrap retailer (σπερμολόγος), piece of riff-raff...’ (*Embassy*, 203). Σπερμολόγος was not a pun as Robinson suggests<sup>25</sup> but a sarcastic jab at Paul, questioning his motives and intellectual capacity.

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<sup>21</sup> B. Winter argues that the Athenian niceness to Paul may be because he was perceived as a ‘herald’ and that such a person would have ‘status and financial standing’, which would cause them to deal with Paul more gently (1996, 83). See my discussion below of the ultimately unconvincing nature of Winter’s thesis.

<sup>22</sup> Note that Athens is one of the few places where Paul is not subsequently kicked out of town (Witherington 1998).

<sup>23</sup> Meanings of σπερμολόγος vary as follows: ‘zealous seekers of the second-rate at second hand’ (Jackson 1979, 211), ‘An intellectual magpie’ (Hanson 1967), and ‘picks up a “hand to mouth” living’ (Chase 1902, 205).

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Haenchen 1971, 517, n. 11

<sup>25</sup> M. A. Robinson suggests that it is more likely that the ‘content of Paul’s preaching must have given occasion to the unkind remark’ (1975, 235). In the agora, which had a varied audience (v. 17: τοὺς παρατυγχάνοντα), Paul would not use the ‘philosophically-oriented starting point’, which he does in his Areopagus address (1975, 235). Instead, Paul may have been using parables, since ‘they were used by Jesus himself when discoursing with crowds...Furthermore, it would seem probable that those same parables which Jesus used towards the common people...would also be used by Paul in order to reach his audience of common people’ (1975, 236). Hence, when the philosophers listened to Paul, they kept hearing variations of σπέρμα and λόγος as Paul told the parable of the sower. Thus they hurled at him a ‘clever play on words’:

Although this pun was σπερμολόγος, a lower-class word (which probably they had often heard but rarely used), the term could be readily applied to Paul’s *type* of speaking without necessarily impugning Paul or the content of his message...In simple terms, they said, “The one who is talking of the σπέρμα and λόγος must be a σπερμολόγος!” (1975, 239).

In addition to being a σπερμολόγος, others in the crowd accused Paul of being a preacher of foreign divinities [ξένων δαιμονίων δοκεῖ καταγγελεὺς εἶναι] (17:18).<sup>26</sup> First, we will address the term καταγγελεὺς; then, we will explore the nature of ξένων δαιμονίων.

While the definition of καταγγελεὺς is straightforward enough, ‘proclaimer’, the fact this is the only time it is used in the NT may indicate a particular context in which this term was used in antiquity. The apparent Athenian objection to Paul may be based on the political wisdom of Maecenas to Augustus (Dio Cassius 52.361) (cf. Barrett 1998, 831). In this case, being a proclaimer was a negative occupation, which inflicted harm upon the community. Indeed, Maecenas advised Augustus to hate and punish those who bring in new ideas about ‘τὸ θεῖον’ (cf. Barrett 1998, 831). This accusation against Paul also recalls the final days of the most famous Athenian resident, Socrates.<sup>27</sup> He was given the death penalty for introducing ‘δαιμόνια καινά’ (Plato, *Apology* 24bc). Seen in this way, Paul was in line with great philosophers of the past, whose ideas were before his time – and his life was in danger because of it.

Yet there was another way this term could have been understood. It may also carry with it an official title, which would have been perceived by the Athenians quite positively. Noting Garland’s study which shows Athens was a significant player in promoting new gods for the Greco-Roman world (Diodorus Siculus 4.39.1; Aeschylus, *Eumenides*, 869), Winter argues that this is exactly how Paul was understood in Athens (Garland 1992; Winter 1996). The Athenians invited Paul to speak at the Areopagus in order to make an informed decision as to whether or not to accept his new god (Winter

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While Robinson goes far beyond the evidence by suggesting he has found a ‘lost dimension of Paul’s preaching’ (1975, 240), it is the connection between the possible use of parables and Luke’s theology of conversion that is most interesting (cf. S. McFague’s article “Conversion: Life on the Edge of the Raft” in which she draws a strong connection between conversion and parables: 1979). Nevertheless, the evidence in Robinson’s favor is so scant that it seems highly unlikely that Luke had parables in mind by using σπερμολόγος as a term hurled at Paul.

<sup>26</sup> The irony in this narrative of Paul introducing new gods cannot be missed: in the κατείδωλον οὔσαν τὴν πόλιν it is Paul who is accused of proclaiming strange deities.

<sup>27</sup> While it is difficult to know for sure if Luke presents Paul as a ‘Christian Socrates’, as suggested in Koch’s recent article ‘Glaubensüberzeugung und Toleranz: Interreligiöser Dialog in christlicher Sicht’ (2008, 196-210), it is tenuous to look to Socrates as an example of a *successful* approach to ‘interreligious dialogue’ given how things turned out for him.

1996).<sup>28</sup> Winter states that ‘[t]he term *καταγγελεύς* was used in the time of Augustus of “a herald” of the imperial cult, and also of the herald of the Areopagus who appeared on the archon-list and possessed the seal of Athens’ (1996, 80).<sup>29</sup> The tone of v. 19, then, is ‘polite, for this is not a prosecution; instead, it is an initial meeting of Counsel members with Paul, after it had been reported that he was possibly the herald of new divinities. They would know that, if he gained popularity in Athens, he might secure a rightful place for his deities in the Athenian Pantheon’ (1996, 83).<sup>30</sup>

Winter’s conclusion, however, is at odds with Josephus’ description of how the Athenians accepted ‘new gods’. Josephus noted that Protagoras, rather fortunately, escaped Athens before the residents were able to find and arrest him because his writings were in conflict with the Athenian gods (*Ag. Ap.* 2.266). Furthermore, the Athenians were so passionate about protecting their city from foreign gods, that they killed a woman who was accused of doing such a thing. The priestess, Ninus, like Socrates and now Paul, was accused of leading people to ‘mysteries of foreign gods’ (*ξένους ἐμύει θεούς*). She was subsequently executed for these actions (*Ag. Ap.* 2.267). While this does not necessarily prove that Luke presented Paul’s *life* to be in danger, it does show precedent for Athenian skepticism and aggression against a ‘proclaimer’ of foreign gods. Thus, a shadow of doubt lingers over Winter’s thesis. Moreover, it seems highly unlikely that this was a ‘polite’ interchange in light of the previous insult of Paul (*σπερμολόγος*) and the public mocking he would face after his speech (v. 32).

The question that needs to be answered now is *who* exactly were these ‘foreign gods’ whom Paul was accused of introducing? Of course, the reader of Luke’s narrative knows Paul is proclaiming God, the father of Jesus Christ; yet, he also wants his reading audience to know that the *Athenian* audience misunderstands.<sup>31</sup> A closer look at the grammar here is necessary: the causal *ὅτι* connects the two clauses, (1) *τινες ἔλεγον, τί*

<sup>28</sup> Winter also points out in Garland’s work that three things need to be shown by a herald of a new divinity. (1) The herald was the deity’s representative, (2) the god was eager to set up residence in Athens, (3) the Athenians had already received some blessing from the deity which ‘could be constructed as proof (*μαρτύριον*) or a sign (*σημείον*) of his goodwill’ (Winter 1996, 88; Garland 1967, 19).

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Geagan’s work on the role of the herald in Athens (1967).

<sup>30</sup> Winter’s fresh reading of 19-20: We possess the right to judge what this new teaching is being spoken of by you. You are bringing “strange [foreign] things” to our ears: we therefore wish to judge what it is being claimed [or ‘decreed’] (1996, 90).

<sup>31</sup> Indeed, recent scholarship argues a double audience and double meaning was intended by the author (Blomberg 2006, 59; Gray 2005).

ἀν θέλοι ὁ σπερμολόγος οὗτος λέγειν and (2) οἱ δέ ξένων δαιμονίων δοκεῖ καταγγελεύς εἶναι with Ἰησοῦν καὶ τὴν ἀνάστασιν εὐηγγελίζετο, showing the foreign divinities *are* Jesus and the resurrection (Croy 1997, 23). There is a long-standing history of interpretation, from Chrysostom to Calvin (1966, 108), which suggests that ἀνάστασιν was taken as the female deity to go alongside the male, Ἰησοῦν. Chrysostom, for example, noted that the Athenians understood *anastasis* ‘to be some deity, being accustomed to worship female divinities also’ (*Hom. Act 38.1*), and the majority of scholars in the critical era of biblical studies have followed Chrysostom’s lead (e.g. Gloag 1870; Haenchen 1971; Powell 1991; Polhill 1992; Fitzmyer 1998; Gaventa 2003).<sup>32</sup>

As Luke here seemed to be more concerned with highlighting the Athenians’ initial radical misunderstanding of Paul and his message,<sup>33</sup> it is likely that the Athenians would jump to the conclusion that Jesus and the resurrection were two separate divinities. Furthermore, this understanding would highlight the δεισιδαιμονεστέρους Athenians and accent their unquenchable curiosity.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>32</sup> There is a minority position, on the other hand, which sees the above interpretation as ‘ingenious’ yet ‘improbable’ (Jackson 1979, 212; cf. Ehrhardt 1969, 97-98). In line with the minority, Barrett says this is ‘superficially attractive’ (1998, 831) but can be maintained ‘only if there were reason to think that Paul in his preaching constantly referred in quasi-personal terms to “Ἰησοῦν καὶ τὴν ἀνάστασιν”’ (1998, 831). Ultimately, he says this is unlikely because Paul would use verbs such as ‘Christ was killed’ and ‘God raised him from the dead’, thus the ‘Athenian comment is cast to recall the story of Socrates, and means no more than This [sic] is a strange new religion, with all this talk about a man called, Jesus and a resurrection’ (1998, 831).

<sup>33</sup> In contrast to Luke’s presentation of Paul, note K. L. McKay’s article that describes how the historical Paul might have approached this situation. He notes that it is highly likely that Paul, who presumably would have known his polytheistic audience, would be careful not to preach in such a way as to be misunderstood (1994, 411). He asks, ‘[a]re we to assume that Paul, with all his consciousness of the tendency of his polytheistic audience to assume the influence of deities in all kinds of circumstances, would have introduced the idea of resurrection, either in this speech or in his preceding conversations, by means of the abstract noun ἀνάστασις?’ (1994, 412-13).

<sup>34</sup> Gray argues there is a direct connection between δεισιδαιμονεστέρους and Luke’s aside about the Athenians’ curiosity (2005), indicating a strongly negative overtone. Indeed, the Athenian legendary curiosity (Demosthenes 4.10; Thucydides 3.38.4) certainly could not have escaped the mind of Luke. The Athenians were famous in antiquity for being busybodies (Cicero, *Off.* 1.18-19; Seneca, *Ep.* 88.36-38), as characterized in several ancient plays by Timocles, Diphilus and Heniochus (Gray 2005, 111). Gray then argues that if the Athenians misunderstood Paul’s preaching about ‘Jesus and the resurrection’ to be about a male god and his sexual partner, then this would be in line with the busybody’s preoccupation with sex (Gray 2005, 113). Indeed, a certain group of Athenians ultimately reject the idea of resurrection because, as a result of Paul’s fuller explanation, they realize Paul is not describing the sexual companion of Ἰησοῦς. He concludes, ‘[m]orbid curiosity, it would seem, cannot tolerate talk about the resurrection of the dead’ (2005, 116). If Gray’s analysis is correct, then Luke characterizes this Athenian audience as being consumed by superstition and perversion. But the question remains, however, whether or not Luke also

Thus we surmise that the Athenians perceived Paul to be a ‘cut-rate’ philosopher who collected ideas of others and put them together poorly. He was perceived to be a proclaimer of foreign gods, and was in danger of facing a hostile crowd. However, Paul’s ‘male and female’ gods piqued the interest of the Athenians; they wanted to know more.

Just as the Athenians hurled insults at Paul, did Luke wish his readers to see that Paul, rather covertly, returned the insult? A strongly negative overtone of superstition could be indicated by the term *δεισιδαίμωνεστέρους* (cf. Philo *Cher.* 42).<sup>35</sup> While *δεισιδαίμωνεστέρους* could indicate a more positive definition of ‘religious’ (Aristot. *Pol.* 5, 11p. 1315; Diogenes Laertius 2, 132)<sup>36</sup> as Josephus rendered it when he referred to the Athenians (*C. Ap.* 2, 130), recent research suggests this is not the case with Luke (Paul) (see discussion of Gray in n. 34). Of course, Luke might have had a *double entendre* in mind in which his reading audience is meant to understand the negative meaning of the term, while Paul’s audience in Athens receives the term in a more positive light. Moellering, who notes Aristotle’s use of *δεισιδαίμονέστερος*, points out that the ultimate function of this term is that of ambiguity. Thus, regarding Luke’s uses of it, the ‘meaning of *δεισιδαίμων* here hinges on the interpretation one accepts for the speech as a whole, and this interpretation in turn is necessarily implicated in theological considerations’ (Moellering 1963, 469). He concludes: ‘It is therefore incorrect to

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considers them to be a lost cause. There is also a connection between Athenian curiosity and Paul’s preaching of repentance (v. 30). Gray shows the classical cure for the Athenians’ vice of being busybodies was to turn one’s attention from external to internal affairs (Plutarch, *Curios.* 515D-516D) (Gray 2005, 111). ‘Direct your curiosity to heavenly things and things on the earth, in the air, in the sea.’ (517D) (Gray 2005, 112). Thus, in vs. 30, when Paul gives them the message of repentance, many of them respond poorly because they perceived it to be in line with a classical criticism of busybody vices. That is, they believed Paul to be calling attention to their deficiencies and calling for introspection, a criticism about which they would be very sensitive. Gray states ‘[w]hile God has winked at ignorance in times past, a day of judgment is coming on which such ignorance will be deemed blameworthy. Knowledge of God has as its corollary a knowledge of oneself, manifested in the act of repentance. This transition in Paul’s message is anathema to busybodies’ (Gray 2005, 115).

<sup>35</sup> The root term *δαίμων* may lean more toward superstition rather than religion. As Burkert points out the ‘ordinary man’ in Greco-Roman antiquity understood the *δαίμων* to stand behind ‘what happens to him’ (1985, 181). *Δαίμων* was the capricious power driving the fate of an individual (1985, 181). See D. Martin’s recent study on the wide ranging functions the notion of superstition played in the ancient world and especially early Christianity (2004).

<sup>36</sup> D. M. Davis argues that ‘[i]t is more promising to take Paul’s words at face value and to accept that he found the Athenians (perhaps to his own surprise) to be very religious’ (2003, 65). Moreover, ‘[i]t is just as likely that Paul found the Athenians’ religious questioning to be genuinely interesting and promising for a dialogical engagement with his Christian faith’ (Davis 2003, 65). *Δεισιδαίμωνεστέρους* is read by Robertson in his grammar as ‘more religious...than I had supposed’ (665).

conclude that Paul means to compliment the Athenians when he calls them δεισιδαιμονεστέρους. The criticisms in the ensuing speech make it abundantly clear that it is not his intention enthusiastically to endorse Athenian religiosity.... Neither is it acceptable to assume that in his *captatio benevolentiae* he means to begin with a rude reproach which would immediately alienate his audience. It is therefore likely that he invests the term with a certain ambiguity so that his hearers will feel they are being commended for their religious scrupulosity, and yet he will be free to proceed to criticize their inadequacies and commend his own faith to them' (1963, 470).<sup>37</sup>

#### 4.3.2 Athenian Seeking and Ignorance

Similar to the conversions of the Ethiopian, Sergius Paulus and Cornelius, the Athenians' own action and intellect were highlighted in their path to faith. In Paul's speech, he mentions that God has arranged the world so that humans may be 'seeking', 'groping' and 'finding' God (17:27). While Luke cast these curious intellectuals in the role of the 'seekers', what does being a 'seeker' of God mean and how does that affect one's conversion process?

The Athenians were desirous of the meaning of Paul's message (v. 20: βουλόμεθα οὖν γινῶναι τίνα θέλει ταῦτα εἶναι). While Barrett thinks this is 'nothing more than a desire for information and enlightenment' (1998, 833), Luke described an audience who *really* wanted to know more about the essence of what Paul was preaching. Of course, their motives may have been less than noble (see n. 34) yet by not completely rejecting Paul, they left themselves open to hear more. Indeed, they wanted to know what this new teaching was (v. 19: δυνάμεθα γινῶναι τίς ἡ καινὴ αὕτη ἢ ὑπὸ σοῦ λαλουμένη διδαχῆ;).<sup>38</sup> Moreover, Luke's narrative aside in v. 21 ('Now all the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there would spend their time in nothing except

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<sup>37</sup> This was the conclusion made by Rown in his recent monograph *World Upside Down* (2009). Indeed he argues that '[t]o eliminate the ambiguity of δεισιδαιμονέστερος, therefore, is to eliminate the dramatic irony and the sophisticated manner in which this technique negotiates between the author's historical presentation and the reader's contemporary situation' (2009, 34).

<sup>38</sup> Indeed, his teaching was welcomed (ζενίζω) by the Athenians. Interestingly, the last time Luke used this word was when Peter, after having a vision of clean food, welcomed in three of Cornelius' men into his house (Acts 10:15. cf. Acts 28:7). Their welcoming him to the Areopagus may indicate that his words were welcoming to them. However, this term here also could mean surprising or astonishing (see Jos. *Ant.* 1, 45).

telling or hearing something new’) gives insight into a possible indirect compliment of the Athenians.

Sheeley shows that narrative asides, similar to what we find in v. 21, serve a mixed function in Luke (1992). On three occasions, Luke employs a narrative aside to distance his readers from the norms and values of opponents of the Gospel. Sadducees, for example (5.7; 23.8), are noted to ‘continue the narrator’s process of distancing the reader from the Jewish authorities’ (1992, 171). Sheeley then notes that the narrator’s comment on the customs of the Athenians (17.21) has a mixed function. On the one hand, the reader will be distanced from the Athenians in v. 22, since the inhabitants of Athens are there characterized as idolaters. On the other hand, the reader is involved in much the same activity in v. 21 (i.e. ‘hearing something new’) and is cautioned to examine his or her motives and priorities (1992, 171). If Sheeley is correct,<sup>39</sup> then the function of Luke’s narrative aside is that there are some positive and negative aspects of the Athenians. Their curiosity, which led them to worship many gods, has now led them to investigate the one true God.<sup>40</sup>

In Paul’s address, he articulated that the God who was unknown to those in Athens (v. 23) was actually the creator of the world (v. 24) and the one who arranged human history (cf. CEV ‘he decided when and where every nation would be’). Ultimately, God arranges the world so that people could ζητεῖν τὸν θεόν (17:27).<sup>41</sup> Interestingly, Luke used this term previously in Acts 10:19 in which three men were seeking Peter and they found him.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> If he is not correct, it still remains that Luke leads his readers down a similar path of that of the Athenians, a path which leads to the knowledge of the one real God.

<sup>40</sup> As other philosophers observed, in Athens there is both good and bad to be found in their devotion to superstition/religion (Grant 1986).

<sup>41</sup> Paul says explicitly that God is found by those who do *not* seek him (Rom 10:20, ζητοῦσιν) (cf. Rom 10:3 seeking own righteousness; 11:3 seeking to kill the prophet). Paul in Romans 2 says that those who *seek* for eternal life will be judged according to their deeds (Rom 2:7, ζητοῦσιν).

<sup>42</sup> For Dibelius Luke’s notion of seeking here is the beginning of his departure from New Testament theology. There is, he argued, a vast difference between ‘seeking’ God (with an Old Testament view of the human ‘will’) and the ‘search’ for God by way of thinking. The latter is the Greek way of doing it, which is quite different from Old Testament and New Testament notions of seeking (Dibelius 1956, 32). According to Dibelius, Luke was clearly promoting the Greek search for God. Witherington suggests that the ‘editorial comment in v. 21 suggests strongly that they are dilettantes – seekers after the new rather than the true; seekers after the curious rather than the Kurios. In the end they are the ones seen as serving strange gods’ (1998, 535).

Luke also characterized the Athenians as ‘reaching’ after God (ψηλαφάω), which can be understood both positively and negatively. It could indicate an actual handling of something which is in one’s grasp or it could indicate a clumsy act of reaching but never finding. Gärtner suggests that the featured aspect of this verb in play is the idea of ‘fumbling’ or ‘groping of the blind’ (Gärtner 1955, 160). He points out that in the LXX, Israel groped for the wall like the blind (Is. 59:10) (Gärtner 1955, 161). Gärtner’s conclusion is that Luke’s usage indicates that ‘men fumble towards a problematic outcome’ (1955, 161). If groping meant actually handling something, then ‘finding’ should have come first in the given sequence. Logically, the act of touching stipulates first finding the object that is touched (1955, 161). Gärtner summarizes, ‘[t]hus, according to the Areopagus speech, Paul is saying that man is created with the appointed purpose to seek God; but the uncertainty of this quest is nevertheless variously indicated. The words used in so doing are readily associated with the experience of man’s perverted knowledge of God...’ (1955, 161).<sup>43</sup> Clearly the Athenians are seeking as they continue to ask questions and pursue the meaning of Paul’s Jesus and resurrection, yet they are left in the dark until they are informed about this ‘man’ whom God appointed judge of the world (v. 31) – only after this information is received can they touch him.<sup>44</sup> As such the Athenian investigation of Paul’s message highlighted their religious ignorance not their religious understanding.

Luke noted that Paul found an object of worship<sup>45</sup> with the inscription: Ἄγνωστος θεός. While there is much speculation on who this unknown god was to the Athenians,<sup>46</sup> Luke’s point here is that the Athenians tried to worship God, but were

<sup>43</sup> Of course, that Luke uses the optative mood for both ψηλαφάω and εὐρίσκω indicates a wishing/hoping component more than an actual ability to achieve it.

<sup>44</sup> Interestingly the only other time Luke used ψηλαφάω is in Luke 24:39 where Jesus encourages his disciples to touch him so they may know for sure that he is not a spirit but a real man. Philo used this term to describe a man handling ‘divine things’ and ‘having them in his hands’ by which he meant a proper interpretation of the sacred law (Philo ‘On the Change of Names’ 126). Yet, for Philo, receiving these ‘divine things’ is called a ‘great gift’ from the ‘all-knowing God’ (126). Thus any ‘credit’ for handling such things goes to the Divine rather than to the individual who received it.

<sup>45</sup> But what was the nature of their worship? Worship (εὐσεβέω) could denote a real form of worship or it could refer to devout piety. This is Luke’s only use of the term and it is used just once in the whole of the NT. In 1 Tim 5:4, it denotes the notion of piety toward family. It may be that Luke has this notion of piety toward family in mind here, as later Paul argues that, according to Aratus, the audience, as well as the rest of humanity, are a part of God’s γένος.

<sup>46</sup> Wycherley suggest that the unknown god may be a reference to a number of burial sites that were discovered in Athens in the mid-twentieth century. By the first century, the names on the tombs may very

unable to do so correctly because they lacked important information.<sup>47</sup> Hence, as a result of their ignorance of who God is, they worshiped ignorantly (ἀγνοοῦντες εὐσεβεῖτε).<sup>48</sup>

While Athenian ignorance is obvious from the text, whether or not it was culpable ignorance is more difficult to determine.<sup>49</sup> In some streams of ancient Jewish thought, a king was considered unrighteous if he punished someone who committed a crime in ignorance. For example in 2 Mac 11, King Antiochus declares that the Jews ought not ‘be molested’ (RSV) for sins they committed in ignorance (περὶ τῶν ἡγνοημένων) (11:31). While the occupants of the empire did not heed the king’s declaration and did indeed ‘molest’ the Jews (12:2-9), God ‘the righteous judge’ (12:6), was called upon and those who harmed the innocent Jews were killed (12:6-9). A major theological issue for Luke, then, is the precise sense in which his audience is ignorant.<sup>50</sup> Did he believe the Gentiles were willfully ignorant, choosing not to know about God? Or were they more genuinely ignorant, like the Jews to which King Antiochus refers? This is difficult to know for certain. However, the thrust of Luke’s usage here appears to be that while God has overlooked times of ignorance (regardless of the nature of their ignorance) and,

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well have been destroyed. Thus, ‘one would expect the Athenians by reason of their notable deisidaimonia to show great scrupulousness in placating the anger of the dead, by ephemeral offerings or even by the establishment of a lasting cult...[a] legend and a name might grow and attach itself to the spot, but not necessarily so; the cult might remain truly the cult of an unknown god’ (1968, 621). Cf. also Lestang’s recent article, ‘A la louange du dieu inconnu. Analyse rhétorique de Ac 17:22-31’ in which he suggests that the inscription of the unknown God led to Paul’s ‘divine eulogy’ (2006, 394-408).

<sup>47</sup> O’Toole relates that the twin themes of ignorance and worship are linked directly to each other. ‘But it is a theme of worship which is dominant, for the ignorance that Luke is concerned with is precisely the ignorance of what true worship is’ (1982, 189).

<sup>48</sup> τὰ σεβάσματα is something revered with awe and is used for anything related to a cult. Josephus (Ant, 18.344) used the word for objects of idolatrous worship (Barrett 1998, 837).

<sup>49</sup> In Luke 9:45, the disciples are the ones said to be ignorant (ἡγνόουν τὸ ῥῆμα τοῦτο). Yet, they were ignorant because God prevented them from understanding (παρακεκαλυμμένον ἀπ’ αὐτῶν). Luke interestingly adds this clause, while Mark just notes their ignorance, without a divine hiding of their senses (Mark 9:32). In Acts 13:27, Luke says that the rulers were ignorant of who Jesus was and of the voice of the prophets (3:17).

<sup>50</sup> Witherington points out ‘Paul in Romans 1 is speaking about willful ignorance of God, caused by a deliberate choosing of darkness over what little light was available through creation’ (Witherington 1998, 535).

indeed, arranged the Gentiles with their present state of curiosity,<sup>51</sup> with the resurrection of Jesus (17:30), this time of ignorance is *now over*.<sup>52</sup>

We have discussed Luke's perception of the Athenians as ignorant and superstitious. Yet, he also depicts their curiosity in such a light that he hopes his readers will 'be like the Athenians' in that their curiosity will lead them to hear the message of Paul. In the section below we will deal with the Jewish and Greco-Roman theological themes in Paul's speech that helped some Athenians to convert to Christianity.

#### 4.4 The Converting Content of Paul's Speech

Many have observed the obvious anti-idol polemic in this narrative, as Luke set the stage in the shadow of false gods (17:16: κατείδωλον οὔσαν τὴν πόλιν). But questions surround the ideological basis for Luke's criticism. Are Paul's criticisms of Athenian idolatry based on common Hellenistic/Stoic themes or are they based on Jewish scripture? While arguing for a 'Jewish' ideology behind this narrative is rife with difficulty due to the diverse theology within Diaspora Judaism itself (Barclay 1996), it is worth exploration.

##### 4.4.1 Luke and Isaiah

Litwak argues that there are 'intentional intertextual echoes' (2004, 201) in this passage, which reflect 'core scriptural traditions', most notably Isaiah's condemnation of idolatry (2004, 202). He claims that many scholars note the parallel between Paul's speech and Jewish prophetic literature, but fail to come to any conclusion about these observations. For example, he quotes Fitzmyer's bland comment, 'Paul echoes a motif common to the OT', and points to the fact that he does not support this statement other than providing some references (Fitzmyer 1998, 608; Litwak 2004, 201). While Litwak's

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<sup>51</sup> 'In the NT God's forbearance is often stressed as the means of man's salvation. In xiv 16, we heard that in past generations God had allowed the Gentiles to walk in their own ways. In Romans iii 25, Paul mentions that God had in his forbearance overlooked former sins. In many other texts (e.g. Rom ix-xi) we find the same lenience and forbearance which shows that God concentrates all his efforts on salvation' (Munck 1967, 171).

<sup>52</sup> While Paul may have used the notion of 'natural theology' to show that the Gentiles are without excuse (Rom. 1; Bornkamm 1968), and Luke used it to show that they are indeed ignorant, the point is that with the resurrection all previous misunderstanding of God is irrelevant – no one need be ignorant anymore.

argument that Luke presents Paul here in the role of a Jewish prophet is unconvincing,<sup>53</sup> that certain passages of Isaiah stand behind this narrative has more credence, and, in spite of not acknowledging them in his introduction, he stands in line with a previous thread of scholarship (e.g. Gärtner 1958; Fudge 1971; Pao 2000).

Most notably, Litwak draws a connection in Isaiah between ignorance and idol worship, two themes also prominent in Luke's Athens passage (2004, 203-4). In Isa. 44:18 [LXX], the writer notes regarding those who worship idols: 'they do not know' (οὐκ ἔγνωσαν) and they do not 'understand' (φρονῆσαι) how powerless their man-made gods are. But then in 44:20-21, God reminds Jacob that *he* was the one who formed him (ἐπλασά σε παῖδά μου), and thus it was impossible for Israel to make for herself a real god who can save. God then calls on Israel in v. 22 to repent (ἐπιστρέφητι πρός με) or else face judgment.

Striking parallels between this and Paul's address are apparent. Paul notes the Athenian ignorance of God once directly (v. 23 ἀγνοέω) and again indirectly (v. 30 ἀγνοίᾳς). Paul then notes that because the real God made everything (ὁ ποιήσας), the idols they worship cannot possibly be real gods because they themselves were made (v. 24). Lastly, in v. 30 he calls the Athenians to repent (μετανοεῖν) of their idolatry because judgment is coming (v. 31). While these parallels do not necessarily prove that Luke had Isaiah in mind while he wrote, it does show a similarity of *thought* between them.

The argument that 17:24 is a direct parallel to Isaiah 42:5 also deserves attention. See the comparison below (cf. Pao 2000, 195):

Isaiah 42:5: Thus says God, the Lord (κύριος), who created (ποιήσας) the heavens (οὐρανόν) and stretched them out, who spread out the earth (γῆν) and what comes from it (τὰ ἐν αὐτῇ), who gives (διδούς) breath (πνοήν) to the people upon it and spirit (πνεῦμα) to those who walk (πατούσιν) in it.

Acts 17:24-25: The God who made (ποιήσας) the world (κόσμον) and everything in it (πάντα τὰ ἐν αὐτῷ), since he is Lord (κύριος) of heaven (οὐρανοῦ) and

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<sup>53</sup> If anything, Paul is shown to be in the shoes of Socrates.

earth (γῆς) does not live in manmade temples (χειροποιήτοις ναοῖς). Nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives (διδούς) to all life (ζωήν) and breath (πνοήν) and everything.

Perhaps Fudge was not too far off the mark when he noted that Luke here quotes ‘verbatim from the LXX’ (Fudge 1971, 194), as the similarities between v. 24 and Isaiah 42:5 cannot be ignored.<sup>54</sup> For example, in both passages God is described as lord (κύριος) and the creator (ποίησας). In both, God creates the earth/world (γῆν; κόσμον). In Acts, he is Lord of the οὐρανοῦ, while in Isaiah he created the οὐρανόν, which proves his lordship. Both passages have the filler statement, ‘what comes from it; everything in it’ (τὰ ἐν αὐτῇ; πάντα τὰ ἐν αὐτῷ). Both describe God as the giver (διδούς) of breath (πνοήν) and of life (ζωήν; πνεῦμα).

Furthermore, Luke’s vocabulary for manmade temples (χειροποιήτοις ναοῖς) is a huge theme in Isaiah’s anti-idol polemic. Of the nine times this term is used in the LXX, seven are in Isaiah (e.g. Isa 40:19, 20; 41:7), and each time it is used in the context of an anti-idol polemic (Pao 2000, 195). See for example the comparison of Isa. 46:6 with Acts 17:25, 29:

Isa. 46:6: Those who lavish gold (χρυσίου) from the purse and weigh silver (ἀργύριον) on the scale hire a goldsmith, who makes it into a hand-made idol (χειροποιήτος); then they fall down and worship!

Acts 17:25, 29: God is not served by human hands (χείρ)...being then God’s offspring, we ought not to think that deity is like gold (χρυσός) or silver (ἄργυρος) or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of man.<sup>55</sup>

The above texts do indeed show remarkable similarities to Acts 17:16-34,<sup>56</sup> indicating that Luke draws on Jewish anti-idol theology as motivation for repentance and

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<sup>54</sup> Of course, it was not completely ‘verbatim’ as Luke used different vocabulary from the Isaiah passage, yet Fudge’s point still stands as Luke’s flow of thought does match that of Isaiah.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. Deut. 29:15 (16)-16 (17).

conversion. In this conversion story, the proper understanding of the Jewish God serves as the reason why someone would be provoked to stop worshiping his native god(s) and be converted to worship the Jewish God. The question, then, is no longer whether or not Luke threads aspects of Jewish theology through this passage, but to what extent does he engage with and apply other systems of thought as well?

#### 4.4.2 Luke and Hellenism

In this section, I will first deal with Luke's engagement with Stoic and Epicurean ideologies. It appears that Luke notes two areas of contention in these philosophies. One area is that of the afterlife, and in this case Paul directly challenges his audience. The other area is the notion of relatedness between humans and the divine. In the latter case, Luke seems comfortable appropriating some of these (especially Stoic) ideas into his Gospel message.

Recent scholarship demonstrates that Paul's address at the Areopagus tackles these dueling philosophies in one way or another. Most of these studies show that the sharp edge of Paul's message, i.e., resurrection, addressed the greatest weakness in these two philosophies. Indeed, as Watson reminds us, in the Hellenistic world at large, 'numerous and often contradictory concepts of the afterlife existed side by side' (Walton 1970, 23-24). Thus, Paul's point about resurrection speaks to an 'underdeveloped' theology of the after-life in the Hellenized world (Marcus 1988, 148). This is certainly the case with Stoicism and Epicureanism (Wright 2003, 52).

For the Stoics, like the Platonists, there was great concern about what happened to the soul after death. Cicero mentioned Stoics who said that 'souls will endure for awhile, [but] they den[ied] that they will endure forever' (*Tusc.*, 1.31.7). After some time, the souls would experience conflagration, the dissolving into the universal soul (Croy 1997, 33). Croy states that the 'Stoics understand the human soul as a "warm breath" (πνεῦμα ἕνθερμον)...That is, the individual soul that pervades one's body, is part of the "world soul" that pervades all matter' (Croy 1997, 32). Conversely, Epicurean physics ruled out the possibility of a soul separating from the body:

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<sup>56</sup> Fudge's statement is no longer true that '[t]he critics generally deny any connection whatsoever of this sermon on "Mars Hill" with the Old Testament' (Fudge 1971, 193).

We must recognize generally that the soul is a corporal thing, composed of fine particles, dispersed all over the frame, most nearly resembling wind with an admixture of heat, in some respects like wind, in others like heat...Hence those who call soul incorporeal speak foolishly (Diogenes Laertius, 10.63-67).

The first-century Epicurean, Lucretius, continues in line with its founder that ‘neither eyes nor nose nor even hand can exist for the spirit in separation. Nor can tongue or ears. Therefore spirits cannot by themselves have sensation or exist’ (Lucretius, *De rerum Natura*, 3.624-33). In light of this, Paul’s message is interesting for the following reason: on the one hand, he *is* talking of the after-life, but, on the other hand, he talks of resurrection of the *body*, not the normative understanding of after-life which consisted of the separation of soul from body. His discussion was of the physical body with all its ‘particles’.<sup>57</sup>

In addition to notions of the afterlife, Stoic philosophers were also concerned about determining the exact nature of the relationship between humans and god(s). While we are reminded in the Iliad that Zeus believed ‘[n]othing is more wretched than a man, of all things that breathe (πνεΐει) and move (ἔρπει) upon the earth’ (*Iliad* 17.446-7), he nevertheless was understood to be the ‘father’ of all the gods, and, in some sense, of men.<sup>58</sup>

Of course, like Judaism, there are various strains of thought in Stoicism that are often at odds with each other. D. L. Balch argues that a particular Stoic thinker in the first century BCE, the historian Posidonius, represents the closest theological parallels between Stoicism and the Areopagus Speech (1990). Take, for example, this paragraph from Posidonius found in Dio Chrysostom (*Or.* 12:27-30):

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<sup>57</sup> Although, note Pliny the Elder’s understanding of the resurrection of a body: ‘Similar also is the vanity about preserving men’s bodies, and about Democritus’s promise of our coming to life again – who did not come to life again himself!...Assuredly this sweet but credulous fancy ruins nature’s chief blessing, death, and doubles the sorrow of one about to die by the thought of sorrow to come hereafter also’ (Pliny, *Natural History*, 7.189-90).

<sup>58</sup> Yet, humans were *not* technically considered to be the ‘children of Zeus’ (Lloyd-Jones 1983, 3). Bevan states that the important issue for the Stoics was not that they had some sort of close, familial relationship with Zeus but that their world was ‘governed by the providence of a conscious intelligent God’ (1973, xiii).

Now concerning the nature of the gods in general, and especially that of the ruler of the universe, first and foremost an idea regarding him and a conception of him common to the whole human race, to the Greeks and to the barbarians alike, a conception that is inevitable and innate in every creature endowed with reason...has rendered manifest God's kinship with man...How could they have remained ignorant and conceived no inkling of him who had sowed and planted and was now preserving and nourishing them...? They dwelt upon the earth, they beheld the light of heaven, they had nourishment in abundance, for god, their ancestor, had lavishly provided and prepared it to their land (*Or.* 12:27-30 quoted from Balch, 1990, 57).

Most prominent in Posidonius' theology is his description of an 'innate' natural knowledge of God which shows humanity's 'kinship' to God. Indeed, he asks how anyone can be ignorant of this God when he gives 'nourishment in abundance' for their land.

Posidonius' understanding of a basic human 'kinship' with God and his bewilderment that anyone could be ignorant of this relationship offer tempting parallels with Luke's notion of ignorance and kinship. Concerning man's kinship with God, Luke uses γένος to show the ridiculousness of man's attempting to make a god for himself (v. 29). However, Posidonius' notion of bewilderment of the ignorance of this relationship ('how could they have remained ignorant?') contrasts with the picture provided by Luke. Paul knew and certainly was not surprised to find the Athenians to be ignorant of God (cf. Owens' discussion of natural theology in Paul's Areopagus Speech, 1958). Indeed, Paul's role as a 'proclaimer' assumes not that he was surprised by their ignorance, but that he endeavored that they no longer remain so, as judgment was coming.<sup>59</sup>

While I contend that Luke was not surprised, as Posidonius was, that humans were ignorant of their relatedness to God – there is striking similarity between their notions of kinship with God. Luke, quoting from another Stoic writer, Aratus, asks the

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<sup>59</sup> The direction of Paul's speech leads to God's proclamation that the times of ignorance are now over. The dispensation of Jesus has arrived, and a call for repentance for 'all men everywhere' has been summoned. This call for repentance is not merely a Christian add-on as others have suggested (e.g. Dibelius 1956) but an indication that ignorance is widespread and now culpable.

leading question ‘are we not all God’s offspring?’ The quotation from Aratus is given in its original context below:

#### ΑΡΑΤΟΥ ΠΗΘΑΙΝΟΜΕΝΑ 1-19

From Zeus let us begin; him do we mortals never leave unnamed; full of Zeus are all the streets and all the market-places of men; full is the sea and the havens thereof; always we all have need of Zeus. For we are also his offspring (τοῦ γὰρ καὶ γένος εἰμέν); and he in his kindness unto men giveth favourable signs and wakeneth the people to work, reminding them of livelihood. He tells what time the soil is best for the labour of the ox and for the mattock, and what time the seasons are favourable both for the planting of trees and for casting all manner of seeds. For himself it was who set the signs in heaven, and marked out the constellations, and for the year devised what stars chiefly should give to men right signs of the seasons, to the end that all things might grow unfailingly. Wherefore him do men ever worship first and last. Hail, O Father, mighty marvel, mighty blessing unto men. Hail to thee and to the Elder Race! Hail, ye Muses, right kindly, every one! But for me, too, in answer to my prayer direct all my lay, even as is meet, to tell the stars.

It is important to point out that there may have been a text that did not name Zeus as the clear progenitor of the offspring. Edwards shows that by the second century BCE, there was a text of Aratus,<sup>60</sup> in which Zeus had been replaced by Θεοῦ (1992, 266-9). However, even if this was the case, the text itself, as can be seen above, praises astrology and ‘telling the stars’. Such practices were far outside of the Judeo-Christian tradition and thus Luke’s use of such a text in this passage is striking. According to their own texts the Athenians had a ‘natural’ relationship with God – they were his offspring.

However, as Owens points out ‘[i]t still remains true that Gentiles have failed to know God from nature and history’ (1958, 137). This relatedness alone was inadequate in

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<sup>60</sup> This was quoted by Aristobulus Fr. 4 as found in Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica*, 666b-d

their quest to find God and Luke used a mixture of Pagan and Jewish theology to demonstrate this to them.<sup>61</sup>

If indeed Luke mixes Pagan and Jewish theology in this case, how does that affect his overall theology of conversion? According to Conzelmann, Luke's primary theological concern is to show that we humans are somehow related to God (1968, 224), and that recognizing this relationship is part of the converting process. One of the interesting theological aspects of Luke's notion of conversion is that it 'consists of one's self-consciousness of one's natural kinship to God' (Vielhauer 1968, 36). For Luke, 'natural theology is a forerunner of faith that just needs to be clarified' (Vielhauer 1968, 36). Moreover, pagan history is 'pre-history' of Christianity which is actually not that dissimilar to Philo's view of Greek philosophy and its relationship with the Jewish religion (Vielhauer 1968, 37).

While some have said this 'kinship' to God does not fit with the 'whole of the New Testament' (Dibelius 1956), others have argued that Luke co-opted this pagan text to fit with a Genesis model of the *imago dei*. In particular, Places points to the LXX of Gen 1:26 in which man is the εἰκὼν of God (1962, 395). Thus it is not just that the Greek poets and the OT are in agreement that 'men are closely related to God' but by virtue of being created beings, humans are related to God.<sup>62</sup> While Luke used Pagan texts to show mankind's relatedness to God this does not necessarily indicate a break

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<sup>61</sup> Another supposed Stoic hallmark, made famous by the work of M. Dibelius (1956), is found in vv. 26-27: ἐποίησέν τε ἐξ ἑνός πάν ἔθνος ἀνθρώπων κατοικεῖν ἐπὶ παντός προσώπου τῆς γῆς, ὀρίσας προστεταγμένους καιρούς καὶ τὰς ὀροθεσίας τῆς κατοικίας αὐτῶν (v.27) ζητεῖν τὸν θεόν, εἰ ἄρα γε ψηλαφήσειαν αὐτὸν καὶ εὗροιεν, καὶ γε οὐ μακρὰν ἀπὸ ἑνός ἐκάστου ἡμῶν ὑπάρχοντα. Traditionally, Paul's statement, 'ἐποίησέν τε ἐξ ἑνός πάν ἔθνος ἀνθρώπων' has been thought to reflect echoes of Genesis 2:7-8, which says that God made a human and set him in the garden of Eden (Litwak 2004, 207). From Adam, all the nations of the world (πάν ἔθνος ἀνθρώπων) find their origin as shown by the genealogy in Genesis 5 (cf. Gen 10:32). It is in this context that the 'universality of humankind's relationship to God' (Polhill 1992, 374) is set. In other words, since all nations came from one man, Adam, then humans are in this sense God's offspring because Adam was the son of God. Dibelius, however, famously argued that this is 'not a case of nations, national epochs and national boundaries, but of the cosmopolitan human race, the ordering of its life according to seasons and its appropriate habitations and of man's search after God which this ordering of his life inspires' (Dibelius 1956, 37). Yet Dibelius's notion fractures when the structure of the sentence is observed: notice that 'ὀρίσας προστεταγμένους καιρούς καὶ τὰς ὀροθεσίας τῆς αὐτῶν' functions as a qualifying/defining of κατοικεῖν (Nock 1972, 830). As Nock countered, 'God created mankind (or rather the faces of men) to dwell on the earth, and he fixed the when and the where; the zones hardly fit v. 26 "on all the surface of the earth" and if indeed they delimit men's habitations, the seasons do not' (Nock 1972, 830).

<sup>62</sup> Some have observed that Paul's letters certainly see things differently than Luke in this passage. For example, while Luke sees humanity being united by virtue of being created by God, Paul focuses on the unity of man by means of the 'eschatological wrath and grace of God' (Bornkamm 1968).

from the Isaianic theology with which he also aligned himself. Indeed, as Rowe observed in his volume *World Upside Down*, ‘[i]n the Areopagus speech the line from Aratus’s *Phaenomena* and other allusions are removed from their original interpretive frameworks and embedded within a different framework, one that stretches from Gen 1 through the resurrection of Jesus to the last day (ἡμέρα, v. 31)’ (2009, 40). These Pagan texts, in essence, function as servants to Luke’s deeper distinctive Jewish/Christian worldview. Hence, these texts create a connecting point with the Athenians while also subverting the fundamental assumptions of these texts by placing them within a Jewish/Christian framework.

Now that we have discussed some of the diverse ideologies at stake in this passage, I will turn to the conversions themselves.

#### 4.5 The Athenian Conversions

In this narrative, the dialogue between Paul and the Athenians escalated into a series of proclamations: first, Paul’s καταγγέλλω of the unknown God (v. 23). While not always the case (Acts 16:21), καταγγέλλω often, as here, indicates a proclamation of an aspect of the Christian message.<sup>63</sup> Yet Paul’s καταγγέλλω is not the focus of this narrative, as Paul subsequently unveils the second proclamation, *God’s* παραγγέλλω (v. 30). God says that the time of ignorance is over and the Athenians need to repent (μετανοέω).

Indeed, it is in the unfolding of God’s παραγγέλλω (vv. 30-31) that we find the most explicit conversion language in this passage. In this, ‘genuinely Christian statement’ (Conzelmann, 1969, 224), both μετανοέω and πίστις are employed by the writer within the context of conversion at Athens. As we noted in Chapter Three, repentance is, of course, a huge theme for Luke (e.g. Lk 3:3, 8; 5:32; 15:7; 24:47; Acts 5:32; 11:18; 13:24; 19:4; 20:21; 26:20) and is a vital component of his theology of conversion (cf. Nave 2002; Mendez-Moratalla 2004).

Since Luke highlights the Athenian intellectual problem (v. 23 ‘what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you’) that μετανοεῖν here carries for Luke the classical meaning of the term – a literal ‘change of mind’ – seems to be the natural reading. In this

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<sup>63</sup> Luke used this term in Acts 4:2 about Jesus and the resurrection of the dead (see also 13:5: τόν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ, ἄφεις ἀμαρτιῶν καταγγέλλεται; 16:17 ....ὁδόν σωτηρίας).

case, Luke would have in mind something quite similar to Aristotle's rhetoric strategy in *Persuasion to Think (epideictic rhetoric)* (Cooper 1960).<sup>64</sup> In this case the goal is simply to change one's opinion using various rules of persuasion. Agrippa may have had this in mind when he asked Paul 'in a short time would you persuade me to be a Christian?' (Acts 26:28). Or it could carry with it the sentiment noted by Seneca, regarding reviewing intellectually one's actions: 'how beautiful is this custom of reviewing the whole day! The mind takes its place on the judgment seat, investigates its own actions, and awards praise or blame according as they are deserved' (*Dial.*, v. 36, 2). Repentance here does reflect persuasion of the intellect, but is there more at play here than just persuasion of the mind?

It seems that Luke has in mind a foundational change of allegiance from δεισιδαιμονία to faith (πίστις) in Jesus. As such, persuasion of the intellect is a major factor of conversion but *not* the whole of the conversion. That converts in Athens both attached themselves to Paul *and* believed (κολληθέντες αὐτῷ ἐπίστευσαν) provides textual evidence that the repentance summoned here was more than changing one's mind. Luke's point was that the Athenians no longer have to live under speculative and oppressive superstition, because, by the resurrection, God has given humanity an opportunity to have faith in Jesus.<sup>65</sup> In contrast to superstition, Paul's message here has a certain degree of concreteness to it: Jesus has been raised from the dead and that in itself ought to give all clear thinking individuals cause for considering devotion to him.

But according to the flow of the text, there were no converts reported as a result of Paul's καταγγέλλω or God's παραγγέλλω. It was only after some asked to hear more about Paul's message that Luke indicates conversion happened in Athens (v. 32-34). Thus, Luke has Paul begin and ultimately end in dialogue, and it is this final dialogue, imbedded in v. 32, that bore conversion in v. 34. Of course, Paul's

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<sup>64</sup> Cf. Wolfe's 'Rhetorical Elements in the Speeches of Acts 7 and 17' (1993).

<sup>65</sup> For my reading πίστις as 'faith' here rather than 'proof' see Newman's and Nida's discussion in *A Translators' Handbook on The Acts of the Apostles* (1972). They mention the possibility of the 'entire phrase to mean that God has given all men the opportunity to have faith' (1972, 344). Also see Conzelmann, who has a similar reading here: 'faith is not an inward mood; it has a clear-cut dogmatic content: Jesus is the Son of God, and God raised Jesus from the dead' (1969, 227).

καταγγέλλω and God's παραγγέλλω play a part in the build-up to the conversion, yet it was the dialogue that seems to have been the lynchpin that led to conversion.<sup>66</sup>

### *Conclusions*

At this point we can draw some conclusions regarding conversion in Athens. We began by suggesting that the small number of converts in Athens did not mean Luke believed this to be a failure. Indeed, Luke painted Paul as using the appropriate style of rhetoric given his audience in Athens. Furthermore, that there were confirmed conversions (Luke even provided their names) show Paul to be a success in Athens. Conversely that there were those who did not believe fits within a pattern in the whole of Acts in which the Gospel caused a divided responses from its auditors. Moreover, it was observed that this philosophically inclined audience could have been perceived by Luke as being good candidates for conversion. Hence the conversion account in Athens is a legitimate conversion story in the thought of Luke and as such fits within the aims of our subject of study.

In addition to being an actual conversion account in the thought of Luke, our survey of Gentile conversions in Acts showed that many of the common elements of conversion were present in the Athens story. For example, in several stories we have the converts already seeking God in some way, whether it be the Ethiopian (reading scripture), Cornelius (praying and giving alms to the poor) or Lydia (worshiping God). In the same way, Luke depicts the Athenians as seeking to worship God – only in ignorance. Yet, it was also shown that in most of the Gentile conversion accounts in Acts, the converts had a pre-existing attraction to Judaism, and it is only in Acts 14 and Acts 17 in which converts turn from an actual Greco-Roman religion to Paul's Gospel. And of these two accounts, which both share a common message by Paul about the creator and times of ignorance, it is in Acts 17 where Luke describes in more detail Paul's converting message as well as the converting response of some in his audience. Because of the

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<sup>66</sup> Others have noted a similar pattern in the conversion of Lydia in Acts 16:11-15 (Isaak 2005). Isaak notes that Lydia's conversion was 'relational' rather than solely informational (2005, 231). Moreover her conversion was 'collaborative' in that she was listening (ἀκούω) to Paul and that she is described as a worshiper of God *before* her conversion. Thus through the dialogue Lydia became a Christian based on her previous understanding of God and on the new information she received from Paul.

common elements of Gentile conversion found in Acts 17 as well as the unique details of this account, Acts 17 was chosen as our representative sample of Gentile conversion.

Several conclusions can be drawn from this conversion account. The first is that before conversion happens in Athens, Luke casts the Athenians in the role of ignorant yet sincere seekers of truth. Throughout the narrative Luke depicts Paul as being both offended by their idolatry and yet in some ways encouraged by their curiosity. Even the term δεισιδαιμονεστέρους functions for Luke as a double-edged sword – it showed that the Athenian’s religiosity was in some way genuine while at the same time it leaves room that in spite of their sincerity their belief was wrong. They were idolaters (worshipping things as God that were not god) and oppressed by superstition. Luke also revealed his complex understanding of the Athenians through describing them as seeking after a God who is not far from them, yet still seeking as one who gropes in the dark. While they seek God they will not find him on their own.

Luke suggested that the Athenians were related to God. They were God’s children and God was their true Father. This idea of relatedness to God has two sources: the first was appropriated from Stoic philosophy but the second reflected a deeper Jewish notion of the *imago dei*. This explanation of God allowed Luke to do three things: first, beginning with Stoic ideology built the context for conversion to occur by having a *starting point* that the Athenians themselves could understand. Second, Luke affirmed the sovereignty of God in guiding human societies in order to arrange this meeting between Paul and the Athenians. Third, it affirmed that the Athenians’ seeking after God was a demonstration of the remnant of God’s image in them. However, aligning his thoughts also to Isaiah, Luke was able to say, nevertheless, that they were subject to judgment – their status as God’s offspring did not show an ontology of relatedness with God to the extent that they were not in the need of ‘salvation’. Indeed, the reason why Luke believed the Athenians ought to convert is that the Jewish God, as described by the prophet Isaiah, created the world, and to worship man-made creation is a perverse act that God will judge. Hence, in relation to our second theological question posed in Chapter One, the motivation for conversion was to avoid God’s wrath on their idolatry.

We may also notice a similarity between the prodigal son’s ‘coming to his senses’ in Chapter Three with that of the Athenian religiosity. Just as the return of the prodigal

son could, at best, achieve the status of a servant, so too, Luke describes the religious efforts of the Athenians to ultimately come short of a full relational connection with God – they were hopelessly groping in the dark. Just as the prodigal was declared a son only *after* the Father took over the narrative, so too, it was only after the Athenians encountered the agency of the gospel in Paul that the prospect of actual reconciliation with God presented itself for them.

While not mentioning Jesus by name, Luke also shows a strong Christology. Now that Jesus has been raised from the dead, no humans anywhere keep the luxury of being ignorant of the Jewish God and of improper worship of him. Humans are to repent *now* – turning from an improper worship of idols - *before* judgment happens at the coming of Jesus (‘a man’ appointed by God). Luke believed the Athenians were the offspring of God, and he believed that they ought to return home to their real Father.

But how are Athenians to come to this understanding that they need to repent; and, in relation to the first question posed in Chapter One, what is the change involved in conversion? Using the tool of dialogue, Luke depicted Paul as persuading some of his audience to convert to his message and follow him (Paul). The role of dialogue is central throughout this conversion narrative, as Paul both begins with it and ends with it finally producing conversions. Important within this dialogue is the proclamation of God himself about the ‘man’ who will come to judge and who now calls everyone to repentance. His call to repentance is not only a call for a change of mind but is also for a broader change of allegiance – to turn from speculative religion to Paul’s gospel in which there is proof – a man who has been raised from the dead. It was also observed that Luke used dialogue in order to build a context for conversion to occur. This dialogue is based on what the Athenians already knew/believed (using Stoic ideology) and from there it explains what they did not already know/believe.

So what can be said about causation in this conversion account in relation to our third theological question? First, while Paul was waiting in Athens, *his* spirit was provoked within him as he saw a city filled with idols (v. 16: παρωξύνετο τὸ πνεῦμα αὐτοῦ).<sup>67</sup> It is interesting to point out that this is the only time in this narrative in which

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<sup>67</sup> What are scholars to make of the precise nature of the term κατείδωλον? The conservative and most literal translation of this *hapax legomenon* is ‘full of idols’ (e.g. RSV, ASV, NIV, NASB, and ANT) or, as

the πνεῦμα is mentioned; of course, it is Paul's spirit and not God's spirit that is in view. Thus, it can be stated that Paul's spirit is the primary driving force that moves along this conversion narrative. On the other side, Paul dramatically meets Athenians who are seeking for God, asking Paul questions, inviting him to tell the story of Jesus and the resurrection and actively worshiping God, yet in ignorance. They understand that they are ignorant and lack the right information about how to worship God correctly and some appear to desire to leave their ignorance and believe Paul's message. Thus, the major driving forces of this conversion are Paul's spirit and Athenian curiosity.

So what role, if any, does Luke present God as playing in this conversion account? There are two areas in which God seems to play a role. First, it must be noted that Paul never intended to go to Athens in the first place. He was happy in ministry in Berea before he was escorted to Athens. Thus, Paul unexpectedly being in Athens might be counted as another example of Luke's notion of God's overarching plan at work. While God is not shown to be directly active in this account, Paul being in Athens can be attributed to God's sovereignty. Secondly, God is active in this account, as depicted in Paul's address. He created the world, arranged human history so that men might seek him, and will judge the world through Jesus whom he raised from the dead. In all these things, it is God who is the active agent. It could be said that it is God who created the context in which men might turn to him. So, if Paul and the Athenians are the major players in this conversion account, Luke shows that it is God who created the playing-field in which these conversions happened.

Now that we have uncovered some of the theology behind the conversion account in Athens, we will turn our attention to the seminal Jewish conversion account in Acts 2. We have seen Luke describe the Apostle to the Gentiles in Athens; now we will see how Luke describes the encounter between Peter and the Jews in Jerusalem. Will there be any

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Fitzmyer puts it, 'idol-rife' (1998, 605). Wycherly argued, however, and with much success, that the translation for κατείδωλον ought to be 'a veritable forest of idols' rather than the more conservative and literal reading above. Such a translation, he suggests, brings to light the 'humorous exaggeration' of the prominence of idols in Athens (1968, 620), and also may indicate the tree-like idols which towered in Athens, especially in and around the agora (1968, 620-21; Harrison 1965). If the above description is correct, Luke's setting of the meeting between Paul and the Athenians is quite literally shadowed by Gentile idolatry. This idolatry did not go unnoticed by Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, and provoked him to action. This idolatry ought not be unnoticed by scholars either, especially those looking for theological insight into this narrative.

similarities between what we have seen in Luke's theology of conversion in Luke 15 and Acts 17 with that of the great Pentecost conversion account?

## CHAPTER FIVE

### ACTS 2 AND JEWISH CONVERSION

*So when they had come together, they were asking him, saying, “Lord, is it at this time you are restoring the kingdom to Israel?”*

*Acts 1:6*

*‘Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.’ Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, ‘Brothers, what shall we do?’ And Peter said to them, ‘Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.’*

*Acts 2:36-39*

In his article, ‘The Restoration of Israel in Luke-Acts,’ Bauckham argues that Luke, in the first two chapters of his Gospel, employed a ‘programme of restoration’, which mirrored that of a wider notion of restoration in Second Temple Judaism (2001, 438).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Bauckham suggests 10 elements that are a part of restoration in Luke:

(1) Repentance in Luke 1:16-17- After tracing how this notion of Elijah was used in Second Temple Period (440-446), he notes Luke’s use of it with John the Baptist and how Luke intertwines the Elijah notion of repentance with the Deut 30:2 notion of repentance which is the ‘foundational text for Israel’s hope of restoration’ (2001, 447)

Mal. 4:5-6:23-24 [Hebrew text 6:23-24] ‘Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes. And he will turn [כִּי־שׁוּב] the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers...’

And he will turn many (ἐπιστρέψει) of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn (ἐπιστρέψει) the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared.”

(2) The ‘oath sworn to Abraham’ in Luke 1:72-73

Building on Wright's insight that most Jews regarded themselves as being in need of a 'return from exile' (1992, 299-334),<sup>2</sup> Bauckham argues that Luke 3-Acts 28 is, in many ways, an outplaying of this restoration plan – a call to return home and to return to God himself. Pointing to the role of **שׁוּב** in Jewish Scriptures, Bauckham argues that Luke and other Second Temple texts understood 'the return' as both 'God's restoration of his people from exile to the land' and as 'Israel's turning back to God in repentance' (2001, 339-440). While Bauckham traces this programme of restoration throughout Luke-Acts, he argues that it is in Acts 2 when this restoration is inaugurated. As such, 'Pentecost may be not so much the birthday of the church as the beginning of the restoration of the diaspora' (2001, 473). It is in Acts 2 where 'Israelites from the whole diaspora return to God ("repent": Acts 2:38) and receive from the Davidic Messiah, enthroned in heaven, the promised gift of the Spirit (Acts 2:33, 38-39), although this is not yet the "restoration of all things" (Acts 3:21) but is the earnest of it' (2001, 443). Moreover, in reading Acts 2, we see that conversion of the Gentiles happens as a result of the restoration of Israel

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'to show the mercy promised to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant, the oath that he swore to our father Abraham'

Drawing on parallels in Gen 22:16-18 and Pseudo-Philo's *Biblical Antiquities* 19:2, Bauckham concludes that 'Luke 1:72-75 expresses, in familiar terms, the late Second Temple period Jewish expectation of restoration to the land and restoration of the land, on the basis of God's sworn promise to Abraham' (2001, 451).

(3) There is a notion of 'redemption as New Exodus' in Luke 1:68: 'Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people.'

(4) The 'horn of Salvation' (2001, 452) in Luke 1:69: 'and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David.'

(5) The 'Light for those in Darkness' in Luke 1:78-79: 'because of the tender mercy of our God, whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.' Bauckham then states, 'Thus Luke 1:78-79 depict the Messiah lighting the way of escape for his people from the darkness of captivity and into the way of peace' (455-456)

(6) 'The consolation of Israel as a Light for the nations' in Luke 1:25's 'consolation of Israel.'

(7) Luke 1:38 the 'redemption of Jerusalem and the return of Diaspora' (2001, 457).

(8) 'The messiah of David Reigns forever' (2001, 459) - Luke 1:32-33: 'He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.'

(9) 'God exalts the Lowly and Humiliates the Exalted' (2001, 459. Luke 1:46-55.

(10) The 'Messiah is Opposed and Causes Division in Israel' (2001, 462). Luke 2:34-35.

<sup>2</sup> Bauckham clarifies that Jews believed they were in 'exile', even in their own land, because they continued to be in '*subjugation*' (2001, 436). Hence restoration 'meant liberation from slavery to oppressive pagan rule as well as return from exile' (2001, 437).

(2001, 483).<sup>3</sup> As such, the conversions of both Jews and Gentiles in Acts are ‘processes that can go on simultaneously...’ (2001, 483). Hence, according to Bauckham, we see the engine of Luke’s notion of conversion at work in Acts 2 – a return home from the prodigals in repentance, which, in turn, triggers the call for conversion to the Gentiles.

With the initial setting in Jerusalem and mass Jewish conversions providing momentum for the spread of the gospel (e.g. 2:41, 4:32, 5:14), it is difficult to question the importance Luke places on Jewish conversion to Jesus. The disciples wanted the restoration of the Kingdom *to Israel* (1:6), and using overt conversion language, Luke explains that such restoration is offered *if* Israel repents (μετανοήσατε, 3:19) and returns (ἐπιστρέψατε, 3:19) to Jesus.<sup>4</sup> Peter states directly to those who ‘are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant which God made with your fathers’ (3:25), that God’s blessing to them is ‘turning (ἀποστρέφειν) every one of you from your wicked ways’ (3:26). The content of God’s blessing to Israel is granting repentance for rejecting Jesus and, moreover, offering time to convert to him before judgment. Similar to Paul, for Luke, the Messiah must call *his people* (2:39) before he calls a people who are *not* his people.<sup>5</sup> Before Jesus is claimed ‘Lord of all’ (Acts 10:36), he must first be declared Lord and Christ of *Israel* (Acts 2:36) (Kilgallen 2001, 47).

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<sup>3</sup> While the question in Acts 1:6 receives a corrective response by Jesus that the kingdom will expand far beyond Jerusalem (1:7-8), for Luke, the conversion of Jews to their rejected yet risen Messiah proves necessary for the gospel to progress ἕως ἑσχάτου τῆς γῆς (1:8). Nolland argues against the idea that there is any ‘causal link’ between the Jewish rejection of Jesus and a turning towards preaching to the Gentiles (Nolland 1998, 76). I certainly agree with this, in that the global rejection of Jesus by ‘the Jews’ does not, in Luke’s thinking, void Israel’s place in God’s eschaton. However, at a more practical level, since many Jews rejected the message of the Gospel, that did provide more opportunities for interested Gentiles to hear more about ‘the way’.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Elliott’s section ‘Restoration as *Conversion* in Jubilees’ in his monograph *The Survivors of Israel* (2000, 533-540). He concludes that, for Jubilees, ‘God’s work of restoration is God’s work of converting Israel to the community who possessed the heavenly tablets’ (2000, 540).

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Paul’s statement in Rom 1:16, ‘for I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, *to the Jew first* and also to the Greek,’ with Luke’s statement in Acts 3:26, ‘God, having raised up his servant, sent him to you *first*’. Also note Luke’s highlighting of Paul’s practice (17:3 ‘as was his custom’) of going to the Jews in a city before going the Gentiles (e.g. 9:20, 13:5, 14, 14:1, 17:10, 17, 18:4), which he did even *after* his claim in 18:6 that he would only go to the Gentiles (19:4, 28:17). Alexander suggests that one possible solution to the obvious problem that, in fact, not all Israel accepted Jesus is to ‘do some theological reflection of the kind Paul undertakes in Romans 9-11...the mere fact that Luke’s Paul, despite constant “last words” to “the Jews”, keeps going back to the Jewish community right up to the book’s final scene, seems to dramatize the kind of ambivalence that Paul himself shows in Romans and elsewhere (cf. e.g. Rom. 11.1-32)’ (2005, 226-227).

With the overall goal of understanding Luke's thought-structure regarding conversion, the weight given to Jewish conversion in Acts warrants special attention.<sup>6</sup> In this connection, the following four questions regarding Jewish conversion in Acts will be helpful for our investigation. For Luke, what is it about the Jews that makes their conversion necessary? Are there detectable common elements of Jewish conversion? And how much diversity is there in the various descriptions of Jewish conversion? What theological assumptions are at play as Luke describes Jews converting? For example, does Luke, as he does elsewhere in his gospel, take for granted that there exists within some humans an innate ability to repent? In other words, are Jews according to Luke, truly changeable (cf. Chapter Three)? For Luke, do Jews need *καὶνὴ κτίσις* (2 Cor. 5:17) or are they simply in need of having the facts about Jesus presented properly (Luke 1:3, ἀκριβῶς καθεξῆς σοι γράψαι) so that they can make a reasonable decision (Acts 2:40)? As Luke does elsewhere in both his gospel and in Acts for Gentiles (cf. Cornelius who was both δίκαιος (Acts 10:22) and εὐσεβής (Acts 10:2)), are Jews presented as δίκαιος *before* they convert (see Luke 1:6, 2:25, 23:50)? In other words, are Jews who convert to Jesus *preconditioned* to do so by virtue of their own δίκαιοσύνη?

It must be noted that answering these theological questions above as well as answering my more central theological questions posed in Chapter One is my primary aim in this chapter. As such I will not focus on the sociological and historical dimensions that under-gird the text under examination. Because of this, I understand that my investigation into the theology of Luke's notion of Jewish conversion is primarily one in which I am bringing questions to the text rather than answering questions that the text itself raises. However, I will attempt to answer my questions based on a careful reading of the text. While understanding the actual 'thought of Luke' on Jewish conversion may be, in some ways, out of reach due to the limited method of this dissertation, I will attempt nevertheless to be led to my conclusions based on what Luke himself has written.

The questions above will be the tools used for our spadework into Luke's theology of Jewish conversion, but before we begin digging, I must first clear the ground regarding two issues. First, we will need to choose a important Jewish conversion text in

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<sup>6</sup> On the unique role that 'the Jews' play in Acts and the diverse ways scholars interpret them, see Sanders (1987), Tannehill (1986, 1990), and Tyson (1986).

Acts and demonstrate that it will epitomize Jewish conversion as well as any other Jewish conversion text in Acts. I will argue, in agreement with Bauckham, that the ‘fulcrum account’ of Pentecost in Acts 2 which yielded 3000 Jewish conversions is the best theological test-case of Jewish conversion in Acts (cf. Bock 2007, 92). Secondly, we need to counter the argument by Barrett that casts doubt on the theological coherence and importance of Acts 2. After these two issues are addressed, I will proceed to an analysis of the text at hand.

### 5.1 Acts 2 as Important Jewish Conversion Text

A very important text of showing Jewish conversion in Acts is found in the initial mass Jewish conversion to Jesus in chapter 2. Besides serving as a ‘programmatic role’ for Luke as his first major episode in that it provides the initial *momentum* for the whole of the narrative (e.g. Sloan 1991, 225),<sup>7</sup> Luke’s quotation of Joel 2:28-32 [LXX] (esp. ‘call upon his name will be saved’) sets the *theological* tone for the ensuing Acts narrative as well (Litwak 2005, 155).<sup>8</sup> In order to establish this, I must first survey Jewish conversions in Acts and show how Acts 2 is, and is not, paradigmatic. What this survey will demonstrate is that Acts 2 actually serves, in some ways at least, as an ‘ideal’ Jewish conversion account for Luke. It also demonstrates that there are some common elements of Jewish conversion in Acts and, furthermore, it is only in Acts 2 where we observe all of these elements at work.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Sloan states that ‘[i]t is often said (rightly I think) that the Pentecost episode and speech deserve favorable comparison with the Rejection of Jesus in the Nazareth pericope of Luke 4:16-30 in terms of programmatic significance. There is, I think, something bordering on consensus here among Lukan scholars’ (1991, 225). Also see Tannehill’s argument in which he draws a connection between Acts 2 and Luke 3 which both have the giving of the spirit in response to prayer and extensive OT quotation about the spirit. As such he argues that both serve a paradigmatic role in Luke and Acts (1990). Likewise, Richard concluded in his study that ‘Pentecost for Luke is a paradigmatic episode that, in parallel with Jesus’ reception of the Spirit, signals conferral of power for and the beginning of the mission and witness to the ends of the earth’ (1990, 148-149). If these scholars are correct to point out the paradigmatic role of Acts 2 in relation to the rest of the narrative, then it would not be too surprising that Acts 2 might also contain the paradigmatic conversion account as well.

<sup>8</sup> Zehnle suggests, in line with this, that Acts 2 is the ‘epitome of Lukan theology’ in that it brings together major Lukan themes such as salvation, Christology and repentance (1971, 61-71).

<sup>9</sup> Such as, but not limited to, miracle, message and response. Other accounts have similar preaching but a poor converting response to that preaching. Still others have the typical miracle and a converting response, yet the message is missing. It is only in Acts 2 where we find an extensive miracle, a detailed message, and a detailed conversion response.

### 5.1.1 John and Peter Heal a Man (Acts 3-4)

In this story, which leads to a larger Jewish mass conversion (4:4) than what we see in Acts 2, we see a miracle, message and response pattern of conversion. With the setting at the temple, a lame man asks Peter and John for money (3:2). While they did not give him money, Peter looked intently at him and declared that the man should walk, which he did miraculously (3:6-8). After the miracle, which is used throughout this story as legitimizing their message (4:16, 22), Peter preached once again to the ‘men of Israel’ (3:12) (compare with Acts 2:22 and ‘men of Judaea’ in 2:14). He declared that *their* God, the ‘God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob’ glorified his servant, the Prince of Life, Jesus, whom they ‘put to death’ (3:13-15). Yet, God raised him from the dead, of which Peter was himself a witness (3:15). Furthermore, this miracle occurred based on faith (3:16, ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει) in Jesus’ name.<sup>10</sup> Similar to what we find in 2:38, but different in that this occurrence was unprompted by his audience, Peter calls them to repentance (v. 19, μετανοήσατε οὖν καὶ ἐπιστρέψατε). Such repentance would wipe out their sins (v.19, ἐξαλειφθῆναι ὑμῶν τὰς ἁμαρτίας) as well as inaugurate an eschatological time of refreshment (v. 19, καιροὶ ἀναψύξεως) and restoration (v. 21, ἀποκατάστασις).<sup>11</sup> Indeed, this Jesus, who was the prophet spoken of by Moses (3:22; Deut 18:15-18), was raised for the Jews first so that they could be blessed and be turned (ἀποστρέφω) from their wickedness (3:26). In contrast to Peter’s first sermon (2:38-40), the response resulted in prompt imprisonment (4:3). Nevertheless, some did receive Peter’s message, believed and were converted to this religious movement (4:4).<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Bruce elaborates helpfully that the emphasis on faith here shows that this ‘was no merely magical efficacy in the sounds which Peter pronounced...the cripple would have no benefit had he not responded in faith to what Peter said...’ (1988, 89)

<sup>11</sup> There is some discussion as to whether or not Luke actually believed that all of Israel would turn to Jesus. Some argue that Luke ‘probably saw a reformed Judaism embracing its Messiah’ (Blaklock 1980, 27). And that, furthermore, ‘that course was open’ (Blaklock 1980, 27). In other words, Luke did not just hope for Israel to turn but expected that over a period of time, Israel would indeed turn to Jesus (as what we see in Paul in Rom. 11). While this did not happen here, there is nothing to indicate that Luke believed this was not going to happen at some point in the future (*contra* Sanders 1987). As Marshall states, ‘there is a place for it [Israel] in the future, if the Twelve are to be its judges and if the kingdom is to be restored to it’ (Marshall 1999, 357; cf. Acts 1:6). Nevertheless, it is true that the main focus of Luke’s narrative is not so much the restoration of Israel (even though that was the question which begins Luke’s narrative in Acts 1:6) as it is the growth of the church (Marshall 1999, 357).

<sup>12</sup> On the next day they explained for the second time how they were able to heal the lame man, that is, ‘by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead – by this name this man stands here before you in good health’ (4:10). Indeed, ‘there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved’ (4:12).

### 5.1.2 Ananias and Sapphira (5:1-16)

Ananias and Sapphira, who were early members of the infant church, lied to Peter (also to God and the Holy Spirit, 5:3-5), when they retained some money for themselves after claiming they had given all the profits of a property sale to the church. The punishment for both was immediate death (5:5; 5:9). These deaths showed to the early church ‘how perilous pretended or half-hearted adherence might be’ (Bruce 1988, 118). Not surprisingly, a ‘great fear came over all who heard of it’ (5:5), and ‘over the whole church’ (5:11). Would not such deaths be ‘negative press’ for the budding Jesus movement? Surprisingly, the result was that *many more* conversions took place as ‘all the more believers in the Lord, multitudes of men and women, were constantly added to their number’ (5:14). The focus was on divine causation of the execution. *God* accomplished this and as such it was a miracle that could not be denied by those who heard of it. Interestingly, the miracle is the highlighted factor in these conversions rather than Peter’s preaching of Jesus (Acts 2 and 3) as before.

### 5.1.3 The Conversion of Saul/Paul (9:1-19)

The conversion story of Paul is Luke’s most descriptive conversion of an individual Jew and rightly receives more scholarly attention than any other conversion in the New Testament because of his missionary successes as well as his own contribution to the NT (e.g. Nock 1938; Menoud 1953; Stanley 1953; Prokulski 1957; Howard 1969; Fudge 1971; Hedrick 1981; Gaventa 1986; Segal 1990; Everts 1993; Franklin 1994; Marguerat 1995; Longenecker 1997). Yet, did *Luke* consider Paul’s conversion on the road to Damascus to be the ‘ideal’ conversion account or a conversion that was *unique* to Paul?

Paul (Saul), who presided over the martyrdom of Stephen (7:58), was the most zealous Jewish authority fighting ‘the way’. It was his practice to go from ‘house to house’ and to ‘drag off’ both men and women to jail (8:3). Yet, on Paul’s way to Damascus, where he also hoped to squelch ‘the way’, Jesus himself appeared to Paul. Out of a heavenly flash that knocked Paul to the ground, Jesus directly asked Paul a question: ‘Saul, Saul why are you persecuting me?’ (9:4). Paul asked Jesus to identify

himself and Jesus responded, ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting’ (9:5). Paul is simply told by Jesus to stand by for further instruction (v. 6, ‘but rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do’). Paul is not informed of God’s call on his life directly by Jesus, but rather, Jesus tells Ananias that Paul is his ‘chosen instrument’ before ‘Gentiles and kings and sons of Israel’ (v. 15). Ananias baptized Paul (9:18) and after regaining his strength he began his public preaching that Jesus was indeed the Son of God (9:2).

Interestingly, we do not have many of the typical elements of conversion in Paul’s account. In this conversion account, we do not have a theological message. In this account Paul is not in a context where he is honestly seeking and worshiping God like what we see in other conversion accounts.<sup>13</sup> Rather, Paul actively persecuted God’s family and, ultimately, God’s son (9:5). Furthermore, there is no call to repentance as in Acts 2, 3, 5 and 17. It is for these and other reasons that some have argued that Paul was not considered to be a real convert. As Stendahl argued quite influentially, Paul was called, not converted (1976) - a sentiment that continues in NT scholarship. Nave, for example, states plainly that ‘Paul is not depicted as experiencing a conversion; instead he is depicted as experiencing an enlightenment and a “calling” – an assignment to a new task’ (2002, 208). However, the heart of Stendahl’s argument must be questioned, as his division between conversion and calling appears to be a false dichotomy.<sup>14</sup> While scholars such as Stendahl are quite right to point out the idiosyncratic nature of Paul’s joining of the way, are there signs in Luke’s account that show Paul to be an actual convert? I argue that there are three clear Lukan signs that Paul was an actual convert. First, that Paul was baptized is a sign of religious conversion. Secondly, similar to how Luke narrates other conversion accounts (e.g. 2:37, ‘what shall we do?’; 17:20, ‘May we know what this new teaching is?’), it is Paul’s own question (9:5, ‘who are you, Lord?)

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<sup>13</sup> In Acts 2 Jews in Jerusalem were worshipping God. In Acts 6 the Ethiopian is returning from worship. In Acts 16 Lydia was praying on the Sabbath. In Acts 17 the Athenians were worshipping (an unknown) God albeit incorrectly.

<sup>14</sup> Recent research shows that ‘called’ language was actually common ‘conversion’ language in antiquity (Chester, 2003, 59-112), thus making Stendahl’s division between the two unfounded. A more balanced approach is found in Segal’s work on Paul’s conversion in which he argued that ‘[f]rom the viewpoint of mission Paul is commissioned, but from the viewpoint of religious experience Paul is a convert’ (1990, 6; cf. also O’Brien’s article, ‘Was Paul Converted,’ in which he concluded, in congruence with Segal, that ‘Paul was converted and called to be the apostle to the Gentiles’ (2004, 391).

that preceded and may have even led to his eventual conversion. Thirdly, it may be that Paul shared a common Jewish plight in which conversion and repentance were the only ways to avoid divine judgment.<sup>15</sup> Thus, it seems clear that Paul is a real convert, but for Luke, Paul's conversion is a unique event, not an ideal or repeatable event.<sup>16</sup>

#### 5.1.4 Anti-conversion Story (5:17-40)

As a result of the apostles' success at winning converts and producing notable miracles, the high priests in Jerusalem had them imprisoned (5:17-18). Yet, the 'angel of the Lord' opened the gates of the prison and the next morning, following the request of the angel, they were teaching in public again (5:20). Once again, Peter began to preach that Jesus, whom the Jews 'had put to death by hanging Him on a cross', was raised to life by God (5:30). In addition, the risen Jesus was able to 'grant repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins' (5:32). Once again, Peter's audience, after hearing his message, was 'cut to the heart' (v. 33, διαπρίω; compare with 2:37, κατενύγησαν τὴν καρδίαν), yet instead of asking Peter how to convert, they 'intended to kill them' (5:33). Taking the advice of the Pharisee Gamaliel, they did not kill them lest they be found fighting against God (5:39), but only had them flogged (5:40).

## 5.2 Jewish Conversions Compared with Acts 2

In the above conversion stories there are five common elements: (1) Miracles serve as catalyst: the healing of a lame man, angelic release from prison, the divine *killing* of Ananias and Sapphira, and Jesus' own appearance to Paul are used both to substantiate the claim that Jesus is alive (itself yet another miracle)<sup>17</sup> and to give motivation for

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<sup>15</sup> Paul recounts his conversion twice more in this narrative (22:1-21; 26:12-23) and the apparent discrepancy among these three accounts have been much discussed (cf. e.g. Segal's coverage of this topic, 1990). Yet, it is the common element among all three accounts that I want to point attention to. All three accounts have Jesus' question/statement to Paul, 'Saul, Saul why are you persecuting me?...I am Jesus whom you are persecuting' (9:4-5; 22:7-8; 26:14-15). Why was it so important for Luke to repeat this detail of Paul's conversion three times? Could it be that for Luke, the core plight of the non-Christian Jew is that their explicit rejection of 'the way' really means that they are guilty of persecuting Jesus? As such, their rejection of him, in Luke's thinking, placed them in the same category with those who actually made the decisions that led to the historical persecution and death of Jesus.

<sup>16</sup> *Contra* older scholarship which argued that Luke believed Paul's conversion to be the ideal conversion account in Acts (e.g. Nock 1938). Cf. also Bochet who shows in his article, 'Augustin disciple de Paul,' that Paul's conversion was held up as the 'model' in 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> century church (2006, 357-380).

<sup>17</sup> Cf. K. Anderson on the role that Jesus' resurrection played as miracle in Luke-Acts (2007, 197-233).

repentance and belief in the name of Jesus. (2) In chapters 2, 3 and 4, Peter's preaching precedes conversion. (3) Another common factor in these conversion stories of Jews is their confession of involvement in the death of Jesus. Paul personally persecuted Jesus (9:5); the 'Men of Israel' 'delivered' (3:13), 'disowned' (3:13), 'put to death' (3:15) Jesus. In chapter two the Jews 'nailed to the cross' (2:23) and 'crucified' (2:36) Jesus. While it is notable that the Jews did so 'in ignorance' (3:18) and according to the plan and foreknowledge of God (2:23),<sup>18</sup> they are nevertheless guilty and rightly accuse the apostles of intending 'to bring this man's blood upon us' (5:28). (4) In chapters 2, 3 and 5, there is a call to repentance, and in 2 and 3 there is a response to that call. (5) In Paul's conversion as well as the Acts 2 conversion story there is a question given by a *pre*-convert, which proves to be instrumental to conversion. As we look to Acts 2 we see that all five of these elements of conversion are at play.<sup>19</sup> For these reasons, if we understand the conversion of the Jews in Acts 2, we will have greatly advanced the quest to understand in general the conversion of Jews in the book of Acts.<sup>20</sup>

In the next section we will need to evaluate the internal theological consistency of Acts 2. This will help fortify Acts 2 as our representative text and will help give confidence that legitimate conclusions regarding Luke's theology of Jewish conversion can be drawn from this text.

### 5.3 Acts 2 as Theology

There is a rich history of research which reads Luke as a theologian (e.g. Conzelmann 1961, Howard 1970, Bock 1989, Green 1995). Barrett, however, insists that Luke, and his Pentecost sermon in particular, 'shows no developed theology, especially when it is compared with the Pauline epistles' (Barrett 1994, 131). Furthermore, he argues that

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<sup>18</sup> Cf. Squires who traces the idea of 'plan' throughout Luke-Acts noting its connection to the Greco-Roman notion of Fate (1993). He states regarding its usage here that 'Luke has Peter draw together portent, fulfilled prophecies and an understanding of God as the subject acting through the life of Jesus' (1993, 187).

<sup>19</sup> In addition, receiving the spirit and confession of the messiahship of Jesus are shown in more depth than other conversions.

<sup>20</sup> It should be noted that Paul's extensive synagogue sermon in Acts 13 in Pisidian Antioch was not considered here because (1) it did not yield Jewish converts (only interested followers for one day, v. 43, no explicit converts), and (2) on the next it was actually the Gentiles who converted not the Jews. V. 48 'And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed.'

Luke's Christological climax in 2:36 that God has made Jesus both Lord and Christ is 'inconsistent with Luke's own Christology' (Barrett 1994, 133). I will argue that Barrett is wrong on two accounts: (1) Luke does present a 'developed'<sup>21</sup> theology and (2) v. 36 is not 'inconsistent' with Luke's Christology being built in chapter 2.

(1) Of course, in establishing Luke as a 'developed' theologian, one must first ask to whom or to what system Luke is being compared. While my overall aim in this project is to compare Luke with Paul, and in so doing may deem one as more sophisticated and perhaps even more potent than the other, the thought of each writer must be systematic enough to determine a predictable thought structure on the topic of conversion. With this said, Barrett states the obvious that Luke does not present Jesus as 'the incarnation of the Son of God who shared equal divinity with his Father' (Barrett 1994, 132). As such, Barrett argues that Luke is underdeveloped in his thinking about Jesus. Reasons for this include the argument that Luke had no positive reason why Jesus died. 'No positive effect is ascribed to the death of Jesus; this is characteristic of Acts as a whole (there is an exception at 20.28)' (1994, 131).<sup>22</sup> He continues, 'There is no question that this speech and those that resemble it present an elementary, undeveloped theology and Christology' (132). Barrett makes it clear that whether or not the theology here was 'early' is an irrelevant question because 'there have in every generation been Christians incapable of anything more than elementary theological thought, and those capable of thought on Paul's level have been very few indeed' (1994, 132). Thus, in regard to Luke's theology, it is both 'later and less profound' (1994, 132).<sup>23</sup> Yet, is it true that Luke's thoughts about Jesus are less developed than Paul's thoughts?

In his narrative in chapter 2, Luke builds his theology of Jesus from what is known by the Jewish audience (2:22) to what is unknown by them (2:36). Barrett understands this progress as being actually an underdeveloped thought about Jesus. Yet, Luke's first Christological point that Jesus is a 'man' (ἄνδρα) (v. 22) with great qualifications (e.g. δύνამις, τέρας and σημεῖον) is that this man's actions were done

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<sup>21</sup> At least when compared with the theologies of other biblical writers. While Luke may not present as sophisticated a theology as Paul's, I will argue that it is no less important or consistent.

<sup>22</sup> In response to this see Doble's monograph which attempts to demonstrate Luke's *theologia crucis* (1996).

<sup>23</sup> Bock insists to the contrary that this speech by Peter may be 'one of the most important theological declarations in the NT' (2007, 108).

among them (v. 22b, ἐν μέσῳ ὑμῶν); Luke is not necessarily emphasizing the humanity of Jesus over his divinity. Furthermore, to contrast Luke's description of the humanity of Jesus with the Pauline understanding that Jesus is a 'divine being who by some kind of incarnation or kenosis accommodated himself to the human world' (Barrett 1994, 140), does not necessarily make Luke's argument less developed. In fact, if Peter (Luke) began with such a high Christology, it would make it more difficult for his audience to understand what he was talking about. It is more likely that Luke is simply identifying Jesus as a real human being with whom Peter's audience was already familiar. Nevertheless, on the basis of that common understanding, it can be argued that Luke then builds a rather elegant Christology with respect to an exalted divine Jesus.<sup>24</sup> Note that the event of Pentecost was explained as a fulfillment of Joel's prophecy that *God* would 'pour forth my spirit on all mankind' (2:17). Yet as the narrative continues, Luke reveals that it was *Jesus* who now 'poured forth this which you both see and hear' (2:33). Likewise in v. 20 Peter introduces the day of the Lord (whom his audience would equate with YHWH) and in v. 36 reveals, to the audience's shock, that the Lord *is* Jesus. Thus, while not as neatly packaged as Paul, Luke does have a 'high' Christology.<sup>25</sup> He simply needs more time to construct the narrative to develop it. While Blaiklock goes too far in insisting that Luke's thought is more developed than 'the Greek-minded Paul' (1980, 27), it is not an overstatement that Luke demonstrates a developed theology using the conventions of narrative to do so.<sup>26</sup>

(2) Barrett argues that Luke's Christology is actually inconsistent with the 'surface meaning' of Peter's conclusion in v. 36 that God made Jesus κύριος and Χριστός.<sup>27</sup> As such, the 'speech contains nothing to connect it with the occasion' (Barrett 1994, 133). This is an overstatement. Even if Barrett is right to argue that, beginning in v. 22, Luke likely uses a different source from that on which he based the

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<sup>24</sup> Cf. Rowe's recent article, 'Acts 2.36 and the Continuity of Lukan Christology,' in which he shows that Luke does not present Jesus as experiencing an 'ontological' change in 'becoming' Lord in v. 36 but rather Luke used this term to describe a change in thinking from the perspective of the audience (2007, 37-56).

<sup>25</sup> Indeed, it is literally a high Christology as Luke emphasizes the ascension of Jesus as well as a figuratively high Christology showing Jesus' divinity.

<sup>26</sup> And it may be in the notion of *narrative* theology where the disconnect lies for Barrett (cf. Root, 1989).

<sup>27</sup> 'It does however seem that we have here that primitive kind of adoptionism that Paul was obliged to correct (Rom 1.4; Phil. 2.6-11)' (Barrett 1994, 152)... 'the crucifixion of one who shares the throne of God is a sin against God; hence the force of the appeal for repentance which follows' (Barrett 1994, 152).

Pentecost event itself, that is not evidence that Luke's conclusion in v. 36 is not directly relevant to the narrative leading up to it (1994, 129).<sup>28</sup> For example, as pointed out above, 'this man' is equated with the giver of the Spirit about whom Joel prophesied (2:17), thus promoting one aspect of Jesus as the divine κύριος about whom David wrote (2:34). Also, in possessing this title Jesus can execute God's judgment on his enemies (2:34). Peter's audience obviously understood Peter's argument that Jesus was in an exalted state as evidenced by their fearful and heart-piercing question about what they could do to rectify their situation (2:37). Furthermore, that Jesus was also deemed Χριστός is not inconsistent with this previous argumentation, but is congruent with it. It was Jesus who according to God's βουλή (2:23; see also 4:28, 13:36; used negatively of man 5:38, 27:42) faced θάνατος (2:24), and by resurrection destroyed (λύω) it as a ruling power (κρατέω). This was consistent with David's prophecy that one of his descendants would not see death and would be king forever (2:29-34), and as such, since Jesus is the only one who fits this criterion, he must be the Χριστός.<sup>29</sup> For these reasons alone, the claim of inconsistency seems hollow.<sup>30</sup>

It seems that there is more than enough coherent theological thought in Luke upon which to build a theological structure.<sup>31</sup> And while there 'is no set, mechanistic pattern by which the various components come into play', it still demonstrates that Luke has a consistent enough pattern of thought that study of it is warranted and essential (Polhill 1992, 116).

#### 5.4 Ingredients of Jewish Conversion in Acts 2: Jews Before Conversion

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<sup>28</sup> Cf. Rowe's recent article 'Acts 2.36 and the Continuity of Lukan Christology' in which he argues that v. 36 expresses Luke's Christology rather than *contradicts* it (2007: 37-56; cf n. 25).

<sup>29</sup> There is also a possible connection between the question asked by this Jewish audience and Peter's conclusion in v. 34, thus showing another connection between the occasion and the content of Peter's sermon.

<sup>30</sup> Of course, holes in Luke's logic can and will be found, but is that not the case with every ancient (or modern!) writer?

<sup>31</sup> Moreover, when one focuses on conversion, Luke is so consistent that he is 'almost programmatic' especially when v. 38 is in view (Polhill 1992, 116). As Polhill has noted, Luke gives 'four essentials of the conversion experience (v. 38): repentance, baptism in the name of Jesus Christ, forgiveness of sins, and receipt of the Spirit' (1992, 116).

In this section I will point to three important ingredients of conversion in Acts 2 before they converted. Identifying and analyzing each of these ingredients is important in detecting Luke's theology of Jewish conversion.

#### 5.4.1 Religious Atmosphere in Jerusalem<sup>32</sup>

While the geographical composition of this crowd<sup>33</sup> has long interested scholars (e.g. Kilpatrick 1975; Ross 1985; Polhill 1992), that they are described by Luke simply as Ἰουδαῖοι (2:5) assumes a diaspora Jewish audience.<sup>34</sup> As we turn our attention to Acts 2, it is important to note the religious atmosphere of Jerusalem. Jews from around the world were in Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of Weeks,<sup>35</sup> and as such Luke characterizes them as 'devout [εὐλαβῆς] men from every nation under heaven' (2:5). Εὐλαβῆς is a favorite Lukan term<sup>36</sup> which he employs in describing righteous Israelites such as Simeon (Luke 2:25) and Ananias (Acts 22:12; cf. 8:2). A point missed by most commentators,<sup>37</sup> Luke

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<sup>32</sup> It is no mistake that the first conversion of Jews happened in Jerusalem. As Sanders points out, Jerusalem has a very 'important theological significance for Luke' as 'the geographical pivot in the divine plan of salvation' (Sanders 1987, 24-25). Sanders argues furthermore that 'Jesus must perish in Jerusalem because Jerusalem always kills the prophets, and that the gospel must proceed out from Jerusalem because Jerusalem always rejects the word of God' (Sanders 1987, 26). However, Sanders overstates his case here because, while Jerusalem carries with it huge theological significance, he totally ignores the fact that the Jews in Jerusalem explicitly did not 'reject the word of God' as is obvious by their response to Peter's preaching. It was in Jerusalem that the word of the Messiah was first *accepted* by a great number of *Jews*. Of course, Luke's explicit focus was the expansion of the church beyond Jerusalem, yet it is clear that the central nervous system of the church remained in *Jerusalem* throughout Luke's Acts narrative (Acts 15:4 'When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by *the church* and *the apostles* and the elders').

<sup>33</sup> 2:9-11 'Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cretans, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians – we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God.'

<sup>34</sup> Recent scholarship shows the likelihood that the coming of the spirit to Jerusalem, and to the temple in particular, shows that the beginning of the church was really seen as an intensified continuation of the 'true temple of God' (Beale 2005).

<sup>35</sup> What connection there is between Luke's description and the symbolism associated with the Jewish Feast of Weeks remains elusive. However, it seems the point Luke was making, besides that of connecting the giving of Spirit with that of the torah (e.g. Ex. 19:16-18 [LXX]; bT Ta'anith 7a; *Sifre on Deuteronomy* Ber. 343; Johnson 1992, 46), is not determined by the uniqueness of *this* festival compared to any other Jewish festival, but that those who attended did so as an act of real devotion to God.

<sup>36</sup> It is used four-times in the NT, all of which are in Luke-Acts (Bock 2007, 100).

<sup>37</sup> Calvin is the only exception that I have seen. He notes that Luke's writing that 'God-fearing' men came to Jerusalem showed that 'some seed was left, for he had, as it were, set his banner in that city...Luke shows who benefits from God's declaration of power in his miracles. As we shall see, evil and godless people laugh at them and ignore them' (Calvin 1995, 31). These Jews were not 'evil and godless' but were good and godly and thus pre-conditioned to hear and *receive* the gospel.

here highlights these Jews in Jerusalem as honestly seeking God.<sup>38</sup> That they are real candidates for conversion is at least part of his point and sets the stage for their conversion (2:41).<sup>39</sup> This crowd only lacks the right information about Jesus, which is why Peter says after his sermon that at last they can ‘know assuredly’ (ἀσφαλῶς οὖν γινωσκέτω; cf. Luke 1:4 ἐπιγνώ...ἀσφάλειαν) that Jesus is Lord and Christ (v. 36). This is also in line with Luke’s notion of ‘righteous’ people who are ready to convert and may be one aspect of an apparent precondition for conversion.<sup>40</sup>

However, if this crowd is already righteous, why convert to Jesus in the first place? As Bock points out, ‘that they are “pious” here need not equal “saved”, since these people will later be told that they must repent to be delivered’ (2007, 100). One clue to as to why they are not saved may be found when one compares the geographical composition of this crowd with Peter’s personalized accusation that *they* killed Jesus (Acts 2:23, 36). Why does Luke go to such great lengths to explain that they were not *from* Jerusalem and then accuse them of being involved in the killing of Jesus? Did Luke simply forget that some of them were not physically there when Jesus was crucified?

Haenchen suggests that the fact that ‘specifically the pious diaspora Jews (2.5!) are charged with this guilt is from a literary point of view inept’ (1971, 183). Perhaps Haenchen is correct. However, maybe there is a better way to read Luke than how he

<sup>38</sup> This is also parallel to what Luke does with the conversion(s) of the Ethiopian eunuch (8:27) and the Athenians (17:22-27), both of which are depicted as earnestly worshipping God(s).

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Twelftree’s recent article, in which he shows that God’s Spirit goes to those who are devoted and prayerful. However, he makes a helpful distinction by noting that the Spirit does not go as a direct response to the prayer of an individual but that ‘prayerful people have been given the Spirit’ (2005, 272). In short, ‘for Luke, the Spirit comes according to God’s determination to those who are prayerful or devoted to him.’ (Twelftree 2005, 276)

<sup>40</sup> It has already been shown that this audience was ‘devout’ and are depicted as seeking God. Yet, it is after Peter’s sermon when this precondition to conversion is most clearly seen. Peter’s message here was effective as the response was that of desperation: if Jesus was indeed God’s messiah and Lord, then could there be no hope for those who rejected and killed him? As Bruce states, ‘they had refused Him in whom all their hope of salvation rested; what hope of salvation was left to them now?’ (Bruce 1988, 75). This desperation is expressed in the combination of being cut to the heart *and* asking what they could do to avoid God’s judgment. Other audiences in Luke’s narrative would be cut to the heart but their response would be to kill the messengers, *not* to convert to their message (Acts 5:17-40). But here they seemed to have a precondition to pursue conversion because of their felt desperation. Berger and Luckmann argue that ‘real conversion’ [that is, a conversion that lasts] occurs only when strong logic is present (1966, 158), yet Smith shows that while logic plays a role in conversion, in reality, it is desperation that plays an even larger role in the conversion (1987, 594). Thus, that this audience converted to Jesus while others in almost the same situation did not, indicates that one audience understood their desperate plight while the other did not. Such a discrepancy of emotion between two nearly identical crowds might be indicative of a precondition to conversion.

suggests. On the one hand, Luke describes that these Diaspora Jews currently ‘dwelled’ [κατοικέω] in Jerusalem and as such they might have indeed been living in Jerusalem during the time of Jesus’ crucifixion. Luke employs this term a number of other cases in which those who ‘dwelled’ in a particular place had clearly resided there for some time in order to be generally known to now be living in that ‘new’ area (Luke 13:4; Acts 1:19, 20; 4:16; 7:2; 9:22, 35). However, part of Luke’s description of Peter’s audience consisted of those who were ‘residents of Mesopotamia’, in which he *also* uses the term κατοικέω. Hence if we take κατοικέω to indicate someone who is a current resident in a particular area then Luke is describing a crowd in which some (but not all) were likely present during Jesus’ crucifixion.<sup>41</sup>

It has already been noted that Paul was guilty of personally persecuting Jesus while it is obvious that Luke knew that Paul did not personally persecute the historical Jesus. While it is uncomfortable to make this observation, could it be that Luke making a more subtle theological point here? Could there be a theological connection between Paul’s rejection of the way to that of a personalized persecution of Jesus himself (Saul, Saul why do you persecute *me*?). If this is the case, then could Luke be making the same connection with the Diaspora Jews worshipping and residing in Jerusalem? Flanagan is quite right to point out in his analysis of salvation terminology in Luke-Acts that Luke depicts salvation *from* sin (1979, 206-207), and, furthermore, that Luke is not afraid to point out the particular sins of those being saved. Is Luke going to make the same point regarding those who participated in the death of Jesus?<sup>42</sup>

#### 5.4.2 Questioning and Combative

As has been pointed out by some (e.g. Kilgallen 1996), the direction of Peter’s message was a result of the sort of questions asked by his Jewish audience. As is characteristic of Luke (Acts 17:18), there is a divided response of the audience after a

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<sup>41</sup> Also note Luke’s additional description of ‘visitors from Rome’ in which he uses the term ἐπιδημέω. However the only other time Luke uses this term is in Acts 17:21 in which it seems to have the force of ‘foreigners’ rather than just visitors. Hence if we read ἐπιδημέω in this way that reinforces Luke’s previous usage of κατοικέω: these were individuals from Rome who had now immigrated to Jerusalem.

<sup>42</sup> It must be noted however that when Peter calls on his audience to repent, he writes rather generically that their repentance is εἰς ἄφεσιν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ὑμῶν. While it could be implied by the accusations that lead up to it (v. 23, 36), as helpfully pointed out to me by Professor Hurtado, Luke does not say specifically that repentance is for their role in the crucifixion in particular but rather for their sins in general.

proclamation about God. Some were astounded (ἐξίστημι) and perplexed (διαπορέω) while others asked what this miracle could mean (2:12, τί θέλει τοῦτο εἶναι;). Indeed, it is this ‘guiding question’ in v. 12 which leads Peter to connect the miracle of the spirit that the audience witnessed to the exalted Jesus who gave it (2:33) (Kilgallen 1996, 181). Furthermore, the rhetorical highlight of v. 33 which connects Jesus and the spirit has been rightly argued as the ultimate answer to this question (Kilgallen 1996, 181).<sup>43</sup> After Peter’s sermon this audience asked yet another question τί ποιήσωμεν, ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί; (2:37). This follow-up question (compare the follow-up in 17:32 which led some Athenians to believe) is what prompts Peter to continue his sermon (2:38). As part of this continuation, Peter gives a three-fold instruction on how to convert: repentance, baptism and reception of the Spirit.<sup>44</sup> As a result of their question and Peter’s response, this audience followed Peter’s instruction and converted (2:41).<sup>45</sup>

#### 5.4.3 Miracle as Catalysis

Determining to what extent the miracle of Pentecost propelled this audience to convert is our task here, but there is some question as to *what* exactly the miracle is in this chapter (Johnson 1992, 45). Is the miracle highlighted here really the external observable phenomenon of bizarre sounds and language translation or is it the spiritual change experienced in the disciples? On the one hand, Johnson argues that ‘Luke’s point is not the pyrotechnics of theophany, but spiritual transformation’ (1992, 45). Indeed, it is true that these disciples were ‘transformed’ especially when one compares Peter shortly before the crucifixion of Jesus who was fearful of a little girl (Luke 22:54-62) with the bold Peter after the resurrection (Acts 2:14).<sup>46</sup> However, it appears that the point of

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<sup>43</sup> Kilgallen explains further that ‘Peter could have simply claimed, at the outset of his speech, that the immediate source of the Pentecost experience was Jesus, but he chose to make the claim credible and close to certain. That v. 33 stands so far from the initial verse which speaks of God as the one who poured out God’s Spirit is now understandable; indeed, with this understanding one can appreciate better the claim the [sic] that v. 33 is really not a digression, but is truly a goal of Peter’s attempt to answer the audience’s question, ‘What does this mean?’ (1996, 187).

<sup>44</sup> Whether or not baptism was required for conversion according to Luke is discussed in section 5.6.

<sup>45</sup> While some in the crowd appeared preconditioned for conversion, others in the crowd (2:13, ἕτεροι) appeared skeptical of this ‘miracle’ and assumed that the disciples were drunk (2:12b). Peter initially addresses their charge with the humorous counterargument that it was too early in the morning for such debauchery (2:15).

<sup>46</sup> Estrada suggests that ‘Peter standing with the eleven’ places him in a ‘representative role’ for the Twelve just as Moses was the representative of the elders (2004, 224).

interest for the Jewish audience was not so much the disciples' transformation as precisely the 'pyrotechnics'. It was the φωνή (2:5)<sup>47</sup> that attracted the crowd in the first place and it was the miracle of hearing preaching in their own language which spurred their curiosity (2:7-8).<sup>48</sup> Miracles continue as a major catalyst for the eventual conversion of the Jews in chapter 2. The reason why Peter's audience has no excuse to reject Jesus was based on the fact the Jesus did miracles among them (v. 22; cf. 2:43; 4:30; 4:30; 5:12; 6:8; 14:3; 15:12). In a sense, Jesus' miracles showed that God was 'vouching for' Jesus directly to Israel (Chance 2007, 54).

### 5.5 The Content of Peter's Converting Speech

In this section I will examine the content of Peter's speech, especially his three major quotations of the Jewish Scriptures (Joel 3:1-5; Ps 16:8-11; Ps 110:1). I will first describe what he is saying, then I will relate it to how this contributes to Luke's understanding of Jewish conversion.<sup>49</sup>

#### 5.5.1 The Spirit and Joel 2:28-32[LXX]

It should not be a surprise, especially in light of the disciples' desire for the Kingdom of Israel to be restored (ἀποκαθίστημι) and of its popularity in the early church (e.g. Rom 10:13), that Luke uses Joel 2:28-32 [LXX] as the initial OT proof text

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<sup>47</sup> It is difficult to know for sure if the genitive subject (φωνή) refers to the sound of voices or the noise of the wind (Parsons and Culy 2003, 26). Nevertheless, it was the *external observable* event that caused their interest, not some internal spiritual transformation; as Wagner points out, there is a multi-tangible element to this miracle in that it was 'audible', 'visual', and 'oral' (1994, 84-85).

<sup>48</sup> Chance points out that 'they are amazed not so much at *what* is said ("the mighty works of God, v. 11), but that they can *understand* what is being said by the Galileans (v. 7) (2007, 49). Johnson speculates further that 'the emphasis is not on what happened to Jesus, but what happened to them' (1992, 45). While he is right that the miracle in the disciples was the spark that initiated their eventual conversion, Luke explains through Peter that it was precisely what happened to Jesus in resurrection (2:24) and exaltation (2:33) which enabled the miracle that they could 'both see and hear' (2:33b).

<sup>49</sup> Before Peter begins to give his explanation of the spirit and Jesus, he first expresses his intentions in sharing this information. Firstly, he states that he was going to give them some *new* information (τοῦτο ὑμῖν γνωστὸν ἔστω, 2:14) that will not only shed light on the miracle but also on what it is God was doing in Jesus. Second, it is imperative that these 'men of Judea' pay attention to what it is that he was saying (ἐνωτίσασθε τὰ ῥήματα μου, 2:14). Ἐνωτιζομαι is only used here in the NT and indicates a desire to 'pay close attention to something' (Bock 2007, 110). Peter here pleads with his brethren to truly consider and give heed to his words about Jesus in the hope that they would respond appropriately. In other words, it appears that conversion is Peter's goal in making this speech.

that the age of the Spirit was now at hand.<sup>50</sup> This prophecy of Joel, which was occasioned by a devastating locust plague, shows the Lord ‘as the source of hope, who by his promise-word (2:18-27) and by his Spirit (2:28-32) upholds his people even in the darkest hour’ (VanGemeren 1988, 83). While judgment was being experienced by Israel in the form of the plague, Joel’s prophecy meant that God’s final judgment (of which the plague was a type) would be preceded by an obvious outpouring of his spirit. Such an unusual outpouring would not be easily missed. Therefore, this prophecy provided hope that while they were enduring this temporary judgment, they need not face the final judgment. This special giving of God’s own spirit (Joel 2:28 [LXX]: ἐκχεῶ ἀπὸ τοῦ πνεύματός μου ἐπὶ πᾶσαν σάρκα) would be both the eschatological guarantor of blessing and indicator of the Lord’s presence in Zion (Joel 2:27, 3:17) (VanGemeren 1988, 93-94). Most importantly, the spirit would also serve as a reconciler as ‘everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved’.<sup>51</sup> As VanGemeren states regarding the spirit, ‘he is intimately involved in the application of God’s redemption in regeneration...[s]oteriology with its eschatological dimension requires a correlation of the Holy Spirit and eschatology. He regenerates so as to restore humanity to new creation’ (VanGemeren 1988, 97).<sup>52</sup>

Below is Peter’s modified quotation in 2:17-21 from Joel 2:28-32 [LXX]

‘And it shall be in the last days,’ God says, ‘That I will pour forth of my Spirit on all mankind. And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy. And your young men shall see visions and your old men shall dream dreams; even on my bondslaves, both men and women, I will in those days pour forth of my spirit and they shall prophesy. And I will grant wonders in the sky above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke. The sun will be turned into darkness and the moon into blood, before the great and glorious day of the Lord

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<sup>50</sup> The connection between the coming of the spirit and that of the eschaton can be found in Qumran texts (e.g. 1 QH 15.6-7 and 1 Q35 1.1.14) as well as later Jewish texts (Midrash Psalms 14§6; Deuteronomy Rabbah 203a) (Bock 2007, 49).

<sup>51</sup> Yet, those who call on the Lord are those ‘whom the Lord calls’ (Joel 3:5). As VanGemeren points out this ‘phraseology is a variant of “seek the Lord while he may be found, call on him while he is near” (Isa. 55:6)’ (1988, 95).

<sup>52</sup> Remembering that the ‘context of Joel’s prophecy contains a call to repentance in hope of divine forgiveness (Joel 2:12-14)’ (Bruce 1981, 68), the spirit shows itself to have ‘converting power’ (Hull 1967, 134).

shall come. And it shall be that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.<sup>53</sup>

The quotation of Joel, which Luke alters slightly from the LXX,<sup>54</sup> serves at least two purposes for Luke. Firstly, it shows that the ‘gift’ of the spirit as witnessed at Pentecost was foretold in scripture. While Luke may believe there was still more to be fulfilled such as the ‘perfect resurrection of the church’ (Calvin 1995, 33),<sup>55</sup> that events of the last days were taking place among the disciples gave them both divine authority and an ability to project a feeling of urgency in the audience to respond to their message. Since this connection to scripture was believed in the minds of some in this Jewish audience, it added credibility to the disciples and gave extreme importance to their activity. By changing the LXX from μετὰ ταῦτα to ἐν ταῖς ἐσχάταις ἡμέραις he makes the ‘Spirit’s outpouring an eschatological, and above all a prophetic event’ (Johnson 1992, 54).<sup>56</sup>

Secondly, because this prophesied event was taking place, God’s salvation was offered to all who call on his name (Barrett 1994, 129). The ‘last days’ and salvation are inextricably linked here by Luke (Barrett 1994, 129) and the time for conversion had come.<sup>57</sup> The point is that all who hear about this and understand its fulfillment must ‘call upon the name of the Lord’ if they wish to be saved. Luke’s quotation in v. 21 proves to be a lynchpin in his theology of salvation and conversion. That the indefinite relative clause, ὅς ἄν ἐπικαλέσηται, has a direct antecedent, πᾶς, is unusual for Luke and may show a real emphasis here on the eligibility of salvation (Parsens and Culy 2003, 35). Thus, in the most Jewish of all the conversions that Luke presents in his narrative, he is

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<sup>53</sup> See Bowker’s article which argues that this speech is a ‘poem homily’ on the text of Joel above (Bowker 1968).

<sup>54</sup> See Bock’s ‘Proclamation from Prophecy and Pattern’, in which he details at least seven alternations of Luke from LXX here, although only two of them have a theological motive (Bock 1987 esp, 156-164). They are Luke’s addition of ‘in the last days’ which gives credence to his argument that what was happening in Acts 2 was the event mentioned in Joel. The second is the addition of μου which makes God’s relation to the slave clearer.

<sup>55</sup> In v. 17 Luke connects καὶ ἔσται with a future finite verb ἐκχέω, thus creating a ‘periphrastic future construction’, so leaving room in Luke’s thinking that there may be more ahead (for Israel?) beyond the events of Pentecost (Parsens and Culy 2003, 33).

<sup>56</sup> Luke may have given a hint that the prophetic fulfillment was about to occur by his use of the term ‘fulfill’ in 2:1. Chance explains: ‘while fulfill can denote the arrival of a specific date, the word “fulfill” offers the impression that something significant is about to happen’ (2007, 47).

<sup>57</sup> That is, the ‘emphasis is directed to the need of the Jerusalemites to repent’ (Talbert 1997, 44).

also careful to use a text that shows the inclusiveness of God's salvation. In addition, Luke draws two theological themes from v. 21 that he uses throughout his narrative: calling on the *name* of Jesus<sup>58</sup> and noting that *salvation* comes through Jesus.<sup>59</sup>

#### 5.5.2 Jewish Guilt and Psalm 15:8-11[LXX]/Psalm 109:1 [LXX]

Beginning in v. 22, Peter introduces Jesus into his speech. The accusative Ἰησοῦν τὸν Ναζωραῖον is brought to the front of the sentence by Luke to emphasize that Jesus is now the main topic of Peter's speech (Parsen and Culy, 2003, 36). Jesus, he reminds his audience, was the familiar messianic figure, who, like many others before him (5:36-37), was killed as a result of his movement (v. 23). But it appears that, for Luke, it is precisely the nature of Jesus' death that is the problem for this Jewish audience. After billing Jesus as a miracle worker in whom God worked (v. 22), Peter then drives a wedge between the Jewish treatment of Jesus and God's treatment of him. Albeit with the help of some Gentiles, it was the *Jews* who were responsible for executing Jesus via the cross (v. 23, προσπήξατε ἀνείλατε) and it was *God* who raised him up again (v. 24).<sup>60</sup> This resurrection was part of the βουλή of God as evidenced in scripture itself.

#### Ps 15:8-11 [LXX]

For David says of Him, I saw the Lord always in my presence; for he is at my right hand, so that I will not be shaken. Therefore my heart was glad and my tongue exulted; moreover my flesh also will live in hope; because you will not

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<sup>58</sup> The theme of calling on the 'name' of the Lord becomes an important feature for Luke in showing how one converts to Jesus and is 'saved' (Tannehill 1990, 31; cf. O'Reilly 1987):

2:38 'repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus'; 3:6 'in the name of Jesus, rise up and walk';

3:16 'and his name – by faith in his name – has made this man strong...';

4:7 'by what power or by what name did you do this?';

4:12 'And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved';

4:17-18 '...let us warn them to speak no more to anyone in this name. So they called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus';

4:30 'signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus.'

<sup>59</sup> The term 'savior' is used twice in Luke's gospel: once of God (Lk 1:47) and once of Jesus (Lk. 2:11) (Marshall 1999, 355). In Acts Jesus is also given this title (5:31; 13:23) (cf. Green 1998; Marshall 1970, 77-215).

<sup>60</sup> 'Many interpreters feel that these verses [Acts 2:22-36] incorporate the most primitive form of the Christian kerygma, in which the death of Christ is closely linked to his resurrection. The basic form of this confession is found throughout Acts and runs: "Jesus of Nazareth whom you killed...but God raised" (Polhill 1992, 111) (Acts 3:15, 4:10, 5:30, 10:39-40, 13:28-30).

abandon my soul to Hades, nor allow your holy one to undergo decay. You have made known to me the ways of life; you will make me full of gladness with your presence.

Ps 109:1 [LXX]

For it was not David who ascended into heaven, but he himself says, ‘The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet’.<sup>61</sup>

Psalm 15, above, expresses the Psalmist’s deep happiness and joy which comes from placing himself ‘under the overlordship of his suzerain’ (Kaiser 1980, 223). While questions surround whether or not the Psalmist had resurrection in mind when he wrote this (e.g. Driver 1910; Boers 1969; Kaiser 1980; Trull 2004a, 2004b), it is clear that *Luke’s* point in Peter’s quotation was that ‘this cannot apply to the historical David....therefore the text must apply to his messianic successor, whom David as a prophet could foresee’ (Johnson 1992, 55).<sup>62</sup> Indeed, the role of prophecy is a vital category for *Luke’s* Christology (Dillon 1986), and furthermore, because Jesus *was* foreseen in the Jewish scriptures, those who refuse to accept him are contrary to God’s prophets.

The immediate application of these texts for Peter’s Jewish audience was that they were on the wrong side of God’s divine plan. As Johnson states, ‘these texts show, therefore, that the Jesus whom they crucified was not dead. By his resurrection he has been enthroned in God’s presence as “Lord”, and, as these texts of David prove, also “Messiah”’ (Johnson 1992, 55). While it is true that Messiah and Lord might ‘possess both political and religious connotations’ (Walaskay 1998, 43), the political aspect can be taken too far. *Luke* was not asking for disloyalty to Caesar, as was the false accusation in Acts 17:7, but a deeper loyalty to the Lord of all. Ultimately, the function of these verses is to bring up Israel’s involvement in Jesus’ death to contrast their treatment of Jesus with God’s treatment of him (Bruce 1988, 73).

It appears that for *Luke* a reason why Jews need to convert relates, in some ways, to their rejection of and the crucifixion of the messiah. It is πᾶς οἶκος Ἰσραὴλ (v. 36a)

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<sup>61</sup> ‘It seems, then, that it is the fact or reality of Jesus’s [sic] ascension which allows Peter to apply LXX Psalm 109,1 to Jesus and so to draw the conclusion that Jesus is Lord’ (Kilgallen 1996, 180).

<sup>62</sup> In his article, ‘David, Being therefore a Prophet’, Fitzmyer suggests that *Luke’s* understanding of David’s psalm as prophetic is not original to him (Fitzmyer 1972).

who need to repent because it was τοῦτὸν τὸν Ἰησοῦν ὃν ὑμεῖς ἐσταυρώσατε (v. 36b). For Luke, that the Jews were involved in the death of Jesus, and furthermore, *continue* to persecute Jesus via their ill treatment of ‘the way’ and Jesus’ apostles, seems to be the primary reason for repentance. ‘*You killed the Author of Life, whom God raised from the dead...repent* (μετανοήσατε), therefore and *turn again* (ἐπιστρέψατε), that your sins may be blotted out’ (3:15, 19).<sup>63</sup>

In his article, ‘The Center of Biblical Theology in Acts,’ Hamilton points out that it is the judgment of the people who killed Jesus, in contrast with God’s treatment of Jesus, which stands as the ‘damning’ act in Luke’s theology (2008, 40):

<p><b>1. People killed Jesus</b></p> <p>(1) The Messiah would suffer at the hands of men (Luke 9:22; 18:33; 24:7; 26, 46)</p> <p>(2) You killed him (Acts 2:23)</p> <p>(3) And you killed the Champion of life (Acts 3:15)</p> <p>(4) Jesus the Messiah of Nazareth, whom you crucified (4:10)</p> <p>(5) Whom you put to death (Acts 5:30)</p> <p>(6) Whom also they killed, having hung him upon a tree (Acts 10:39)</p> <p>(7) They asked Pilate for him to be put to death (Acts 13:28)</p>	<p><b>2. God raised Jesus</b></p> <p>(1) And rise from the dead on the third day (Luke 9:22; 18:22; 24:7, 26, 46)</p> <p>(2) God raised him (Acts 2:24)</p> <p>(3) Whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses (Acts 3:15)</p> <p>(4) Whom God raised from the dead (Acts 4:10)</p> <p>(5) The God of our Fathers raised Jesus (Acts 5:30)</p> <p>(6) This one God raised on the third day (Acts 10:40)</p> <p>(7) But God raised him from the dead (Acts 13:30)</p>
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So is Luke fundamentally anti-Semitic for pointing this out? There are two basic paths recent scholarship travels in response to this question. On one, we have the work of Sanders who concluded provocatively that ‘[i]n Luke’s opinion, the world will be much better off when “the Jews” get what they deserve and the world is rid of them’ (Sanders 1987, 317). Luke’s equation of Jews to murderers of Jesus means that they should pay for what they have done. On the other, we have Tannehill who argues that Luke actually

<sup>63</sup> However, cf. the discussion below regarding the distinction between Jews living in Jerusalem and Jews not living in Jerusalem at the time of Jesus’ death.

held the Jewish authorities responsible for Jesus' death, not the Jewish people as a whole. I will first address Sanders and then Tannehill. Is Sanders' conclusion an accurate summation of what *Luke* believed about Jews? Crucial to Sanders' argument is Paul's pronouncement against the Jews in 18:4. This is the final indicator that Luke thought God was finished with the Jews. Yet did Paul's pronouncement actually indicate that he was finished with the Jews? No. Paul was successfully engaged with Jews until chapter 28 when even then there are converts. Moreover, the gift of the Spirit was for Jews and *their children* (2:39). This assumes not a total rejection by God, but a future for Israel. Of course, for Jews that do not convert, there is judgment, but that view is no different than Luke's notion that Gentiles that do not convert are going to be judged as well (17:31 'Judge the world by a man...'). While history teaches us that many have used Luke for their own evil purposes, one must not judge Luke himself any more harshly than a religious zealot who believes he is a part of 'the way'. To put it bluntly, Sanders is wrong: Luke wanted Jews converted, not killed.

That Luke wanted to convert Jews can be seen in points 3 and 4 of Hamilton's article regarding deliverance and damnation (2008, 40). It is in the face of judgment that Jews, according to Luke, can repent and find forgiveness. It is in this act that they can have restoration. The fruit of such restoration is to rejoice in God that they are now forgiven.

<p><b>3. People can repent and receive forgiveness of sins</b></p> <p>(1) Thus it has been written that the messiah should suffer and rise from the dead...and for repentance unto forgiveness of sins to be proclaimed in his name to all the nations (Luke 24:4-47; this forgiveness is not announced in Luke until after the resurrection)</p> <p>(2) And Peter said to them, 'Repent!' He said 'And each one of you must be baptized in the name of Jesus the Messiah for the forgiveness of your sins and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit' (Acts 2:38)</p> <p>(3) Repent, then, and turn so that your sins might be wiped away (Acts 3:19)</p> <p>(4) And there is no salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men in which it is necessary for us to be saved (Acts 4:12)</p> <p>(5) God exalted this one as Champion and Savior to his right hand to grant repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins (Acts 5:31)</p> <p>(6) In this one all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name (Acts 10:43)</p> <p>(7) There let it be known to you, men, brothers, that through this one forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you (Acts 13:38)</p>	<p><b>4. Forgiven People Rejoice in God</b></p> <p>(1) And having worshiped him they returned to Jerusalem with great joy (Luke 24:52)</p> <p>(2) And daily they continued in the temple with one accord...praising God (Acts 2:46-47)</p> <p>(3) All were praising God for what had happened (Acts 4:21)</p> <p>(4) They went to their own and reported...and having heard they raised their voices to God with one accord (Acts 5:41)</p> <p>(5) rejoicing...that they were counted worthy to be dishonored for the name (Acts 5:41)</p> <p>(6) Speaking in tongues and declaring the greatness of God (Acts 10:46)</p> <p>(7) The Gentiles were rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord (Acts 13:48)</p>
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Tannehill suggests that Luke does not count 'the Jews' guilty of the particular sin of killing Jesus and, in so doing, he goes against a potentially important motivation for repentance and restoration (1990).<sup>64</sup> Indeed when Peter calls for repentance of the Jews in Acts 2:38 it is for the general 'forgiveness of sins' not for the particular offence of killing Jesus (cf. n. 42). While that offence is surely in the background of Peter's call to repentance (as the accusatory tone of v. 23 and v. 36 indicates), it is still noteworthy that forgiveness was not specifically stated to be for the crucifixion of Jesus. Tannehill

<sup>64</sup> Tyson notes that in comparison to the other synoptics, it only Luke who highlights the Jewish leaders who were instrumentally involved in the death of Jesus. Tyson concludes, 'all three gospels display a negative attitude toward Jerusalem and the temple, but only Luke balances the negative with more positive images' (Tyson 1986, 165).

argues that Peter's accusation in chapter 2 against the Jews results from their presence in Jerusalem during the crucial Passover, not from the simple fact that they were Jews. When Paul later speaks to Diaspora Jews, he does not accuse them of responsibility for Jesus' death, but attributes this to 'those dwelling in Jerusalem and their rulers' (13:27-28) (Tannehill 1990, 28).<sup>65</sup> Many scholars note that Luke is careful to spread the blame on a variety of Jewish leaderships rather than to Jews in general (Weatherly 1994; Bock 2007). Indeed, there is plenty of evidence that Luke did just that (Luke 22-23; 24:20; Acts 3:17; 4:5, 8, 27; 13:27; 14:5).

In his sermon to Diaspora Jews at Antioch of Pisidia, Paul's appeal for their conversion did not include the warning of judgment tied to a connection with the death of Jesus but rather the very positive opportunity of gaining the kind of freedom which the law of Moses could not provide. Hence in 13:38 Luke's Paul says 'let it be known to you therefore, brothers, that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and by him everyone who believes is freed from everything from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses.' Furthermore, when they reject Paul's message their judgment is due to their action of judging 'yourselves unworthy of eternal life' (v. 46), not that of involvement in the death of Jesus. Of course, chapter 13 is not an example of a *successful* Jewish conversion, to which I have limited my dissertation, yet it is more than noteworthy that Paul's *attempted* conversion of the Jews here did not factor in the death of Jesus.

In summary, we have seen so far in this chapter that there were at least *some* in Peter's audience who were not there when Jesus was crucified and yet were included in Peter's accusation. And we have seen that Paul's persecution of the church was, according to all three of Luke's accounts of Paul's conversion, actually persecuting Jesus. Yet, when engaging Jews outside of Jerusalem, Luke does not connect coming judgment with a general 'Jewish plight' of crucifying Jesus. While this point is complicated by the fact that they produced unsuccessful conversions, it is noteworthy that the appeal for conversion had no ties to any historical role in killing Jesus.

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<sup>65</sup> Sanders argues that Peter here is accusing this audience of serving a representative function for every Jew (Sanders *Jews in Luke-Acts*, 233-35).

## 5.6 Response: Repentance and Baptism

While Kilgallen observes that the ‘thrust of the speech of Peter is to move his listeners to call upon the name of the Lord’ (1976, 656),<sup>66</sup> Luke actually tries to bring his audience to the point where it can hear *God’s* call: ‘for the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our *God calls* to himself’ (2:39). With that said, Peter does give a number of imperatives to his audience as a way of response and conversion. Peter’s first imperative to repent means that Luke saw that changing one’s mind about Jesus is vital for Jewish conversion. They ‘must understand that he is indeed the Messiah in spite of the crucifixion. The people were challenged to admit that they were wrong about Jesus. They were asked to look beyond the crucifixion; God had raised Jesus from death to life, and empowered Jesus to sit at the right hand of God’ (Walaskay 1998, 45).<sup>67</sup> In addition to changing their mind about Jesus, repentance here seems also to have an emotional element to it. Luke tells his readers that Peter’s audience was ‘cut to the heart’<sup>68</sup> when they understood that Jesus was Lord and Christ (vv. 36-37). As Bruce puts it, repentance here is ‘a complete change of heart, a spiritual right-about-turning’ (1981, 75).

It is important to note the relationship between repentance and the giving of the spirit. The Deuteronomic notion of ‘return’ was a return *to* the law. This then would lead to the outpouring of the spirit. In this case, however, repentance and the receiving of the Spirit was connected with believing in Jesus not as a result of law observance. As Kilgallen stated: ‘Faith in Jesus [as opposed to the obedience of the law], however, is now understood to be the one means to possessing the indwelling Holy Spirit’ (2004, 41).<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Calvin notes the two responses of the Jews: both being cut to the heart and a willingness to obey are the beginning of repentance which ‘mortifies our human natures so we can be offered as sacrifices to God’ (Calvin 1995, 44). Secondly, ‘the mind that is overwhelmed with horror runs to God. This inner conversion of the heart ought to bear fruit in a person’s life. Good deeds should follow on from repentance’ (Calvin 1995, 44).

<sup>67</sup> The threefold repent, baptize and receive forgiveness echo the call of John the Baptist in Luke’s Gospel (3:3) when John also predicted that the one who comes after him (i.e. Jesus the Messiah) will baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire (3:16). The miracle at Pentecost and Jesus’ ascent to the right hand of God and giving of the spirit is yet another proof for Luke that Jesus was the messiah.

<sup>68</sup> ‘Cut to the heart’ is a biblical phrase (Ps 108:16 [LXX] = 109:16; Chance 2007, 57).

<sup>69</sup> Cf. also Peterson who states insightfully regarding the spirit, ‘Although the Spirit was explicitly given to empower particular individuals for witness to the resurrected Jesus and for prophetic leadership (cf. Lk. 24:46-49; Acts 1:8; 4:8; 6:5, 10; 13:1-4; 16:6-7), Luke presents a more comprehensive view of the Spirit’s

In addition to repentance, Peter also told his audience to ‘be baptized’ (v. 38: Μετανοήσατε, καὶ βαπτισθήτω ἕκαστος ὑμῶν ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ εἰς ἄφεσιν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ὑμῶν). One must note that repentance in both Jewish and Greek traditions ‘denote a change of both mind and action’ (Chance 2007, 57; cf. Nave 2002). Thus, ‘in this immediate context, such a turning involves a changing of one’s mind regarding Jesus from one who was to be rejected and executed to one who is Lord and Messiah. Change of action required committing oneself to this Jesus. Such commitment is realized in fulfillment of the instruction to be baptized in the name of Jesus.’ (Chance 2007, 57-58).

There is some question in recent scholarship as to the precise relationship between baptism and forgiveness of sins. Osburn shows numerous examples where a second-person and third-person imperative can refer to the same subject. As such she concludes that ‘in accord [sic] with customary idiomatic usage, the function of the third person imperative βαπτισθήτω in Acts 2:38 is to underscore emphatically in distributive fashion the necessity of each one of the hearers participating in baptism as part of conversion’ (Osburn 1983, 84). Similarly, Davis argues that ‘forgiveness follows baptism’ as he points that the oft understood causal εἰς in v. 38 is more rightly understood as a ‘purposive’ εἰς (Davis 1981, 85). He argues furthermore that ‘forgiveness, salvation, washing away of sins always follow baptism, never precede it’ (Davis 1981, 88). Osburn and Davis, however, overstate their case. Luke has many conversion stories in his two-volume narrative that have no mention of baptism. This being the case, it seems highly unlikely that he believed the action alone of baptism ‘sealed the deal’ on conversion since he thought it unnecessary to include it in each conversion case. While Bruce concurs with Osburn and Davis’s idea that ‘an unbaptized Christian is simply not entertained in the New Testament’ (Bruce 1988, 77), he also rejects their wooden one-to-one correlation of salvation and baptism. He states it thus:

[I]t would, of course, be a mistake to link the words ‘unto the remission of your sins’ with the command ‘be baptized’ to the exclusion of the prior command ‘Repent ye’. It is against the whole genius of Biblical religion to suppose that the

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work in terms of a fulfillment of the promise in Acts 1:5. The Spirit created and verified new communities of believers in Jesus, enabling them to enjoy the messianic salvation and minister its benefits, both inside and outside their fellowship...’ (2009, 142).

outward rite had any value except as it was accompanied by true repentance within. In a similar passage in the following chapter, the blotting out of the people's sins is a direct consequence of their repenting and turning to God (Ch 3:19)...[baptism is the] visible token of repentance (Bruce 1988, 77).

Peter also exhorted his audience to σωθήτε (2:40). In what way could they be saved or save themselves from their generation? Barrett helpfully points out that 'there is no possibility that men will save themselves except in the sense that they call upon him who has already called them: thus, *Accept your salvation*' (Barrett 1994, 156. Emphasis his). Just as baptism cannot be self-administered, neither can salvation. Luke's point is that salvation is present and ready to be taken (Barrett 1994, 156). This imperative also serves as a reminder of the 'biblical notion of a faithful remnant in Israel. In allying themselves with Jesus, these new Christians carry on the traditions of a faithful minority within God's people, designated by God to carry out God's mission in the world' (Walaskay 1998, 46). Moreover, their reception of salvation and of this Spirit that is a sign of salvation is fundamentally an act of God's grace (v.38c). It is a gift (v. 38c, δωρεά) that they can receive.<sup>70</sup>

### *Conclusions*

At this point we can begin to draw some conclusion regarding Luke's understanding of Jewish conversion. We began this investigation by observing the disciples' desire to see the restoration of Israel (Acts 1:6) and by noting that this restoration is available if Jews convert to Jesus (Acts 3:19). As such, the conversion of Jews is an important part of Luke's narrative in Acts. A brief survey of Jewish conversion in Acts showed that common elements of conversion do exist. These common ingredients are miracles, preaching, repentance, questioning and involvement in the death of Jesus. Acts 2 shows each of these elements and as such is demonstrated as the paradigmatic Jewish conversion account in Acts (instead of Paul/Saul's conversion as some have assumed).

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<sup>70</sup> Luke states that those who were converted received (ἀποδέχομαι) the word of Peter. This is a common Lukan word for receiving Jesus (Luke 8:40, 9:11) and here Luke uses it to receive the message about Jesus.

Bauckham shows that Acts 2 is the engine within Luke's notion of the restoration of Israel, which consists of Jews converting via repentance to Jesus

Luke believed that this Jewish crowd was pre-conditioned for conversion by virtue of their own piousness. This Jewish crowd lacked the right information about Jesus, and Peter's sermon explained the facts about Jesus that they had previously not understood. After explaining their treatment of Jesus (crucifixion) and God's treatment of him (resurrection), they understood the weight of their guilt as well as Jesus' position as Lord and Christ. The result of Peter's preaching was that at last they could know for certain who Jesus was. Such pre-condition was seen as they accepted in full (while other Jewish crowds did not) the guilt of rejecting Jesus and believed themselves to be recipients of God's wrath.

It was their own questioning that initiated both Peter's sermon and his invitation to them to repent. Using the tool of their questions, Luke through Peter explained from what they already understood/believed (Jesus was a miracle worker) to what they did not previously understand/believe (Jesus was also Lord and Christ).

Their curiosity about the miracle of the Pentecost event led them to discover the power behind the miracle. It turns out that these Nazarenes were enjoying the Spirit of God that Jews had hoped to experience in the last days. The outpouring of this Spirit was connected to the resurrection and ascension of Jesus who was giving it to his followers. This Spirit was available for all Jews but in order to receive the Spirit they first had to repent of their initial rejection of Jesus. The declaration of repentance and their openness to it showed that they were changeable and thus pre-conditioned for conversion.

The instruction to be baptized is parallel to the notion of being saved. It is in some ways a passive event while at the same time given as a command. The human and divine agency in this passage is complex in that the call for response is given in light of Peter's words that God is calling *them* to himself. Yet, within Peter's sermon is the other side of this agency: 'everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved' (Acts 2:21; Joel 2:32).

We now turn to our conclusion of part one where we summarize our findings about Luke and conversion and answer the three basic theological questions posed in Chapter One.

## CHAPTER SIX

### CONCLUSION TO PART ONE

At this point we can answer our three theological questions posed in Chapter One.

*What is the change involved when someone became a believer?*

Luke's core assumption of the nature of repentance and conversion was to recognize a fundamental changeableness in the fabric of the human condition. Hence, the call to change is never given with the question about whether or not someone had the ability to change. The message of repentance always includes a call for change, and Luke's heavy emphasis on this message demonstrates his strong underlying assumption that change is a fundamental human ability. However, as we saw in Acts 17 and Acts 2, the reactions to the Gospel are split: just because one could change did not mean that one was going to change. Moreover, as we will see with question three, one's turn towards God will come up short if one does not *also* encounter the agency of God.

In Luke 15, it is the son in a far off country who *first* comes to his senses and then heads back home. When the father sees and embraces him, his repentance is sealed and he is a son again. In Acts 17, the crowd is likewise heading in the right direction as they are already worshipping God, albeit incorrectly. Luke (Paul) recognizes their attempts to find God as a sincere and proceeds to show God is not far from them: after calling them to repentance, some indeed repent and believe. In Acts 2, the crowd of Jews is likewise already heading in the right direction for Luke describes them as pious worshipers of God. On learning of their plight as the crucifiers of God's Messiah, they quickly repent of their action and believe in Jesus.

*Why is conversion necessary?*

This human mutability in Luke's theology of conversion connects closely with his second basic assumption in conversion: that humans, both Gentile and Jew, are related, albeit distantly, to God. Ultimately, God is the father of the human race. Thus a call to

repentance for Gentiles and Jews alike is actually a call to return back home – back to the family. The human condition of lost-ness is akin to a son in a far off country having forgotten his father. According to Luke, humans who are ready to convert have come to their senses and recognize their need to return to their common origin, to their father. Humans are God’s offspring, and in each of these conversion stories, they are seeking and groping after their father. But in order for conversion to happen, it is not enough to be changeable and understand one’s relation to God; one must begin that changing process oneself. Thus, there are twin assumptions within Luke’s understanding of humanity, and Luke believes that conversion happens when the pre-convert is already heading in the right direction.

In the three conversion stories, each pre-convert found himself/herself in a desperate spiritual plight: each had offended God. The son, having run away from home, severed his relationship with the father and misused his resources, confessed that by doing so he had sinned against his father and God. The Jews in Acts 2 learn they have offended God by their rejection of his messenger and their Lord, Jesus of Nazareth. That *some* might not have actually been there when the historical Jesus died, is beside the point for Luke. The Gentiles in Acts 17 offended God by worshipping him incorrectly and thus committing idolatry. In each case their attempt to change and find God lacked the right information about God. Jews misunderstood the identity of Jesus. The Athenians did not understand proper worship of God. The prodigal son’s return could, at best, make him a servant to his father. Thus, what was required was another messenger to provide additional information as to what was necessary for reconciliation with their Creator.

#### *Who is responsible for conversion?*

Luke has a dual understanding of agency in conversion, in which the process is horizontal with two moving agents meeting together. It is not a vertical process in which one agent dramatically changes another from above. The first move in this horizontal conversion process is on the part of the convert, who becomes an active agent in his or her own conversion. The son came to his senses. The Jewish crowd placed themselves in the context where they could hear the message from Peter, and as devout worshipers of God they themselves sought out from Peter what they had to do to be saved from God’s wrath.

Likewise the Athenians' curiosity was the driving force that led to their conversion. As worshipers of God who, like the Jews of Acts 2, were devoutly religious, their questioning placed them in a position to hear from Paul about the Creator, and led to their understanding the gospel.

However, the pre-convert's agency alone was not sufficient for effective conversion, but had to meet with the agency of the gospel. In Luke 15, it was the Father himself who meets the prodigal and embraces him *as* a son. In Acts 2, it was Peter who stood up and spoke of the Jewish plight. In Acts 17, it was Paul's spirit that was provoked when he witnessed idolatry. In these cases, the agency of the gospel (the father, Peter and Paul) needed to clash with 'the son',<sup>1</sup> 'the worshipers' and 'the seekers' in their attempt to meet with God, and only then could conversion take place. Hence while Luke is comfortable with a notion of ontological unity of pre-converts and post-converts, he states, nevertheless, in Luke 15 that, in some way at least, the prodigal son was *dead* to the father – showing a notion of discontinuity. It was not until the father pronounced that his son was alive that their kinship was restored.

The singular exception to Luke's horizontal understanding of conversion is his telling of Paul's conversion. In contrast to the son, the Jews and the Athenians, Paul was *not* heading in the right direction. He was not an active agent in his own conversion nor was he seeking after God but, to the contrary, was seeking to persecute God's own son. In this case, Luke describes a vertical conversion in which God radically changes Paul autocratically, not relationally. There was very little dialogue as happened in Acts 2 and 17. Here, God called Paul, and Paul responded to that call. Thus Paul's conversion is not a typical example for Luke but is an unusual situation *unique* to Paul.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Indeed, with the son, the agency of the father takes over the agency of the son.

<sup>2</sup> This observation speaks to our preliminary point made in Chapter One regarding methodology. Some scholars have sought to understand Paul's conversion experience as evidence regarding how Paul believed others ought to convert (Segal 1990 and Campbell 2009). If the above observation is to be believed however, this points out that Luke himself did not expect what happened to Paul to happen to other converts to Christianity. Indeed, what happened to Paul *separates him from* other converts to Christianity and provides evidence for his apostleship (a title both Paul and Luke certainly did not expect to be given to all who converted to Jesus).

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### THE POWER OF SIN OVER REPENTANCE: UNDERSTANDING PAUL'S RADICAL THEOLOGY OF CONVERSION

*Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed.*

Romans 2:4-5

A conundrum exists in the guild of NT studies regarding the precise perspective Paul takes on repentance. This dilemma is not primarily about what Paul *says* regarding repentance as much as it is about his unusual silence. As Enslin aptly puts it, it is the *lack* of repentance in Paul that is 'a conspicuous silence' (1982, 16). Paul mentions repentance only three times in his unquestioned letters: Rom. 2:4 in the form of a question, which will be the subject of our investigation in this chapter: ἢ τοῦ πλούτου τῆς χρηστότητος αὐτοῦ καὶ τῆς ἀνοχῆς καὶ τῆς μακροθυμίας καταφρονεῖς, ἀγνοῶν ὅτι τὸ χρηστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ εἰς μετάνοιάν σε ἄγει; and in 2 Cor. 7:10/12:21 addressing the restoration of wayward Christians: ἡ γὰρ κατὰ θεὸν λύπη μετάνοιαν εἰς σωτηρίαν ἀμεταμέλητον ἐργάζεται / καὶ πενθήσω πολλοὺς τῶν προημαρτηκότων καὶ μὴ μετανοησάντων ἐπὶ τῇ ἀκαθαρσίᾳ καὶ ἀσελγείᾳ ἣ ἔπραξαν.<sup>1</sup> Due to this lack of data, there is no consensus in scholarship as to *where* this

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<sup>1</sup> 'For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret/and I may have to mourn over many of those who sinned earlier and have not repented of the impurity, sexual immorality, and sensuality that they have practiced.'

important aspect of 1<sup>st</sup> century CE Jewish/Christian conversion theology – preached by John the Baptist<sup>2</sup>, Jesus<sup>3</sup> and the early church<sup>4</sup> – fits in with Paul’s theology of conversion, if at all.

In her brief article penned in the first half of the twentieth century, Andrews observed this phenomenon of the relationship between Paul and repentance (1935).<sup>5</sup> Given the increasing centrality of repentance in the Second Temple Judaism of his day, she notes the remarkable fact that Paul, though ‘a Hebrew of Hebrews’ (Phil 3:5), basically ignored it in his letters. Andrews concluded that ‘[w]ith emphasis on repentance so clear in his ancestral faith, and his letters revealing such abundant opportunity for exhortation to repentance, his almost total neglect of the idea invites study’ (1935, 125). With this I agree. Moreover, considering the two-part historical reality that (1) the religious movement, which became known as Christianity, did so by *converting* Jews and Gentiles (e.g. Crossley 2006) and (2) that no other adherent of whom we know was more successful at converting others than Paul (and the missionary endeavors he spearheaded) – it is all the more curious that he opted not to use the *primary* conversion language of his day or culture.<sup>6</sup>

What was it about repentance that caused Paul not to utilize this important term? Did the predominant contemporary theological meaning associated with this term not fit in his theology? If it did not, then why not forge a ‘creative repentance’, in which Paul could have used repentance terminology yet co-opt it into his own theological construct, as some in later Judaism felt free to do (Blau 1994)? Was Paul afraid of the assumptions

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. Matt. 3:2, 8, 11; Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3, 4; Acts 13:24; 19:4.

<sup>3</sup> There is much speculation about whether or not the historical Jesus preached repentance, and if he did, what sort of repentance it was that Jesus actually required (Sanders 1985, 174-211; Chilton 1988, 1-18; Wright 1996, 246-58). I mention it here because the early church evidently believed Jesus taught repentance (Matt. 4:17; Mark 1:15; Luke 5:32; 15:7; 24:47) thus making Paul’s silence about it all the more interesting. Of course, if Sanders is correct, then the reason Paul did not mention repentance was because Jesus did not teach a *traditional* notion of repentance. Hence, according to Sanders, repentance as expressed in the NT became a later development as the Gospel reached the end of the first century CE.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Acts 2:38; 3:19; 5:31; 8:22; 11:18; 26:20.

<sup>5</sup> Of course, Andrews was not the first to notice this tension regarding repentance. Indeed, in his recent article, ‘Luthers neues Verständnis der Busse und die reformatorische Entdeckung’, Brecht argues that it is precisely Luther’s shift in understanding repentance (that it must be based on grace) which was the foundation of his initial argument against indulgences (2004, 281-291). Cf. also Micheals’ article ‘Paul and John the Baptist: An Odd Couple’ which notices that ‘repent’ and ‘repentance’ all but disappear in Paul’s writings. Micheals finds a connection, however, between Paul and John the Baptist in eschatological repentance via their notions of ‘children of Abraham’ (1991, 245-260).

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Chapter Three on the role of μετάνοια/μετανοέω language within Judaism.

his audience might have of repentance if he mentioned it in his letters? Are there other theologically grounded reasons that explain why he did not use this term?

In Chapter Two we found that Bultmann understood repentance not as concept contrary to faith but as a concept subsumed by faith. Käsemann argued that repentance was in line with a salvation historical concept with which Paul's concept of 'new creation' clashed. It must be noted, however, that the problem with these theories about how Paul understood repentance and, hence, conceived of how the change in conversion worked, is the lack of usages of the term itself in Paul's letters.

The methodological pitfalls of *argumentum ex silentio* are well known and I do *not* plan to fall into one here.<sup>7</sup> To the contrary, what Paul *says* about repentance in Rom. 2 provides the foundation for my ensuing argument. A study of Paul's usage of repentance in Rom. 2:4-5 gives insight both into what he believed about repentance and why he used other terms such as ἐπικαλέω (e.g. Rom. 10:12, 13, 14) and πιστεύω (Rom. 10:9, 10) to describe conversion. The result of this study will reveal a sharper profile of Paul's theology of conversion by showing where the concept of repentance, as he understood it, actually fits.

At the outset, let me state my conclusion on Rom. 2:4-5 as argued below. Paul understood repentance in the following way: Paul the Jew loved and cherished repentance as he did the law. Indeed, embedded in his concept of repentance was the notion that salvation was found by returning to law obedience (Deut 30).<sup>8</sup> However, Paul the Christian believed sin terminally infected the human heart. Hence the possibility of effective repentance died just as the possibility of doing the law was killed by the cancer of sin. I will argue below that when Paul used this term in Rom. 2:4, its purpose in his overall argumentation was *not* to bring people to a point of repentance, but rather to show that the component in the soul of mankind (i.e. v. 5, καρδία) which made such repentance possible had suffered irrevocable damage. Repentance for Paul as expressed in Romans was a foil - not a *real* option. Paul hoped his readers would *despair* because they could not repent.

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<sup>7</sup> Cf., for example, J. Ziesler's article on Paul's 'Anthropology of Hope' which is a self-described argument from silence thus losing some of its persuasive power (1979, 104-9).

<sup>8</sup> While this is the case, one must also note that the call to repentance in Judaism was not limited to Jews but also extended to Gentiles as well (cf. Jonah 3:10).

While other scholars have come close, most have not yet drawn this conclusion regarding repentance. Stagg, for example, postulates that ‘Romans 1:18-3:20 is in a sense the foil against which salvation as new standing and new life for Jew and gentile alike is presented in 3:21-8:39’ (1976, 401). Yet, regarding Paul’s mentioning of repentance in Rom 2:4 he says ‘consequences of sin overtake the sinner both in this life and beyond, except when overcome in repentance...’ (1976, 407-8). That is, he does not seem to connect this universality of sin to the inability to repent effectively. Consequently, he does not see the connection between Paul’s mentioning of repentance in v. 4 and how he modifies repentance in v. 5 – a common oversight in most readings of Rom. 2 as will be demonstrated in my unfolding argument.

It is not the call for repentance that is the problem, it is the *doing* of repentance that is the problem (cf. Rom. 2:13). The point Paul is trying to make in v. 5 is that the heart itself is not just unrepentant but indeed incapable of repentance (v.5, ἀμετανόητον καρδίαν). Just as Paul sets up ‘doing good’ (2:7a) and ‘seeking’ (2:7b) only to discover that no one ‘does good’ (3:12) and that no one ‘seeks’ after God (3:11) so too he sets up repentance as the ideal in 2:4 only to discover in 2:5 that this very act, because of sin, has been rendered impossible.

Referring to our theological questions posed in Chapter One, this chapter will rule out one possible way of understanding the change involved in conversion. It will also help to answer our second question regarding the necessity of conversion. In Chapter Eight we will address the third question about human and divine agency in conversion. It is also worth noting again that my methodology, which primarily brings my own questions to the text rather allowing questions to emerge from the text as a result of a more traditional historical study, will result in a theology of conversion in Paul which will serve the agenda of this thesis more than the actual historical agenda of Paul as he wrote his letter to the Romans. However, as I also noted with Luke, I do endeavor that the results of this study on Paul will be based on a very careful reading and exegesis of my selected texts in Paul.

I must also note briefly the justification of my selection of Romans as my primary text in this section on Paul. Two fundamental reasons are as follows: (1) Rom. 2 has the most explicit usage of repentance by Paul and, since repentance was chosen in Chapter

One as an important variable in our analysis of Paul and Luke, it is vital to discover how Paul understood and used this important conversion concept. (2) Rom. 9-11 was chosen because it has the most concentrated use of Pauline conversion concepts in all his letters. As such, it is my contention that if we grasp how conversion works in these two passages, this will give us the best chance to create a profile of his theology of conversion *within* the confines of the aims [and the limited word count] of this project.

### 7.1 How does One read Rom. 2?

Rom. 2 is a minefield for students of Paul. It is easier to move to Paul's seemingly clearer points in Rom. 3 and then to work backwards to explain Rom. 2 in light of it. Wright observes that 'generations of eager exegetes, anxious to get to the juicy discussions that surround 3.19-20, 3.21-31, and so on, have hurried by Romans 2, much as tourists on their way to Edinburgh hurry through Northern England, unaware of its treasures' (2001, 131). Wright, however, is guilty of a similar pattern in his explanation of Rom. 2 by beginning at the end of Rom. 2 and working backwards to the beginning (2001, 132; cf. Schreiner 1993, 152-55 who takes a similar methodological approach).<sup>9</sup> When he finally gets to the beginning of Rom. 2, he simply describes it as a 'general opening' (2001, 147). I propose the exact opposite approach – by starting from the beginning of Rom. 2, we allow Paul's usage of repentance in particular to provide interpretive insight in explaining the oddities of the remainder of the chapter.<sup>10</sup>

### 7.2 Who are the Addressees in Romans 2:4-5?

In the 29 verses of Romans 2 Paul directly addresses several different categories of people (Rom. 2:1, 2, 10, 14, 17, 29). So at any given point, Paul may be addressing humanity in general, Jews, Gentiles, Jewish Christians or Gentile Christians – as a result,

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<sup>9</sup> Concerning his working from end to beginning in Rom. 2 Wright states, 'I propose to take them in reverse order, for the very good methodological reason that one should start from the clearer parts and build towards the less clear' (2001, 132). It will be my contention, however, that one understands Rom. 2 better when following Paul's argument from the beginning of Rom. 2 rather than from the end.

<sup>10</sup> While the focus of this chapter is *not* on the remaining 'oddities' of Rom. 2 (e.g., Carras 1992), understanding repentance in 2:4-5 may very well provide insight into how the rest of the chapter ought to be read. For example, this may give life to the so called 'hypothetical' readings of Rom. 2 that interpret Paul as making categories of people who do the law (whether Jewish or Gentile) only to reveal that no one fits in these categories after all.

confusion reigns (e.g. König 1976; Lamp 1999; Wright 2001). As it concerns my argument, it is important to know as much as possible whom Paul had in mind when mentioning repentance in v. 4. The identity of Paul's audience provides insight into what sort of repentance Paul was writing about and what assumptions Paul believed *his* audience had about repentance. I will suggest that Paul had both Jews and Gentiles in mind in Rom. 2:4-5. However, he used primarily Jewish language and evoked primarily Jewish literature to do so. Coming to this conclusion, however, is complicated, as we shall see below.

In v. 1 and v. 3 Paul addressed his audience directly as – ὁ ἄνθρωπος – a term which Paul used throughout Romans to describe humanity in general (e.g. Rom. 7:24, 9:20, 12:17, 14:18).<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, it is also used to describe a person who 'has just been mentioned in a narrative';<sup>12</sup> if that is the case here, then it refers to humanity in 1:18. In addition to this grammatical connection of ὁ ἄνθρωπος, there is also a conceptual connection between the addressees of 1:18 and 2:1, 3 in that both groups are under the wrath of God (ὀργή, 1:18, 2:5).

However, there are apparent differences in the particular sins mentioned in Rom. 1 and Rom. 2. Namely, the sin of Rom. 2 is the act of *judging* others for things that they themselves are guilty of doing (2:1).<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, evidence suggests this particular sin is not referring to humanity in general but specifically to the Jews.<sup>14</sup> This evidence, if sustainable, would therefore support the 'almost universal scholarly opinion since Augustine' that Paul had Jews in mind in the beginning of Rom. 2 rather than humanity in general (Campbell 2002, 107). Dodd offers the best evidence of this in pointing to the possible parallel between Paul's argument here and the writer of Wisdom of Solomon (so too e.g. Moo 1996, Cranfield 1975, Wilckens 1978, Sanders 1983, Harper 1988, Dunn 1988 and Watson 2004). Wis. 15:1-2 stated regarding the Jews that 'even if we sin we

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<sup>11</sup> See Watson, who understands 'O Man' in v. 1 to stress the 'creatureliness' of the human being who presumes to stand in the place of the Creator as judge over others (1986, 109-110). Moo considers this unlikely because 'O Man' is common in diatribe and cites Jas. 2:20 as an example (1996, 130).

<sup>12</sup> Cf. BDAG's article on ἄνθρωπος 6a.

<sup>13</sup> Dunn observes that the idea of the 'one who judges being condemned by his own judgment is too similar to Matt 7:1-2 to be accidental, that is to say, Paul's formulation probably shows the influence of (or interaction with) the Jesus tradition at the point' (Dunn 1988, 80).

<sup>14</sup> Cranfield agrees that 'there are weighty reasons for thinking that Paul has the Jews in mind right from 2:1' including parallels with Wisdom 15 and the accusation of moral superiority (1975, 138).

are yours.’ The writer also stated confidently that Jews were not like those who fall into idolatry (Wis. 15:4; Rom. 1:23). Thus, Paul’s supposed Jewish audience here took on an arrogant attitude and believed God’s patience towards them was because of their nationality. Therefore, to combat this strand of Jewish thinking, Paul also used the Wisdom of Solomon, which stated about God: ‘you overlook people’s sin, so that they may repent’ (Wis. 11:23-24). In other words, God is patient with you not because you are Jewish but because he wants you to repent. God’s patience with Jews ‘is not an expression of His approval and favour towards a chosen race: it is meant to make you repent’ (Dodd 1959, 58). As Nygren dramatizes ‘The Jew says, “God is merciful and forbearing in judgment, giving his foes opportunity for repentance.” Paul replies, “Do you not know that God’s kindness is meant to lead *you* to repentance?”’ (1947, 117; emphasis mine). Therefore Paul has in mind a ‘critique of Jewish presumption’ (Moo 1996, 128).<sup>15</sup>

To summarize, we have evidence suggesting that Paul had humanity in general in mind in Rom. 2:4-5 and we have evidence to suggest that he had Jews in mind as well. I suggest that there is a middle way to show that he uses specific Jewish language here but does so not just for Jews.

Campbell has recently pointed out (2006, 109) that because 2:1 begins with  $\delta\iota\acute{o}$  - which implies the previous argument at the end of Rom 1, ‘what is now being said follows on the basis of an argument about the failings of the *gentile* world already made’ (Campbell, 2006, 109; emphasis mine). Campbell (following Esler 2003, 151) concludes that Jews cannot be in Paul’s mind in Rom. 2:1 but only Gentiles. This is Gentile arrogance not Jewish arrogance (cf. Stowers 1994).

However, Paul’s use of  $\delta\iota\acute{o}$  does not rule out the possibility that he might have included the Jews in Rom. 1. While the gist of Rom. 1:18-32 is from a ‘Jewish and biblical perspective’ of Gentile society (Seifrid 1998, 116), Paul’s charge is not

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<sup>15</sup> Most recently Watson has argued for a connection between Wisdom of Solomon and Romans not just in Rom. 2 but in the lead up in Rom. 1 as well. He observes that ‘[b]oth writers argue that the true God might have been known by way of the created order, but that their opportunity has been wasted; that the most fundamental religious error is the manufacture and worship of idols; that idolatry is the root of all other evils; and that those who commit such sin are subjected to the divine punishment’ (2004, 408). However their parallel thoughts diverge in Rom. 2 and in Wisdom of Solomon 15 when Paul accused the ‘Jew’ of being guilty of idolatry as well whereas in Wisdom of Solomon the ‘Jew’ is reassured of his favored status with God (Wis. 15:1-4) (Watson 2004, 409)

specifically against Gentiles *per se* but against those who commit idolatry. In Rom. 2:22 we see that Paul accuses Jews specifically of idolatry (cf. Lafontaine 1986). Does this not show Jews to fit within the scope of Rom. 1? It is more reasonable to go with Cranfield and understand that 1.18-32 is not solely for Gentiles but also for Jews (1975, 141-142). Using this logic, Wischmeyer is quite right to insist that ‘Röm 2 ist kein antijudaistischer Text’ (2006, 356), in that Paul does not have *just* Jews in mind - even as Paul does not have *only* the Gentiles in mind in Rom. 1. Seifrid helpfully observes the following regarding the relationship between Rom. 1 and 2:

His argument takes the form similar to that of the prophet Nathan’s confrontation of David. Paul calls his readers to recognise the justice of the divine wrath against all idolatry, judgmentalism, and pretence, and only when this agreement is secured does he introduce the prophetic charge, ‘Every human is a liar’ (1998, 117-118; cf. Seifrid 2004, 120-121).<sup>16</sup>

Hence I take Harper’s conclusion to be the most balanced: ‘Romans 2:4 may be considered to be part of a passage which is addressed to both Jews and Gentiles’ (1988, 136; cf. Dunn 1988, 89-90).<sup>17</sup>

Having adopted this position that Paul addressed a mixed audience,<sup>18</sup> the question remains how exactly repentance functioned for him in this context.

### 7.3 How does Repentance function in Romans 2?

There are several options available regarding how repentance was utilized by Paul in Rom. 2. We will begin with Sanders (1983), not just because his is currently the most famous approach to Paul and repentance, but because his is the most provocative and, as such, has advanced the discussion of the relationship between Paul and repentance (cf. also Räisänen 1983, 101-109). Sanders suggests that Paul, in Rom. 2, splices a

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<sup>16</sup> Cf. Dunn (1988, 79) and Wilckens (1978, 124) who make similar observations.

<sup>17</sup> Wright states that the beginning of Romans 2 ‘addresses all humans, Jew and Gentile alike, who might consider themselves exempt from the strictures of Romans 1.18-32’ (2001, 147).

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Seifrid who argues that the obvious difficulty in discerning who Paul was addressing shows that Paul likely *meant* there to be ambiguity (1998, 117). As Dunn states, ‘the lack of clear identification of the one indicted in vv. 1-11 suggests that it would be better to see 2:1-11 as an overlapping section binding the two more specific indictments of 1:18-32 and 2:12-3:8 together’ (1988, 79).

previously existing synagogue sermon into his letter to the Romans. Paul then fails to integrate theologically this sermon with the whole of his letter. Sanders maintains that Paul clings to repentance in the Jewish Pharisaical tradition: ‘Pharisees and rabbis of all schools and all periods strongly believed in repentance and other means of atonement in the case of transgression’ (1983, 28). Thus, ‘Paul takes over to an unusual degree homiletical material from Diaspora Judaism’, which he changes only in an ‘insubstantial way’ (Sanders 1983, 123). Due to this ‘Jewish’ understanding of repentance, Paul entertains the possibility that some will be saved by their works. Hence, Paul’s understanding of repentance is inconsistent with his overall argument in Romans regarding universal sinfulness (Sanders 1983, 123-124). Rom. 2 according to Sanders means little more than ‘repent and obey the law from the bottom of your heart, so that you will be a true Jew’ (1983, 129).<sup>19</sup>

Sanders’ characterization of ‘Jewish’ repentance does not reflect the widely divergent views of repentance *within* Judaism in Paul’s day<sup>20</sup> and adds support to the accusation against him of over-simplifying Judaism (e.g., Cooper 1982; Sang 1983; Boring 1986; Quarles 1996; Elliott 2000). However, while many rightly criticize Sanders’ view of repentance (e.g., Harper’s PhD thesis written against Sanders’ view of Pauline repentance, 1988), as we will see, most ‘alternatives’ to Sanders’ position actually land very close to his view.<sup>21</sup> The only real difference is that these ‘alternatives’ do not see the inconsistency as Sanders does between Paul’s greater argument of sinful humanity and his straightforward call to repentance.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Cf. Schreiner’s detailed response to Sanders’ view (1985, 245-278).

<sup>20</sup> See Chapter Three which shows the diverse ways repentance was understood within Second-Temple Judaism.

<sup>21</sup> Even in Seifrid’s critique of Sanders’ view of Rom. 2, he concedes, ‘In a narrow and facile sense, Sanders is correct...’ (2004, 126).

<sup>22</sup> In his recent massive monograph, *The Deliverance of God*, Campbell offers a strikingly original reading of Rom. 1-3. He suggesting that Rom. 1:18-32 is *not* Pauline but, by use of ‘speech and character’, Paul is characterizing a judgmental Jewish ‘Teacher’ whom Paul fears will arrive in Rome and corrupt the church there. Repentance in Romans 2 then functions as a way for Paul to condemn this ‘Teacher’ by using the same standard used by the Teacher against Gentiles. While this is an original thesis regarding the function of repentance in Romans 2, the basis of it (i.e. Campbell’s mysterious ‘Teacher’ theory) is too tenuous to be seriously considered. His evidence for ‘speech and character’ in Rom. 1:18-32 is so scant that even those who might be sympathetic to Campbell’s overall reading remain totally unconvinced (cf. Gorman’s review of Campbell given at SBL in New Orleans 2009; cf. also Watson’s review which states that only time will tell if anyone will be persuaded by Campbell’s thesis, 2010).

The works of Kirk, Cranfield, Barrett, Harper and Moo all suggest that Paul's accusation in vv. 1-3 leads to a straightforward call for repentance in v. 4.<sup>23</sup> According to this reading, God's kindness puts pressure on Paul's audience to repent *and* Paul evidently hopes (perhaps even expects) that they will do so. Moo comments only on the 'surprisingly small part in Paul's teaching' that repentance plays and does not attempt to ask why Paul uses it here (1996, 134). Hence there is surprisingly little difference in these readings of Paul's notion of repentance than what Sanders has proposed. While some have a more sophisticated notion of how repentance functioned for Paul,<sup>24</sup> they all basically agree with Sanders that the point here is a straightforward call to repentance from the bottom of one's heart.<sup>25</sup>

There are at least two other possible options besides Sanders. First, we have Käsemann (1980). He does not take the term 'repentance' at face value (as he does in his earlier work, cf. 2.2) and insists that it is actually just a component of faith. Repentance is the 'integral element of faith', in which one submits oneself to the Judge rather than being the judge oneself (Käsemann 1980, 55). Hence Käsemann defines the meaning of repentance from what Paul means by faith. Second, we have Bultmann who suggests that perhaps Paul reverts back to his style of preaching and calls for repentance just as he would do in a missionary evangelistic setting. Bultmann believed that μετάνοια was part of Paul's missionary preaching and that is how it ought to be understood here (1985, 55).<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Observe also Lightfoot's reading of v. 4 'not knowing that the true purpose of God's goodness is the very reverse of this, intended not to encourage you to sin, but lead to repentance' (1999, 259).

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Yinger who states that repentance here was intended by Paul on a dual level: first, for his 'imaginary dialogue partner', the call to repentance was to be understood 'generally as a *warning*' (1999, 162; emphasis his). He explains further, 'The critic should recognize his/her presumptuous reasoning and hypocritical behavior (cf. verses 1-3), and allow God's kindness to produce repentance (cf. verse 4); otherwise wrathful judgment is threatened (verse 5)' (Yinger 1999, 162). On another level, the call to repentance was intended for his Jewish-Christian readers to 'challenge them in an indirect way to correct possibly faulty attitudes. Paul is not accusing them of impenitent sinning or apostasy; rather he is concerned lest their thinking mirror that of the diatribe partner...' (Yinger 1999, 163).

<sup>25</sup> However, Dunn notes the negative use of repentance in v. 5 by stating that, 'Repentance held a very important place within Jewish teaching on salvation. It was the fundamental tenet for the pious Jew of Paul's time that God had provided a way of dealing with sin for his covenant people through repentance and atonement... Paul thus seems here to turn one of the Jewish interlocutor's own key beliefs against him' (Dunn 1988, 82).

<sup>26</sup> Bussmann, likewise, believes that Romans 1:18 – 2:29 was part of Paul's early messages (1971, 108-111). It is a genuine prophetic call to repentance of the style of John the Baptist, Jesus and apostolic proclamation in Acts.

While both Käsemann and Bultmann provide interesting alternatives to Sanders, neither explains *why* Paul decided to use the term ‘repentance’. If Käsemann is correct, why is it that Paul explained only this important element of faith once in all his letters? If Bultmann is correct, why did Paul immediately abandon this language in favor of other terminology without explanation? Another problem in the readings offered by Bultmann and Käsemann is that neither explains *how* repentance fits in with Paul’s broader argument. Hence according to their readings Paul would have been better off to use the term ‘faith’ than repentance.

In contrast to the readings of Paul and repentance above, I suggest a reading of repentance that fits Paul’s overall argument. Paul was too much of an intentional thinker for scholars to settle for those readings of Rom. 2 that flatly contradict his broader argument in Rom. 1-3 or suggest Paul inexplicably reverted to his old preaching style. Neither does it seem very Pauline for Paul to transfer what he meant by ‘faith’ into the term repentance without explanation or without ever replicating it in his unquestioned letters.

#### 7.4 The Connection between μετάνοια (v. 4) and ἀμετανόητος (v. 5)

The problem with the majority of views about repentance in Rom. 2 is the disconnection between what Paul says about repentance in v. 4 and what he says about it in v. 5.

v. 4 – ἢ τοῦ πλούτου τῆς χρηστότητος αὐτοῦ καὶ τῆς ἀνοχῆς καὶ τῆς μακροθυμίας καταφρονεῖς, ἀγνοῶν ὅτι τὸ χρηστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ εἰς μετάνοιάν σε ἄγει;<sup>27</sup>

v. 5 – κατὰ δὲ τὴν σκληρότητά σου καὶ ἀμετανόητον καρδίαν θησαυρίζεις σεαυτῷ ὀργὴν ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ὀργῆς καὶ ἀποκαλύψεως δικαιοκρισίας τοῦ θεοῦ<sup>28</sup>

The prospect of one’s μετάνοια is immediately qualified (δέ) by their being ‘hard’ (σκληρότης; cf. Deut. 9:27) and having an impenitent (ἀμετανόητος) heart. While, on

<sup>27</sup> ‘Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God’s kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?’

<sup>28</sup> ‘But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God’s righteous judgment will be revealed.’

the one hand, God's kindness *ought* to lead them to repentance (v. 4), on the other hand, Paul diagnoses them with a bad heart that is unable to accomplish such an action. Paul used an ἀμετανόητος – μετάνοια wordplay to show that repentance, given the current conditions of their heart, is ineffective.<sup>29</sup> This then functions to set up the result of Paul's statement that God will render to each one according to what he had done (2:6). That is, because of man's heart, no one can 'do good' (cf. 3:12).

If this is the case, we may notice then how it affects Cranfield's argument, which is representative of most views of how Paul uses repentance: 'even now, when God's wrath and His righteous judgment are actually being revealed as the gospel is preached, the person whom he is addressing cannot think of anything better to do than to go on storing up wrath for himself by his self-righteous, impenitent attitude' (Cranfield, 1975, 145- 146). However, if Paul modified repentance with 'impenitent heart', it is precisely the capacity of the heart to repent that is the problem. It is not an attitude problem in which one has the ability to change but refuses to do so. Rather it is a καρδία problem that calls for a more radical procedure – one that is impossible to self-administer. Indeed, when describing an 'inner Jew' later in this chapter (v. 29) it is precisely the καρδία that is at issue – yet this time it has been circumcised *by the Spirit*. In vv. 4-5 Paul diagnoses the problem and in v. 29 previews what it takes to fix such a problem – surgery on the καρδία itself performed by the hands of God. Hence, I think the effect Paul wished to give to his readers is that the heart is not just unrepentant it is, in reality, *unrepentable*.<sup>30</sup>

If this is a better reading of Rom. 2:4-5, then was Paul alone in believing in an unrepentable heart or did this fit within a pre-existing strand of Jewish thought? The term ἀμετανόητος was used rarely in ancient literature – only Rom. 2:4 and Test. Gad. 7:5 use this term in a clearly understood way.<sup>31</sup> Interestingly, both use it to describe that the impenitent are subject to God's wrath (e.g., Test. Gad. 7:5, '[the] unrepentant is reserved for eternal punishment' and Rom. 2:5 'because of your hard and impenitent

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<sup>29</sup> While this dynamic has no obvious predecessor, we do see a similar wordplay in Martyrdom of Polycarp XI using a cognate of ἀμετανόητος, ἀμετάθετος. 'Ἀμετάθετος γὰρ ἡμῖν ἢ ἀπὸ τῶν κρείττωνων ἐπὶ τὰ μετάνοια = 'a change of mind from better to worse is not a change that is an option for us' (cf. BDAG article 'ἀμετάθετος').

<sup>30</sup> By *unrepentable* I mean incapable of repentance.

<sup>31</sup> Noting the *hapax legomena* in this verse, including ἀμετανόητος, Dunn states that this 'strongly suggests that Paul is striving to find words which will maximize the impact of what he is saying and not be shrugged off as merely formulaic or commonplace' (Dunn 1988, 83). Cf. also Epictetus, frag. 25

heart you are storing up wrath for yourself...'). The concepts that comprise this reading of an unrepentable heart, however, were not totally original to Paul (while use of ἀμετανόητος to describe this may be original to him). These can be seen in texts such as 2 Esd. 9:10-13 and in Sib. Or. 4.166-170 that effective repentance only occurs as it is given by God himself (e.g. 'God will grant repentance' Sib. Or. 4:168). By implication it is an impossible task to repent without God granting it.<sup>32</sup>

### 7.5 Paul's Logic in Negating Repentance

If my argument is right, then why did Paul choose to explain repentance in this way? Is it not odd to mention repentance just to show that one cannot repent? While Paul's arguments can be famously dense (cf. 2 Pet. 3:16), I argue that Paul's use of repentance here forms part of a larger pattern of logic seen in Rom. 2-3.

Paul begins in vv. 4-5 with what I have suggested is a μετάνοια- ἀμετανόητος dynamic. This quickly leads into the concept of 'doing good' in v. 7 (τοῖς μὲν καθ' ὑπομονὴν ἔργου ἀγαθοῦ) and v. 10 (εἰρήνη παντὶ τῷ ἐργαζομένῳ τὸ ἀγαθόν). Just as scholars have been baffled at Paul's usage of repentance, even more are confused as to Paul's apparent work-based approach to gaining peace (e.g. Sanders above).<sup>33</sup> Once again scholars are left to interpret this either at face value and thus simply inconsistent

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<sup>32</sup> As we saw in Chapter Three there is a Jewish strand of thought, stemming from Deut. 30:6-7, in which repentance that is effective towards reconciliation with God is itself given by God as a gift. Hence the question is whether or not Paul believed in repentance in this tradition and if so is this mentioning of repentance here an example of it? It is the contention of my reading that Paul's modification of repentance with an impenitent heart shows that whether or not he did believe in this sort of repentance, his usage here shows it not to be effective. The reason this is so is because of the hard heart. That is, the fundamental element that needed to be changed for repentance to occur (i.e. the heart) has *not* been changed. This change is needed to make even the above strand of thought of repentance possible. However, it could also be argued that Paul was also conscious of the various ways repentance was understood including ones that highlighted the human element of agency and hence would not refer to this concept because of the theological assumptions of his audience.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Schreiner who argues that Paul refers to works here in the sense of Gentile Christian obedience. He comes to this conclusion, however, by reading v. 26-29 back into the beginning of chapter 2 (1993, 147). Thus 'works' in this context 'do not constitute an earning of salvation but are evidence of a salvation already given' (1993, 154). But this is forced because Paul makes it explicit that 'salvation' (i.e. v. 7, ζώην αἰώνιον) is offered in *the future* (v. 6, ἀποδώσει) based on what one does. We do not get a notion of salvation already given in this section. It must be explored from other sections of Paul's writings to come to Schreiner's conclusion – not from Rom. 2 itself. Davies argues that Paul has a pre-Christian Gentile in mind here yet, in agreement with Gathercole, 'the Old Testament references to God having already written Torah on the hearts of his people...are not convincing' (2002a, 29; 1990; also Snodgrass 1986). Cf. section 7.6 which is where I explain how my reading of repentance in vv. 4-5 affects the overall reading of Romans 2.

with Paul's overall argument or that Paul himself was not quite sure what he was saying (Wright 2001).<sup>34</sup> However, just as Paul negated the possibility of repentance, so too, later in this argument, Paul negated the possibility of anyone 'doing good' (3:12, οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ ποιῶν χρηστότητα).

Paul then approached the concept of seeking eternal life (v. 7, ζητοῦσιν ζωὴν αἰώνιον) only to conclude that no one really seeks God (3:11, οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ ἐκζητῶν τὸν θεόν). It is possible to read Paul as simply contradicting himself in Rom. 2 and Rom. 3 but reading these terms as foils to be negated makes better sense of what Paul seems to be suggesting in this section of Romans.<sup>35</sup> While it may seem unusual that Paul waited so long to complete the negation of 'seeking' and 'doing', recent scholarship demonstrates that Paul was quite able to maintain a logical sequence while not necessarily using it in a 'point by point...linear fashion' (Myers 1993, 32). Paul might have used a literary device that Bassler calls the 'postponed conclusion' (1982, 59). This means that Paul sometimes gave the main conclusion to one argument after (and sometimes in the middle) of another argument. For example, both Myers (1993) and Bassler (1982) suggest that when Paul noted in Rom. 3:22-23 that '...there is no distinction since all have sinned' this is actually the postponed conclusion of his discussion in Rom. 3:9-20. Similarly, Paul's statement in Rom. 3:28 is actually the postponed conclusion of his discussion in Rom. 3:21-26. While the possibility of 'postponed conclusion' does not prove Paul was using it with 'doing good', and 'seeking', it does show the capacity in Paul to use unorthodox logical sequences in proving his point. As Seifrid helpfully points out, 'Paul does not work as a bricklayer adding piece upon piece, but as an artist, who covers the whole canvas quickly with very broad strokes and then returns to fill in the details' (2004, 107).

This way of reading 'repentance', 'seeking' and 'doing good' actually fits Paul's overall argument of universal sinfulness in 1:18-3:26 and gives explanatory force as to *why* he uses them. Hence, if what I suggest is correct, some of the arguments which attempt to explain that Paul did not mean what it seems like he means can be put to rest.

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<sup>34</sup> 'My suggestion is that Paul has not worked out in detail, and I think in fact nowhere works out in great detail, exactly what that "keeping the law" involves' (2001, 138).

<sup>35</sup> This is a point missed by Schreiner who argues that 'a better conclusion is that Paul believes some people do good works and thereby receive eternal life' (Schreiner 1993, 137).

Paul means *real* repentance, *real* seeking God and *real* doing good – it is just that no one can do them.

## 7.6 The Law and Conversion Language

Now for Paul, the question becomes how exactly one describes a καρδία transformation. If the problem is the heart itself, how is it changed? Why is it that repentance is not the answer for Paul, even as it was the most common term for conversion? I suggest two basic reasons: (1) repentance was too closely associated with the law and as such forced him to create new conversion language and (2) Paul's radical understanding of sin rendered repentance, as it was commonly understood, useless.

The relationship between Paul and the law in Rom. 2 is closely related to the relationship between Paul and repentance. Pedersen suggests that the fundamental difference between Paul's understanding of the law and his former way of understanding the law was whether or not the law-giving event itself was the primary salvation event. Paul the Christian understood the coming of Christ as the primary salvation event rather than the giving of the law. Thus he states 'what at the deepest level divides Jews and Christians is the basic salvation event' (Pedersen 2002, 12). In light of this, is it not to be expected that Paul would also craft a new 'response' to this salvation event (Pedersen 2002, 5)? If so, then he would be wary of using repentance language which recalled the common way of salvation and would look for something new to describe conversion. Moo is not too far off the mark when he states regarding the lack of repentance in Paul that 'this is because the coming of Christ has revealed to Paul that acceptance with God requires a stronger action than the word "repentance" often connoted at the time' (1996, 133-34).

Repentance is no longer a useful term for Paul because of its heritage within Judaism, especially in light of its relationship with the law (e.g. Deut 30).<sup>36</sup> Repentance, for some Jews, was another way of calling wayward Jews back to the *law*: 'when you

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<sup>36</sup> There are two recent published dissertations on the relationship between Paul and Deuteronomy which are important. Wisdom doubts that most Jews in Palestine believed themselves to be under the 'curse' thus Paul's assertion in Gal 3:10 had a sharp polemical edge to it – an edge that he suggests others file-off when they argue for a wide-spread notion of 'exile' in 1<sup>st</sup> century Judaism (Wisdom 2001, 9, 157-158). Waters agrees with Scott (see below) that Deuteronomy was important to Paul but he argues Paul did not read it as a set narrative unit (2006). Cf. Lincicum's recent article which details up to date scholarship on Paul and Deuteronomy, 'Paul's Engagement with Deuteronomy: Snapshots and Signposts' (2008, 37-67).

obey the voice of the LORD your God, to keep his commandments and his statutes that are written in this Book of the Law, when you turn (ἐπιστραφή) to the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul' (Deut. 30:10). Rather than turning his listeners to the law, Paul wanted them to turn to the Christ (Rom. 10:4). It therefore seems very logical that he would be careful not to confuse his readers on this point and would select other terms that did not have such a close connection with the law. Hence Paul does not use repentance because of preconceptions present in his Jewish audience.

In his article, 'Romans 2: A Deuteronomistic Reading', Ito argues that the blessings and curses of Deuteronomy 27-30 function as Paul's interpretative framework in Romans 2. He notes that verses 7 and 10 promise a blessing to those who do good while verses 8-9 declare curses on evil doers (1995, 25). He also shows the similarity in language between v. 8 'wrath and fury' (ὀργή καὶ θυμός) and that of Deut. 29:27 'in anger and fury and great wrath' (ἐν θυμῷ καὶ ὀργῇ καὶ παροξυσμῷ μεγάλῳ). Likewise v. 9 'there will be tribulation and distress (θλίψις καὶ στενοχωρία) matches Deut. 28:53, 55, 57, 'in the siege and in the distress' (ἐν τῇ στενοχωρίᾳ σου καὶ ἐν τῇ θλίψει σου). Furthermore, he notes that Paul's reference in v. 29 to the circumcision of the heart is a reference to Deut. 30:6 'and the Lord your God will circumcise your heart (καρδίαν) and the heart (καρδίαν) of your offspring, so that you will love the Lord your God with all your heart (καρδίας) and with all your soul, that you may live'.

Interestingly, Ito does not factor in Paul's use of repentance in his argument which is ironic because repentance was the key to restoration in Deut. 30. Using Ito's insight, however, one can see even more clearly how Paul may be using repentance. He is drawing on a common understanding of Jewish soteriology derived from Deuteronomy and deconstructing it, having eliminated the power of repentance to save. Likewise, Paul previews another soteriology (2:29), also drawn from Deuteronomy (30:6 and 29:28), but one in which repentance is not the major emphasis.<sup>37</sup>

Following Ito is the recent work by White who also argues that Paul has Deuteronomy in mind here; yet, unlike Ito, he connects Paul's use of repentance with the

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<sup>37</sup> This is a pattern we will see Paul use again in Romans 10 which I will discuss in Chapter Eight.

Deuteronomistic notion of repentance.<sup>38</sup> He states: ‘the language of Rom. 2:5 shows clear linguistic parallels with the Moabic narrative. The verdict that the interlocutor has a hard heart ... parallels the verdict of Moses on Israel (Deut. 9:6 LXX)’ (White 2009, 15). Likewise, the summons for repentance recalls Deut. 30:1-10, yet as it is used in Rom. 2:4, it highlights Israel’s stubborn refusal to repent (White 2009, 17). White, however, falls to see the possibility that Paul may be alluding to this Deuteronomy passage for the purpose of showing that a return to the law is no longer effective in one’s return to the Lord.<sup>39</sup> In his monograph, ‘No one seeks for God’, Bell admits that repentance, if taken at face value, may well have been considered a ‘work’ within Paul’s Judaism (1998, 183; 1995, 42-45).<sup>40</sup> Thus, in Bell’s reading, ‘the most important question’ concerns how this notion of repentance ‘can be reconciled to Paul’s theology of justification *sola fide, sola gratia.*’ (1998, 183). However, if my reading is correct, the tension that Bell refers to is relieved.

In his recent article, Hägerland argues that Jesus, who preached to primarily Jewish audiences, saw a stark difference between repentance that implied ritual law and that which implied spiritual and moral change (2006). While his conclusion about how the historical Jesus viewed repentance is irrelevant to this investigation,<sup>41</sup> his observation about the complex ways the call for repentance could have been understood, especially within Judaism, is relevant. If it is true that ‘repentance was taken for granted as a characteristic of Jewish piety’, then it might be equally true that the actual implications of ‘repentance’ could vary widely depending upon which strand of Jewish thought the auditor relied upon (Hägerland, 2006, 169). Thus, perhaps Paul, who claimed sensitivity to his audiences (1 Cor. 9:22), refrained from using it so as to not confuse his readership. Thus while Bultmann might not be totally wrong to insist that Paul may have used repentance in his missionary preaching (1985, 55), in this reasoned letter to the Romans, Paul must be more careful with his words. Indeed, his polemic against repentance in 2:5

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<sup>38</sup> Scott argues that Paul’s thought flowed through a basic Deuteronomistic framework of sin-exile-restoration’ especially as seen in Rom. 9-11 (1993a; 1993b). I agree with his basic insight, yet, similar to White, I think he missed Paul’s contrasting notions of repentance and faith in Deuteronomy (cf. Deut 30:14; Rom. 10:8).

<sup>39</sup> Again, cf. Chapter Eight.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Bell’s journal article ‘Teshubah: The Idea of Repentance in Ancient Judaism’ (1995, 42-45).

<sup>41</sup> See Barclay’s article “‘Offensive and Uncanny’: Jesus and Paul on the Caustic Grace of God’ for a possible theological ‘congruity’ between Paul and Jesus regarding the notion of grace (Still 2007, 1-18).

safeguarded his brief mention of it in v. 4 so as to erase any notion that one may have regarding human ability to orient oneself towards God via works of the law.<sup>42</sup>

### 7.7 Repentance and the Power of Sin

The second reason Paul did not use repentance was because of his radical understanding of sin.<sup>43</sup> In order to see how radical was Paul's view of sin, we first need to observe some similarities between him and other first century Jews. Indeed, Paul was not the only Jew in the first century CE who questioned the effectiveness of repentance. Philo and the writer of Jubilees also had their reservations, but in different ways and for different reasons.

Philo noted that only God himself is without sin. However, if a man sins, a *wise* man will go forward in repentance. τὸ μὲν μηδὲν ἁμαρτεῖν ἴδιον θεοῦ, τὸ δὲ μετανοεῖν σοφοῦ (*Fug.* 157). But to achieve repentance is 'very difficult and very hard to attain to' (καὶ δυσεύρετον τοῦτό γε) (*Fug.* 157). Thus repentance remains a possibility but only for a select few who are already wise. However, for those who are not wise, repentance is never actually achieved even though there are claims that it has been. 'And that man is crazy who, speaking falsely instead of truly, while still committing iniquity, asserts that he has repented' (*Fug.* 160). While the wise actually repent, others continue on in sin claiming all the while they have repented. For this category of the unrepentant a 'storing up' of judgment awaits, just as it does for Paul. Philo said that it is as 'if one who had a disease were to pretend that he was in good health; for he, as it seems, will only get more sick, since he does not choose to apply any of the remedies which are conducive to health' (*Fug.* 160). Thus like Paul, Philo saw death as the result of unrepentance; however, unlike what I am arguing Paul was saying, Philo does hold out the possibility that people have it within themselves to 'choose to apply' repentance.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> This might make sense for Jewish audience members, but what about the Gentiles ones? The simple answer to that is Gentile Christians felt great pressure in the early church to integrate Jewish practices into their Christianity. Thus Paul may well have wanted to avoid the Jewish aspect of this term so as not to confuse his Gentile Christians by suggesting they ought to revert to a Jewish way of atonement.

<sup>43</sup> In his article, 'Sophistische Argumentation im Römerbrief des Apostels Paulus' Vos argues that Paul, in his letter to the Romans, often brought up the notion of law for the express purpose of showing the nature of sin (2001, 224-244).

<sup>44</sup> Cf. *Somn* 2:292 'giving ear to their new counsellor, which never flatters, and which cannot be corrupted, namely, repentance, having propitiated the merciful power of the living God by sacred hymns of repentance instead of profane songs, they will find entire forgiveness.'

Lambert recently argued that the writer of Jubilees had his doubts not about who could repent, in contrast to Philo, but about the effectiveness of repentance. Instead what Jubilees looked for was a ‘*divinely* initiated transformation of human nature—let us call it “new creation” or, perhaps better, “re-creation”—rather than *humanly* initiated repentance’ (Lampert 2006, 633, emphasis his). The writer of Jubilees altered the biblical story recounting the conversation between Moses and God. Rather than God calling on Israel to repent in a Deuteronomistic fashion, Moses interrupts God and begs him to:

. . . create for them a just spirit. May the spirit of Belial not rule them so as to bring charges against them before you and to trap them away from every proper path so that they may be destroyed from your presence. They are your people and your heritage whom you have rescued from Egyptian control by your great power. Create for them a pure mind and a holy spirit. May they not be trapped in their sins from now to eternity (1:19-21).

According to Jubilees, in order for Israel to repent, it was incumbent upon God to change Israel’s nature first (Lambert 2006, 637; Deut 10:16). Their mind and spirit needed to be recreated.<sup>45</sup>

In concert with Philo and Jubilees Paul also had his doubts about repentance, not because it was too hard and not *just* because the human condition needed divine agency (certainly Paul believed it did – cf. Chapter Eight; Barclay and Gathercole 2007), but primarily because the overpowering role of sin in the heart of mankind had spoiled its effectiveness. Most Jewish thinkers believed that there were individual sins in a person’s life which needed to be atoned for in some way. Indeed, part of the concept of repentance itself presupposes that there is sin to turn from. But sin was not seen as an agent that could negatively affect an individual in such a way as to make repentance itself

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<sup>45</sup> Cf. Josephus’ view of repentance in which he believed it could not undo the consequences of sin. In describing Joseph’s refusal of the sexual advances of Potiphar’s wife: ‘He also put her in mind that she was a married woman, and that she ought to cohabit with her husband only; and desired her to suffer these considerations to have more weight with her than the short pleasure of lustful dalliance, which would bring her to repentance afterwards, would cause trouble to her, and yet would not amend what had been done amiss’ (*Antiq.* 2:51).

useless.<sup>46</sup> For Jews repentance provided the *hope* of ultimate salvation. And it is this *hope* that I think Paul in Rom. 2 wished to dash. For Paul sin destroyed all human confidence to achieve salvation and any term that may conjure up such confidence in the flesh, such as repentance, he was careful to argue against.

As we saw in Chapter Two, Käsemann argued that mankind was always under a power. Indeed, ‘Man never belongs to himself; he always has a lord whose power is manifested through him. We might also put it as follows: we live in and from spheres of powers’ (1971, 9). In contrast to how sin was written about by other NT writers,<sup>47</sup> sin for Paul was not just the *act* of sinning, but was itself a living entity. Sin is ‘a hostile power or a malignant disease’ (Marshall 2002, 14), which does not just cause death, but actually ‘pays a wage of death’ (Rom. 6:23; Marshall 2002, 15). As Keck puts it: ‘sin is not simply something one does; it is a power which makes men do’ (1984, 238). Regarding how this power of sin fits with Paul’s Judaism, Harper states ‘[i]n this understanding of sin, Paul departed from Old Testament and Jewish thought, in which sin was looked upon simply as transgression of the Law’ (1988, 174). In light of this, Paul is then placed in a situation in which his view of sin causes him to think of a novel way to deal with sin (Harper 1988, 174).<sup>48</sup> If repentance evoked ‘soteriological synergism’ (Talbert 2001, 16) in the minds of his readers, and if such synergism is impossible because of the power of sin, then there needed to be a new crafting of terms to describe one’s entry into salvation.

For Paul, humanity was ‘under’ sin and its power. As he states in Rom. 3:9, προητιασάμεθα γὰρ Ἰουδαίους τε καὶ Ἕλληνας πάντας ὑφ’ ἀμαρτίαν εἶναι. By this verse Paul assumes that he had already established that all humanity were not just sinners but were indeed, under its power. We see a similar idea in Paul in Gal. 3 when he talked about the Law (scripture) imprisoning everything ὑπὸ ἀμαρτίαν so that the

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<sup>46</sup> But there is some question regarding Esau about whether or not God allowed him to repent as a result of his sin. *Secrets of Enoch* 62:1-3; *Sib. Or.* 4:166-170

<sup>47</sup> See Marshall’s article that surveys how the different writers in the NT use the various terms for sin: παράπτωμα, παραβαίνω, ἀνομία, ἀμαρτία. He concludes regarding Paul’s usage of the term ἀμαρτία that ‘this usage goes beyond the concept of “sinfulness” in the Gospel of John’ (Marshall 2002, 14).

<sup>48</sup> For Talbert ‘Palestinian Judaism was optimistic; Paul was pessimistic. If non-Christian Jews were optimistic, soteriological synergism was possible. If Paul was pessimistic, everything depended on God’ (Talbert, 2001, 16).

promise of faith will be given to those who believe (Gal. 3:22).<sup>49</sup>

For Harper the result of understanding the power of sin formed with Paul simply a ‘deeper meaning’ of repentance (1988, 174). And while this may be true in a sense,<sup>50</sup> it is not the point that Paul himself makes about repentance when he writes about it explicitly in Romans. Manson, likewise, states that sin has rendered man ‘incapable of responding to a command to repent in this full sense of the word. He can regret his faults and feels remorse; but he is enslaved to sin and cannot break free from the chains that bind him. Only by an act of God can he be liberated’ (1938, 138). But Manson concludes that Paul believes Christ makes ‘possible the repentance that is necessary if man is to be justified’ (Manson 1939, 138). However, in Paul’s own writing he did not refer to a deeper meaning of repentance or a divine enabling, but rather negated its possibility altogether and then sought out better terminology to describe the conversion event. It is as if scholars sniff what Paul might be saying but are not willing to take a bite.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> It is in Galatians where Paul’s notion that before Christ, humanity existed under powers other than God is fully seen. Martyn has outlined this theme in Paul’s thought process in Gal. 3-5:

3:10 Those whose identity is derived from observance of the Law are *under the power of a curse*. (Cf. 3:13, where Paul presupposes that, prior to being redemptively liberated by Christ, ‘we’ existed under the power of the Law’s curse.)

3:22 The scripture imprisoned (synekleisen) everything *under the power of Sin*, in order that the promise might be given via the faith of Jesus Christ to those who believe.

3:24-25 So then, the Law was our confining custodian until the advent of Christ, in order that we should be rectified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer *under the power of that confining custodian*.

4:2 [The minor heir] is *under the power of guardians and overseers*.

4:3 We were held in a state of slavery *under the power of that confining custodian*.

4:4 [God’s Son] was born *under the power of the Law*.

4:5 Being *under the power of the Law*, we stood in need of redemptive liberation.

4:21a You Galatians wish to be *under the power of the Law*, the result of which would be birth into the state of slavery.

5:18 If you Galatians are led by the Spirit, then in fact you are not *under the power of the Law* (1997, 371; italics his).

Yet, as Martyn also points out being under the power of sin specifically (3:22) is fleshed out more clearly in Paul’s letter to the Romans (1997, 372).

<sup>50</sup> As expressed in the Pastoral text 2 Tim 2:25 ‘God may perhaps grant them repentance [μετάνοιαν] leading to a knowledge of the truth’.

<sup>51</sup> Others have noted the similar effect of sin on the human knowledge of God. Just as sin renders repentance ultimately ineffective, it also spoils all knowledge of God so as to pervert any real insight into God. As Jeske noted ‘[i]n the opening chapters of Romans, Paul argues that it is not ignorance of God which is the sign that the world is ungodly. On the contrary, it is precisely knowledge of God which is the sign of an ungodly world’ (Jeske 1974, 26). It is not that there is no knowledge of God, it is that the knowledge of God is hopelessly flawed. The heart and the mind, important components used to respond to God, are both wrecked by sin. Understanding the malignancy of sin in this way casts doubt on readings of

It is also worth bringing together two possible connections between what Paul writes in Rom. 1 and what he writes in Rom. 2. The first connection relates to Paul's theology of creation in Rom. 1:19-20 with the 'kindness' of God in Rom. 2:4. God's kindness, like that of his creation in Rom. 1, is effective at making humanity guilty of not turning to him as Creator. Consider Philo's words of God before the Noahic flood in *QG* 2:3: 'But the original cause of the creation of the world was the goodness which is in me, and my *kindness*; and the cause of its impending destruction is the ingratitude and impiety of those persons who have been loaded by benefits by me.' In this text, Philo combines the two acts of God that Paul uses in Rom. 1-2 which condemn humanity. God reveals himself as the good Creator of the world and he shows himself to be kind by holding off on judgment (e.g. the flood in Philo's case). Yet, in the face of God's good acts, humanity rejects its Creator *and* refuses to repent in spite of God's patience. Hence Paul might have brought up these characteristics of God to show *not* a way of salvation but to highlight humanity's sinful state. Paul is arguing for God's righteousness in bringing wrath to all humanity – no one will have an excuse (1:20; 2:1) – which means that he is *not* in Rom. 2 trying to show how humanity can escape this judgment.

Second, Paul in Rom. 1 writes that God 'handed over' humanity to another power (Rom. 1:24, 26, 28). Gaventa shows that Paul's phrase 'God handed them over', was used in antiquity in handing over a person to another person or power (2005). Hence she argues that Paul here uses this phrase to show that God has handed over humanity to sin/death/Satan and he had done this as a response to human action. This shows that

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Paul offered by Barth and Segundo. Barth's dialectic approach of the knowledge of God basically paralleled with repentance in that God's kindness in v. 4 is the 'absolute, vertical miracle' equivalent with God's imparting knowledge (1977, 60). The response of man, repentance, is to the previously 'unknown God' (Barth 1977, 60). However, Davies is correct to point out *contra* Barth that man's problem is not that he does not have any knowledge of God but that his knowledge of God is marred (Davies 1970, 328). As Davies counters 'where there is complete agnosia, such as Barth refers to, there can be no responsibility, and therefore, no relevance in claiming that men are without excuse for their condition' (1970, 328). Segundo states that 'Paul makes Sin explicitly responsible for the loss of freedom: i.e., for the incomprehensible distance between the work performed by human beings and the initial intentions of their inner humanity' (1986, 54). But surely this is wrong because for Paul it is the intentions of inner humanity that are at issue here. Sin affects the heart, the inner man himself. He will not find help looking deep within himself, but will only find spiritual bankruptcy. Paul's point is to have him discover his inability within himself and thus be placed in a situation in which he is looking for something that is outside of himself.

God's handing over humanity to the power of sin runs in correspondence with human responsibility – humanity did not acknowledge God as Creator.<sup>52</sup>

### 7.8 Paul's Positive Use of Repentance

Thus far, I have argued that Paul uses repentance in his thinking about conversion as a foil, but is there a positive use for repentance in Paul's thinking? Indeed there is, but it is *not* regarding conversion. The other two times Paul uses the term repentance, it is in the context of Christian restoration (2 Cor. 7:9-10/12:21). In 2 Cor. 7:9-10 Paul writes about a godly grief that Christians feel because of their sin that leads them to repentance and salvation in the holistic sense. This godly grief is then compared with worldly grief that leads one not to salvation but indeed to death (θάνατος). In 12:21 Paul writes about the possibility of his own mourning over the sinful behavior of some in Corinth who have not yet repented (μὴ μετανοησάντων) of their sexually immorality (πορνεία). There is an irony here about how Paul actually uses repentance because of the popular notion in Western Christian thought that Paul understood repentance as a climatic one time event (Sherwood 1979). But, in fact, Paul uses repentance precisely for a repeated phenomenon in the context of a Christian's battle with the ongoing power of sin.

Barrett points out two important aspects of Paul's positive use of repentance. He states that 'repentance does not play a large part in Paul's thought; here it is not a fundamental element in the way of salvation so much as a return to the way after deviation from it' (2004, 211). Paul fears that when he returns to Corinth he will find Christians who still have not repented of their sexual immorality (Barrett 2004, 332). And in relation to why Paul only uses it here, he states that repentance 'smacked of Hellenistic intellectualism, and did not give as much weight as Paul desired to the action of God in salvation' (Barrett 2004, 211). Hence repentance as used by Paul is in relation to restoration of Christians and it is not used as a one-time conversion event of a non-Christian to Christianity.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Cf. Viljoen who argues that Paul in Rom. 1 tries to show that each 'section' of the human race has not lived up to whatever knowledge of God they have been given thus showing their guilt (2003, 643-670)

<sup>53</sup> This is interesting in that Luke's use of repentance as a 'return' assumes a continuity of 'going back' to that which one once had but lost – evoking the *imago dei*. Hence when Paul uses repentance he uses it in a similar light but it can not be in reference to a non-Christian becoming a Christian because there was no such beginning point with the non-Christian (cf. Chapter Eight in which we discover that becoming a Child

## 7.9 Repentance and Romans 2

If what I have argued is correct regarding repentance in vv. 4-5, then how is the rest of Romans 2 to be read in the light of it? I suggest that the blessings and curses of vv. 6-11 are to be seen in an equally gloomy light now that the traditional means of restoration has been taken away.<sup>54</sup> In this section, which is bracketed by the statements, ‘He will render to each one according to his works’ (v. 6) and ‘for God shows no partiality’ (v. 11), Paul stated that God will give the ultimate blessing of ‘eternal life’ (ζωὴν αἰώνιον) for those who earnestly seek for glory, honor and immortality (v. 7). Similarly, the blessing of glory, honor and peace await those who ‘do good’ (v. 10). Hence, for Paul it is the notion of eternal life for the individual (ἕκαστος) that is at stake in this section and, furthermore, this eternal life is based on what one does.

In v. 12, however, the power of sin comes into play once again. ‘For all who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law.’ For Gentiles, Paul shows that they will perish without the given Jewish law (v. 12), even though they have a law written on their hearts (v. 15) that will only work to condemn them (vv. 15b-16).<sup>55</sup>

Having the law written on the hearts of the Gentiles could indicate a Stoic notion of natural law as expressed in Cicero’s statement: ‘Law is the highest reason implanted in Nature, which commands what ought to be done and forbids the contrary. This reason, when firmly fixed and perfected in the human mind, is law’ (*De legibus* 1.6.18) (Talbert 2002, 84; Luther 1954, 60). Martins argues, furthermore, that this Stoic notion of the law in the heart was a reflection of Zeus himself and only a ‘sage’ could possibly fulfill this natural law. Yet, Martins suggest that it was likely that it was only ‘theoretically’ possible to achieve this and, indeed, highly unlikely that any mortal had ever fulfilled it.

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of God occurs because of God’s creating-something-out-of-nothing call). Rather it refers to a wayward Christian who is nevertheless a *new* creation coming back to that which is his/her true state.

<sup>54</sup> Paul stated explicitly, elsewhere, his pessimism regarding the outcome of blessings and curses: ‘For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, “Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them”’ (Gal. 3:10). Thus, for Paul, ‘Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree”’ (Gal. 3:13).

<sup>55</sup> While Paul also holds out the possibility that their conscience might also excuse them (v. 16), this is to be read in light of the previous logic regarding ‘doing’ the law. This is not really an option in Paul’s thinking.

Hence, according to this reading, Paul refers to it here to show that like the Jews, Gentiles also are self-condemned (Martin 1994, 55-67).<sup>56</sup> While it is difficult to know its origin for certain, it is plausible that Paul employed the notion of the law written on the heart to show that Gentiles ‘can distinguish between good and bad’ and thus are held accountable on the day of judgment (v. 16; Luther 1954, 60).

I consider the above readings to make more sense in the context of what Paul is arguing than to read Paul as describing a Gentile Christian, vv. 14-15, who is actually justified by doing the law (Gathercole 2002b, 127; Watson 2007, 205-215). While Gathercole makes a compelling argument that connects v. 14 with v. 13, one could then demand that both vv. 13-14 ought to be read in the context of v. 12, which describes the condemning sinfulness of both Jew and Gentile (Gathercole 2002a, 33). Thus, despite some similarities between vv. 13-15 with Jer. 31:33,<sup>57</sup> it is still a better reading to understand this person as a non-Christian Gentile.<sup>58</sup>

For Jews, they have the law and will thus be judged by the law (v. 12). Paul outlined in vv. 17-24 specific occurrences of their breaking the law and thus their

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<sup>56</sup> Or it could express a belief in a Noahic law to which Gentiles were held accountable (Talbert 2002, 85).

<sup>57</sup> Cranfield has argued (in line with Augustine) that Paul has Gentile Christians in mind in v. 15 and connects it with Jer. 31:33 (2004, 158-159):

Rom. 2:15: ‘They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts’

Jer. 31:33: ‘But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people.’

There is of course an obvious similarity between these two passages: the ‘work of the law’ and the ‘law’ are both written on hearts in these verses. However, in the Romans passage Paul explicitly takes his aim off of the ‘house of Israel’ and focuses instead on ‘the gentiles’ (v. 14), whereas in the Jer. 31 passage it is precisely the ‘house of Israel’ who is foreseen as having the law written on the heart. It must be noted that there are no shortage of passages in the OT which predict an eschatological inclusion of the Gentiles which Paul could have used to refer to the Gentiles here (e.g. Isa. 42:6; 43:9; 49:6; 65:1; Jer. 3:17; 4:2) and indeed he uses them at other points in his letter (cf. Rom 10:20), yet he does *not* do so here. Cranfield’s argument only works, as he himself acknowledges (2004, 159), if one *already* concedes that Paul is discussing specifically Gentile Christians. Furthermore, he is confident that Paul is talking about Gentile Christians because Cranfield is convinced that v. 15 refers to Jer. 33:33, which, to me, seems to fall victim to circular reasoning. However, it does not do to follow Dunn, who, in contrast to Cranfield, not only sees these Gentiles as non-Christian Gentiles but reads Paul at face value and states that Paul is open to ‘the reality, not just hypothetical possibility of Gentile goodness...’ (2002, 99). Dunn’s interpretation then is in direct conflict with Paul’s major anthropological point in Rom. 3 that no one does good. However, if the repentance-impenitent wordplay was intended by Paul as I propose it was, then what he describes in vv. 13-15 makes sense: he is describing non-Christian Gentiles who, like Jews, have a law, but who, also like the Jews, are guilty of breaking it and therefore subject to God’s wrath.

<sup>58</sup> Bell’s statement still stands, despite Gathercole’s objection, that ‘in Romans 2 Paul contrasts Jews and Gentiles, not Jews and Gentile Christians...’ (1998, 153; Gathercole 2002a, 31).

condemnation alongside the Gentiles. While it is true that Paul explained a final judgment by works elsewhere (Phil 2:12-16; 1 Cor. 3:11-15; cf. Gathercole 2002, 130), this is not the point Paul wishes to make here. Rather, Paul is making the case that the human heart is incapable of *doing* repentance and *doing* the law, whether it is the law known instinctively (v. 15) or by the letter (v. 17). It is in vv. 25-29 that Paul asserts how this heart is to be changed: only the heart that has been circumcised by the Spirit (Deut. 30:6) will be acceptable to God (v. 29).<sup>59</sup>

### *Conclusions*

I have argued in this chapter that Paul does not see traditional repentance as an option available to those who wish to convert. He uses it in Rom. 2 only to increase the despair found in the human condition. While Paul's logic in making this point may be unusual, it is not unprecedented. This reading also fits with Paul's overall argument in Rom. 1-3 of the universal sinfulness of humanity. Mentioning repentance as he does adds to the depth of the human problem and causes his readers to despair that even the common way to come back to God is impossible.

We can now answer our first theological question: what is the change involved in conversion? Stated negatively, for Paul conversion was not understood as a return to God. Paul's crafty use of repentance (evoking Deuteronomy) demonstrated that the traditional means of returning to God, repentance, was not an option. Humanity was subject to God's wrath and stands in a position under him, guilty of rejecting God's kindness as shown both in his creation and in his patience toward humanity.

The reason why repentance is no longer an option is because of the power of sin in the individual. Hence, we see the second question regarding why conversion is necessary. Humanity needs conversion because people are hopelessly infected by sin to the point they cannot even turn to God. Indeed, it was God himself who 'handed them over' to this power. They are in need but are hopeless to do anything about it by themselves. Humanity needs God to act on behalf of them.

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<sup>59</sup> Cf. Moo who concurs that it is vv. 28-29 that 'For the first time...alludes to Christians' (1996, 175).

Now that we see that Paul has no room for traditional notions of repentance in his theology of conversion, the way is cleared for us to see how exactly Paul constructed his notion of conversion. We will see in the following chapter that the only hope for one whose heart is unrepentant is to meet a God whose converting call is equally irrevocable: ἀμεταμέλητος (Rom. 11:29). Allison has argued that in Rom. 11 ‘the traditional emphasis on the repentance of the Jews has been displaced. Their turning to God is no longer that upon which all else turns’ (Allison 1985, 30). In the following chapter we will see what has replaced this notion of repentance in Paul.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### PAUL'S THEOLOGY OF CONVERSION: ROMANS 9-11

*For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. For the Scripture says, 'Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.'  
For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. For 'everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.'*

#### Romans 10:10-13

The Apostle to the Gentiles reveals his deep desire for the conversion of Jews in Rom. 9-11. While some within Israel believed the Gentiles would be saved in the 'last days' (Schnabel 2002, 35-57), Paul believed that it was Israel who would be saved. Having climbed the peak of Christology in chapter 8, finding an inseparable love in Christ (Rom. 8:39), Paul abruptly falls in 9:1-2 confessing his willingness to separate himself from this love (Rom. 9:2) if only his sacrifice would work to save his brothers in the flesh.<sup>1</sup> If Christ became a curse for those who were once under the law (Gal 3:10-13), perhaps Paul could do the same for his kinsmen.<sup>2</sup> Paul admitted that his motivation to raise the profile of his public ministry as an Apostle to the Gentiles (Rom. 11:13; cf. 15:16) stemmed largely from a desire to bring his fellow Jews to jealousy καὶ σώσω τινὰς ἐξ αὐτῶν (Rom. 11:14).<sup>3</sup> Paul's yearning for conversion was so great that some argue he even

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<sup>1</sup> In his article 'Das Evangelium und Israel – Erwägungen zu Römer 9-11' Hofius suggests that it was the Apostle's deep love for his people that drove him to here work out theologically whether or not God's word had failed Israel and whether or not God had ultimately rejected his people (1986, 297-324).

<sup>2</sup> Or perhaps Paul has Moses' statement in mind in Ex. 32:32 'But now, if you will forgive their sin—but if not, please blot me out of your book that you have written' (cf. Abasciano's monograph, 'Paul's Use of the Old Testament in Romans 9.1-9' esp. pp. 45-146 (2005).

<sup>3</sup> As Käsemann observed, 'The mission of the apostle is a colossal detour to the salvation of Israel, whereby the first become last' (1969, 241).

subverted his own logic established in Rom. 9-10 (Johnson 1984), and indeed put aside his own Christology (Stendahl 1976), so that all Israel could at last be saved (Rom. 11:26). Paul stated in Rom. 10:1, ‘Brothers, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved’ (εἰς σωτηρίαν), and in these three enigmatic chapters Paul traced out how this might be accomplished.<sup>4</sup> Establishing a theology of salvation emphasizing divine agency in Rom. 9 and 11, Paul, in Rom. 10, showed how *both* Jews and Gentiles obtain salvation through conversion.

A cursory reading of Rom. 9-11 shows it to be the most elaborate exposition of soteriology in all of Paul’s letters. Consider, for example, that Paul mentioned salvation eight times in these three chapters (9:27; 10:1, 9, 10, 13; 11:11, 14, 26) compared to five times in the other 13 chapters of Romans (1:16; 5:9, 10, 8:27; 13:11). Consider, also, that Paul used an unusually high concentration of ‘calling’ language in these chapters (9:11, 24, 25, 26; 10:12, 13, 14; 11:29) compared to the rest of the letter (1:1, 6, 7; 4:17; 7:3; 8:28, 30). Moreover, when this ‘calling’ language is analyzed, it is divided between God’s ‘calling’ (9:11, 24, 25, 26; 11:29), which recent scholarship argues is Paul’s favorite term for conversion as we discovered in Chapter Two (2.4; Chester 2003, 59-112) and the calling from man to God (10:12, 13, 14), which Paul depicted as *leading* to salvation. While mere frequency alone does not necessarily prove that Paul was writing about conversion, the disproportionate quantity of these salvation terms warrants an investigation.

There are multiple approaches to reading Rom. 9-11. In regards to how Rom. 9-11 fits with the rest of the book, mainstream interpretations swing between two primary readings: one interprets it independently from the rest of Paul’s letter to the Romans<sup>5</sup> and

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<sup>4</sup> That the context of these chapters concerns Paul’s unsaved brethren is important for several reasons, not least of which is the likelihood that their prospective future conversion looms in Paul’s mind as he writes. In his recent monograph, *Inhabiting the Cruciform God*, Gorman argues that the center of Paul’s soteriology is his ‘master story’ in Phil 2:6-11. Yet, the fact that the context of this ‘master story’ is how Christians ought to treat each other (Phil 2:1-4), shows this to be a text more concerned about how salvation is lived out (Phil 2:12) not necessarily explaining what salvation actually is. In contrast, Paul states twice (9:1 and 10:1) that his unsaved brethren are in mind and, furthermore, that he desired they be saved. While not proving that conversion is in mind in these chapters the context does make it probable that it is.

<sup>5</sup> E.g., Dodd who famously argued Romans 9-11 to be a sermon by Paul inserted into Romans separate from the actual argument of Romans itself (1959, 161-163).

the other views it as the letter's crescendo (Baur 1876; Wright 1991).<sup>6</sup> Some read this section as a type of diatribe (Dodd 1959; Käsemann 1980); others interpret it as midrash (Stegner 1984).<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, even individual scholars, given enough time, change from one end of interpretation to another as demonstrated in the remarkable alterations by Barth.<sup>8</sup> It must be noted, however, that different readings of Rom. 9-11 exist, at least partially because of the tension evident in Paul himself. Earlier in his ministry he wrote of the 'Israel of God' (Gal. 6:16), referring to the Church.<sup>9</sup> In Rom. 9-11 Paul described Jews who were explicitly not a part of the Church as receiving God's 'gifts' and 'calling' (11:28-29). Indeed, it was this 'Israel' that was still 'beloved'. Add to this the difficult phrases in Paul such as οὐ γὰρ ὁ ἐν τῷ φανερωῷ Ἰουδαίος ἐστίν (Rom. 2:28) and οὐ γὰρ πάντες οἱ ἐξ Ἰσραὴλ οὗτοι Ἰσραὴλ (Rom. 9:6), and one must attribute at least some of the confusion to Paul's choice of language.<sup>10</sup>

Despite the tensions within Paul's own description of Jews, what will be argued in this chapter is that Paul constructs how Jews, as well as Gentiles, actually convert. Building on our discoveries in Chapter Seven, we will see that Paul here will chose not to include repentance language in his formula of conversion. Paul borrowed from the most well-known repentance passage in the OT (Deut. 30; cf. 3.1) in his description of conversion (Rom 10:6-10); however, he eliminated repentance language. Paul instead

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<sup>6</sup> Followed now by many within the New Perspective.

<sup>7</sup> Both arguments suffer for lack of sufficient evidence. Examples of diatribes and midrash in the first century are too sparse to argue with absolute certainty that Rom. 9-11 fits in either category, a fact even Stegner himself admits (1984).

<sup>8</sup> For instance, in his monumental commentary on Romans, Barth famously entitled this section, 'The Tribulation of the Church', arguing that Rom. 9-11 actually refers to the church (1933, 330 ff.). In his shorter commentary on Romans, however, which was written in the aftermath of the horrors of the Second World War and in an era historically when dispensationalism offered theological *and political* hope for the ravaged Jewish people, he changed course and entitled his section 'The Gospel among the Jews' (1959, 110 ff.). Cf. Paddison's 'Karl Barth's Theological Exegesis of Romans 9-11 in the Light of Jewish-Christian Understanding' (2006, 469-488). Also see Demson's 'Israel as the Paradigm of Divine Judgment: An Examination of a Theme in the Theology of Karl Barth' (1989).

<sup>9</sup> Or so some argue. Cf. Martyn's article 'Apocalyptic Antinomies', in which he suggests that the 'Israel of God' was 'embodied in those who, recreated by Christ's love, serve one another in the new community of mutual service (5:13), God's Israel' (1997a, 123; cf. his commentary on Galatians, 1997b). Also see Dunn (1993, 345) for a reading in which Paul is more conciliatory.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Beker who notes this as well but also warns against those who conclude prematurely that Paul is guilty of blatant contradiction. He states that 'instead of charging Paul with outright contradictions and fickleness of thought, we should pay close attention to argumentative sequence and to the variety of contingent situations, which determine the particularity of Paul's argumentative strategies' (Beker 1989, 364).

makes an unmistakable substitution by highlighting the role of preaching, confession and heart belief in conversion.<sup>11</sup>

### 8.1 Romans 9-11 and Conversion in Recent Scholarship

My positive emphasis on conversion in these three chapters cuts against a common strain of scholarship that emphasizes the rejection of the Gospel by Israel rather than their eventual salvation. In their classic commentary on Romans, Sanday and Headlam note Paul's tone in these chapters: 'How glorious the prospect of the life with Christ! How mournful the thought of those who are cut off from it' (1902, 225). Käsemann exemplifies this negative emphasis when he argues that Romans 9:30-33 and its depiction of the stumbling of Israel is the 'thesis developed and established in chapter 10...In spite of the new introduction in 10:1f' (1980, 276). Yet, to state that the stumbling of Israel is the thesis of this section relegates Paul's overt interest in salvation to a mere subsidiary role in Paul's argument despite his straightforward statement that Israel 'did not stumble *so as to fall*' (11:11).<sup>12</sup> Similarly, Wright praises modern scholarship for its focus on 'the main subject' in Rom. 9-11, which is 'the Jews' failure to believe the Gospel' (1991, 235). Likewise, in his influential monograph, Hays concludes his chapter on 'Intertextual Echoes in Romans' by noting the echo of Deut 32:20 (LXX) behind Romans 10:19: 'I will turn my face away from them, and I will show what will happen to them in the last times because they are a perverse generation, sons in whom there is no faith' (1989, 83). However, this 'echo' actually muffles Paul's point, represented in Rom. 10:21, that God continued to stretch out his hand all day long *despite* the negative response of Israel.

In all these readings, scholars take the obvious *Sitz im Leben* of unbelieving Israel and place it as the primary focus of Paul. While Paul addressed Israel's current unbelief, his focus, to the contrary, was on their eventual conversion.<sup>13</sup> Paul showed how Israel's

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<sup>11</sup> As noted in each of my chapters, my methodology limits my ability to capture in full the whole of Paul's 'thoughts' on conversion.

<sup>12</sup> Stendahl argues against this trend vigorously. He states that Paul's purpose in Rom. 9-11 was to tell the Gentiles that 'the Jews are in the hands of God, and, as I read it, that it is none of their business to try to manipulate or perhaps even evangelize the Jewish people' (1995, 33-34). While Stendahl is quite right to point out that for Paul the Jews, and everyone else for that matter, are in the hands of God, he fails to see the logic in Paul's argument that Jewish and Gentile believers actually play a part in the *modus operandi* of unbelieving Israel's salvation (cf. 11:11, 14).

<sup>13</sup> Heil has recently argued that the remnant in Rom. 9:27-29 is a hopeful sign for unbelieving Israel which blossomed into salvation in Paul's thinking in Rom. 11. 'This subtle progression of hope within 9:27-29

current unbelief played a role in the present salvation of Gentiles. Furthermore, Paul showed that the same means by which the Gentiles were saved would also be used in the eventual salvation of all Israel.<sup>14</sup> Modern scholars have the vantage point of history – most Jews have not converted to the Christian Gospel – but that ought not affect their judgment of whether or not Paul himself believed ‘all Israel’ would convert to Christ in a timely fashion.

Another strand of scholarship emphasizes the positive nature of Paul’s assessment of Israel, but then concludes that Paul did not wish to evangelize them. These *Sonderweg*<sup>15</sup> readings of Paul insist that Israel will not convert to Christ in the same way that the Gentiles did – as evidenced by Paul’s strikingly Christ-less conclusion in chapter 11 (Stendahl 1976; cf. Stowers 1994).<sup>16</sup> Donaldson, however, shows well that *Sonderweg* readings of Paul cannot account for the historical reality of Jewish Christianity of which Paul himself was the chief example (Donaldson 2006, 52).<sup>17</sup> Likewise, Sanders argues that the Christ-less salvation for Israel advocated by Stendahl does not account for the requirement of faith in Christ for Israel (11:23; 26-29; 1978, 183).<sup>18</sup>

In contrast to the *Sonderweg* readings, some suggest that if Paul advocated a special way of salvation for Israel *apart* from converting to Christ then Paul’s own system implodes. As Johnson concludes, ‘It follows that the character of the Israel which

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functions as a preliminary climax within Romans 9-11. It plays its role in the concerted thrust toward hope for unbelieving Israel that reaches its ultimate climax in the hope that “all Israel will be saved!” (11:26; 2002, 703).

<sup>14</sup> Of course, how one defines ‘all Israel’ is crucial in determining the nature of this conversion, which is a point I will address as this chapter develops. Cf. Zoccali’s recent article “‘And so all Israel will be saved’: Competing Interpretations of Romans 11.26 in Pauline Scholarship” which argues that ‘all Israel’ is best understood as the total elect from among the nation (2008, 289-318).

<sup>15</sup> *Sonderweg* = ‘special way’. This term, purported to have been used first by Mussner (1970, 60; Donaldson 2006, 29), refers to the salvation of all Israel at the parousia, but now is a more general term that includes the two covenant readings of Pauline salvation.

<sup>16</sup> However, Stendahl later preferred to call this ‘God’s traffic plan’ rather than an actual two covenant system (1995, 7; cf. Donaldson 2006, 29).

<sup>17</sup> ‘In a two-covenant reading of Paul, what is to be done with that category of people for which Paul is the prime example, namely, Jews who are also “loyal to the righteousness expressed in Jesus Christ?”’ (Donaldson 2006, 30). While Kinzer recently argued for a ‘*Postmissionary Messianic Judaism*’ (2005), such thinking is difficult to find in Paul’s own argumentation, esp. in 10:1-13.

<sup>18</sup> In his article ‘Comment le Dieu d’Abraham, d’Isaac et de Jacob peut-il être à la fois fidèle et libre?’ Trocmé goes so far as to suggest that Paul, in his argument of God’s irrevocable call to Israel, sets a precedent that major religions of the world (Islam in particular) are also recipients of a special way of salvation.

is to be saved at the end of history will be no different from the character of the remnant which has been saved within history. If the two were not so related then Paul's entire argument in chap 11 would simply collapse. And since the salvation received by the remnant was not divorced from Jesus Christ, neither will be the salvation of all Israel' (Johnson 1984, 102). While it is possible for Paul to have subverted his own argument, it seems much more likely, given the evidence, that he believed Israel would experience salvation by turning to Christ (Rom. 10:12-13). Sanders affirms, 'The solemn pronouncement of the prediction of the salvation of Israel as a mystery does indicate that an important point is coming, but it does not seem adequate to preface a major alteration of his consistent, oft-repeated, soteriological exclusivism' (Sanders 1978, 183).<sup>19</sup> Moreover, it is increasingly difficult to hold a special way of salvation in Paul because there is no distinction between Jew and Gentile explicitly in the context of how one converts (Rom. 10:9-12).<sup>20</sup>

In my unfolding argument, I will show how Paul traced out his basic understanding of God's election and salvation, and how one responded and was thus converted. Paul began with a heightened understanding of God's agency in salvation which was to create humility in 'the saved', diminishing any notion of human action in salvation. Paul's understanding of salvation showed a distinction from various strands of Jewish notions of conversion, omitting any aspect of human repentance, and, in its place, Paul showed that conversion to Christ occurred by faith through hearing the preached word. Conversion, for Paul, was a phenomenon that occurred principally through listening, not doing. Moreover, Paul's notion of election, while counterintuitive, actually

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<sup>19</sup> Schroeder states bluntly, 'If Jews can be saved without Jesus Christ, the church can do without Him too' (1998, 266).

<sup>20</sup> As Spencer points out 'such pronouncements, in my judgment, preclude a "two covenant" approach to theology that charts distinctive ways of salvation...apart from Christ' (Spencer 2006, 132). Spencer, however, still holds that Paul was not interested in seeing them convert, noting that Paul never stated to Jews explicitly, 'repent and believe'. Spencer, echoing Stendahl, argues that Paul believed the 'salvation of the Jews is God's business' and that Paul ought not get involved personally (2006, 133). But this theory is untenable because Paul himself confessed that part of the motivation of witnessing to the Gentiles was in order to bring non-believing Jews to jealousy and thus to 'save' them (Rom. 11:14). Moreover, as argued in this thesis, Paul is careful not to write to *anyone*, Jew or Gentile, to *repent* in order to convert.

gave hope to those who were not saved, providing a missional aspect to God's hardening.<sup>21</sup>

## 8.2 Human and Divine Agency in Romans 9-11

God is free. The purpose (πρόθεσις) of election for Paul was to demonstrate God's liberty. Salvation was not from human volition but from God who called one into being. Paul states uncomplicatedly in Rom. 9:11: οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων ἀλλ' ἐκ τοῦ καλοῦντος. In matters of salvation, God is in a position of complete determinism. Thus, in Rom. 9:15: 'I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion'.

Cranfield points out that Paul, quoting Moses,<sup>22</sup> does so to emphasize not just God's freedom but also God's mercy:

It is our contention that Paul regarded these words from Exodus as an appropriate and cogent answer to the suggestion that there is unrighteousness with God, precisely because he understood them to be affirming emphatically the *freedom* of God's mercy (and therefore the fact that God's mercy is not something to which men can establish a claim whether on the ground of parentage or works), and at the same time making it clear that it is the freedom of God's *mercy* that is being affirmed, and not of some unqualified will of God behind, and distinct from, His merciful will'. (1979, 484; emphasis his).<sup>23</sup>

As the creator, God maintained the privilege to do as he pleased. While one may accuse God of unrighteousness in judging someone whom he did not choose (Rom. 9:14, 19), Paul simply reaffirmed God as the creator, and thus he had the right to do what he wanted. As a potter had the right to make what he wished out of his raw material (Rom.

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<sup>21</sup> By 'missional' I mean an outward evangelistic focus that constantly pushed beyond the boundary of the current Christian community.

<sup>22</sup> This is the first of three such quotations from Moses in these three chapters (Rom. 9:15-18 citing Exodus; 10:5 citing Leviticus and 10:19 citing Deuteronomy). In his article 'La figure de Moïse en Romains 9-11' Quesnel suggests that Paul's quotations from Moses show a trajectory of salvation in the person of Moses as a representative of Israel (2003).

<sup>23</sup> Cf. 11:21-31.

9:21), God similarly could determine the specific recipients of mercy and judgment.<sup>24</sup> Given that the context of Paul's argument is concerning the fate of his kinsman (9:1-5) and that he addresses personal objections 'will the thing formed say to its maker, why did you make me thus?' to God's choices, it is rather clear that Paul believes in God's unique privilege of shaping eternal destinies of individuals prior to their ability to 'choose' him (Piper 1983, 183-185).

There have been many attempts to soften Paul's determinism, such as the work by Klein (1984), which emphasizes the corporate view of election over and against an individual notion of election.<sup>25</sup> However, even if Paul does not focus on the individual, it still remains that Paul's notion of God's choice is one that prevailed against the will of man (Rom. 9:16). This means that Paul's notion of election was also a judgment on anthropology, not just a statement of theology. Humanity, regardless of corporate or individual categorization, is incapable of salvation apart from the call of God.<sup>26</sup>

Using Israel herself as the test case, Paul demonstrated God's complete freedom in electing and hardening. Paul stated in 9:4 that Israel was given the adoption as sons (υἰοθεσία).<sup>27</sup> Paul, however, by using υἰοθεσία for Israel, stands in contrast with the writers of LXX who never used this term for Israel.<sup>28</sup> Israel's status as sons was by God's choosing and not according to the natural order as children of God. Hence, Paul used the notion of adoption here not just to describe *what* they received (sonship) but *how* they received it. Israel's status as sons *was* via adoption (Moo 1996, 562).<sup>29</sup> As the chapter

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<sup>24</sup> As Sneen states 'God is the source, agent and goal of all things' (1986, 405).

<sup>25</sup> Interestingly, Klein sidesteps the electing call of Jacob (who is both an individual and represents a nation), which Paul used as an important building block in this section. Klein states, 'We pass by 9:7 since, though it has some "elective" significance, the issue of eternal salvation of individuals is absent' (1984, 54). While I am convinced Klein did not exclude this for the sole reason that it goes against his thesis, I am still unsure, however, why exactly he did not factor this important verse into his argument. Cf. Schreiner's article 'Does Romans 9 Teach Individual Election unto Salvation? Some Exegetical and Theological Reflections' which argues, *contra* Klein, that it is impossible to separate individual and corporate election (1993a, 25-40).

<sup>26</sup> As Cranfield explained, 'The divine call is that which gives effect to the divine election. It is the call to a positive relationship to God's gracious purpose, and so, characteristically, the call to faith and obedience' (1979, 478-479).

<sup>27</sup> Paul used this term in a previous letter stating that those who were 'redeemed under the law' now received 'the adoption as sons' (Gal 4:5) and used this term for Gentiles who were now in Christ (Rom 8:15).

<sup>28</sup> The editors of the LXX choose terms such as 'first born son' (Ex. 4:22; cf. Is. 1:2).

<sup>29</sup> However, as Piper points out υἰοθεσία has 'virtually no history with a religious meaning before Paul' (1983, 17). So the exact meaning of the term must be derived from the context of Paul's own argument.

unfolds, Paul launches into a discussion of Israel's most famous sons and unites the concept of children with that of calling (9:11, 24, 25, 26; 10:12, 13, 14; 11:29), election (9:11; 11:5, 28), and salvation (9:27; 10:1, 9, 10, 13; 11:11, 14, 26).

Another important theme, especially in chapter 9, is the notion of promise. The meaning, similar to that of adoption, is to emphasize not simply *who* the people of God were but *how* they become the children of God. Those who comprised Israel became Israel by methods other than physical descent as Paul explains in his discussion of Isaac and Jacob. Paul reminds us that Israel formed her identity as the *selected* children of God in the *midst* of relatives. It is in this context that the current theological problem of the effectiveness of God's word (9:6) is then resolved. God's word is *really* the word of promise (9:8).

Although Abraham had other children (Gen. 16:4) in Rom. 9:7 it was ἐν Ἰσραὲκ κληθήσεται σοι σπέρμα.<sup>30</sup> The father of Israel had a son who was not a part of Israel which is exactly why Paul could write οὐ γὰρ πάντες οἱ ἐξ Ἰσραὴλ οὗτοι Ἰσραήλ (Rom. 9:6). Therefore, if one was a child of the flesh, the implication is not necessarily that one was also a child of God (Rom. 9:8). Similarly, in 9:11, Paul noted the election of *one* son in Rachel's womb even though she had twins. It was Jacob rather than Esau who was chosen;<sup>31</sup> similarly, it was their father, Isaac, who was the chosen one in the midst of his relatives. For Paul, God's election was not to demonstrate as much the arbitrary

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<sup>30</sup> Paul also mentions that the covenants were given to Israel (9:4). These likely refer to the multiple covenants God made with the patriarchs (9:5; 11:28) or to the steady renewing of the covenant noted in Jewish Scriptures. While some have argued that covenants actually denote 'ordinances, commandments, or perhaps oaths' (cf. Roetzel 1970, 390), it seems forced to conclude that they should be seen in relationship to the law rather than the patriarchs (1970, 390). However, this exact term, albeit in singular form, is used in unambiguous conceptual connection with the patriarchs in 11:28. When Paul uses covenant in 11:27, the temporal conjunction ('whenever', 11:27b) follows immediately referring to a time when God will remove sin from Israel. In context, the 'sin' clearly refers to Israel's unbelief in the Christ. Therefore, until Israel corporately believes, the covenant is still intact. Unbelieving Israel remains loved through the patriarchs because of God's covenant (11:27a).

The connection between God's covenant and unbelieving Israel's salvation is wrapped in the mystery of God (11:25). This mystery is the temporal aspect of Israel's hardening. Once the Gentiles find salvation, all Israel will be saved (11:26). The Israel Paul envisions is neither the 'spiritual' Israel nor the 'remnant' of Israel, which Paul mentions elsewhere. This Israel is the enemy of God because of their rejection of the Gospel while also 'beloved' by God because of his covenant. In this way, God's gifts and calling can never be repented of (11:29).

<sup>31</sup> Even though, as pointed out by Blomberg, Esau and Jacob eventually did reconcile pointing to a reconciliation with God in the Genesis account (Gen. 33), Paul's point in mentioning this here is to show the *means* by which one becomes a child (1987, 99-117)

nature of God's purposes but rather to highlight the agency of God in creating his children.

In the work of Barclay we see that for Paul, God's mercy is itself an act of regeneration. He states: 'For Paul divine mercy is itself the creative agent in Israel's history, not its restorative assistant. Israel is not rehabilitated by mercy so much as established by it, and because mercy has this generative role (as Paul reads Exodus 32-34), it not only gives hope for the future of Israel but can and must include 'the nations' as well' (2008, 20). He states, furthermore: 'To put the matter in a nutshell: divine mercy for Paul is not, as we might expect from our use of the term, an act of pity that overlooks sins to restore the *status quo ante*; it is an act of creation that brings a new reality to birth' (Barclay 2008, 23).<sup>32</sup>

Paul quotes from Hosea in v. 25: καλέσω τὸν οὐ λαόν μου λαόν μου. That is, God's call brings into existence those who did not exist before. As we saw in Chapter Two (2.4), Rom. 4:17 states καὶ καλοῦντος τὰ μὴ ὄντα ὡς ὄντα (and calling into existence the things that do not exist). It was then suggested that 'the calling referred to here is God's act of creation' (Chester 2003, 77). Indeed the whole scope of Rom. 4 was shown to be the inclusion of the Gentiles into the people of God. Likewise we saw a similar idea in Paul in 1 Cor. 1:28. In writing to his converts in Corinth he asks them in v. 26 to 'consider your calling, brothers' (βλέπετε γὰρ τὴν κλησιν ὑμῶν, ἀδελφοί). In so doing Paul then describes their conversion as a process in which God chose the 'things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are' (τὰ μὴ ὄντα, ἵνα τὰ ὄντα καταργήσῃ). The converts in Corinth were 'granted existence on his higher authority' (Chester 2003, 79). We then noted that Chester, in accordance with Käsemann (2.2), argues that conversion is God's calling into existence of something that did not previously exist – an act of new creation.<sup>33</sup> But what is Paul's thinking regarding human agency in conversion?

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<sup>32</sup> Establishing God's mercy as an active creating agent allowed not only allowed Paul to account for the influx of Gentiles to the Gospel in the face a broad Jewish rejection of the Gospel, but also showed, specifically in Jewish scripture (for the sake of Jewish Christians?), God's 'unusual pattern' of choosing recipients of his mercy (Thielman 1994, 169-181).

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Martyn's discussion of new creation in 2 Cor. 5:16-17 in his article 'Epistemology at the Turn of the Ages' (1997).

The flipside of highlighting the agency of God was the diminished role of human agency.<sup>34</sup> For emphasis, Paul exhausted his vocabulary using five different terms and expressions that showed human work was unrelated to becoming a child of God.

1. Election is *before* birth (γεννάω) (v. 11)
2. Accomplishment (πράσσω) is not possible (v. 11)<sup>35</sup>
3. Sonship cannot result from works (ἔργον) (v. 12)
4. It does not rely on man's will (θέλω) (v. 16)
5. It does not rely on man's exertion (τρέχω) (v. 16)

This repeated denial of human agency in salvation was a remarkable denunciation of the action of humanity which fed directly into Paul understanding of works. That sonship was not a result from works (ἔργον) was juxtaposed with God who called one into sonship (καλοῦντος) (Rom. 9:11). To affirm that one could, by natural birth or accomplishments or works or will power or exertion, become a child of God, would go against Paul's understanding that only the Creator could account for new creations (Rom 9:20-26; 2 Cor. 5:17).<sup>36</sup> Indeed, in the following chapter, Paul takes it so far in Rom 10:20 by quoting Isaiah 65:1: 'I have been found by those who did *not* seek (ζητοῦσιν) me; I have shown myself to those who did *not* ask for me.'

One reason for the extreme emphasis on God's agency in salvation was to produce a sense of humility among the saved and to make known his glory to the unsaved. God had delayed his wrath for the benefit of the elect. ἵνα γνωρίσῃ τὸν πλοῦτον τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ σκευὴ ἐλέους (Rom. 9:23). Ironically, the intended result was to cause them to fear (φοβέω) - *not* the vessels of wrath - but rather for the vessels of mercy (11:20b). God desired to make known to them the fullness of his glory,

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<sup>34</sup> The role of the human will in conversion has been debated for centuries such as in the famous debates between Luther and Erasmus (Kolb 1976) in which accusations of determinism and Pelagianism abounded. Missing in much of these disputes, however, was the *missional* aspect of election and hardening that Paul points towards. As God, he has a right to chose or harden whomever he wished, but the question for Paul is for what *purpose* does he do it (cf. 9:17, 22-23)? The answer to that is provided in his doxological conclusion in Rom. 11:32-36.

<sup>35</sup> Interestingly, πράσσω highlighted Paul's achievement in doing things he hates (Rom. 7:19).

<sup>36</sup> Paul, in establishing God's total agency as well as man's non-agency in salvation, set up the profile for how one converted to Christianity. How can one convert if you cannot exert your own will? According to Paul, it is possible by faith – specifically through hearing the gospel proclaimed.

which would, as a result, subvert any notion of human pride. Μὴ ὑψηλὰ φρόνει ἀλλὰ φοβοῦ (Rom. 11:20).

One might think election was only about the individual/nation being elected and that hardening was only about the individual/nation being hardened, but, in fact, it was not. Both benefit from each other. The hardening of Pharaoh was for the benefit of the nations – assuming that some of them, unlike Pharaoh, would be elect (cf. 9:17). Likewise, God was patient with the non-elect, so that those who were shown mercy would marvel at God’s unwarranted goodness to them (cf. 9:23-24). Paul concluded happily that this mutual benefit climaxes with God ‘consigning’ all to disobedience at some point ἵνα τοὺς πάντα ἐλεήσῃ (Rom. 11:32).<sup>37</sup>

Like Pharaoh, Israel had been hardened by God (Rom. 11:7) for the benefit of the nations (Rom. 11:17). But unlike Pharaoh, Israel’s hardening – being a great mystery – was only partial (μέρος, 11:25).<sup>38</sup> Similar to the outward focus of election and hardening in Rom. 9, Paul explained how Israel was currently hardened so that the gospel could go to the Gentiles. Indeed it was the failure of Israel that led to the abundance of the gospel among the Gentiles (Rom. 11:12). However, Paul believed the inclusion of the Gentiles would, in turn, make Israel jealous. Quoting Deut 32:21, Paul believed that Gentiles enjoying the benefits of Israel’s God would make Israel jealous so as to seek salvation themselves (Rom. 10:19). Thus, there is an outward focus in Paul’s explanation of election and hardening, which is counterintuitive – the elected and the hardened help each other. God himself was the ultimate agent in this process which led Paul into a state of praise and wonder (11:33-36).<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Cosgrove is quite right to connect the hardening and election by God in chapter 9 with the salvation of Israel in chapter 11, in that it provides ‘rhetorical suspense’ for the reader (Cosgrove 1996, 271).

<sup>38</sup> Schreiner, noting the apocalyptic background of mystery (e.g. Dan 2:18-19, 27-30; 1 QpHab 7:1-5, 8, 13-14), argues that this mystery plays itself out in God’s plan in three ways: (1) this partial hardening has been evident throughout the history of Israel, (2) the incoming of the Gentiles into the church is now part of this mystery and (3) the future salvation of ethnic Israel will be the culmination of this mystery. He concludes that ‘The focal point of the mystery is the timing and manner of Israel’s salvation, for all Israel will be saved after the full number of Gentiles have entered into the people of God’ (2006, 477)

<sup>39</sup> As Wakefield concluded: ‘God’s will accomplished his plan of salvation, even in spite of – indeed, by means of – human disobedience and rebellion’ (2003, 78). In his article, ‘The Centrality of Wonder in Paul’s Soteriology’, Davis points out the function of ‘superabundant love’ in Paul’s soteriology, which is depicted, in part, by Paul’s doxologies at the end of Romans 8 and 11 (2006, 410). He suggests that Paul’s ‘waxing hymnic at the conclusion of difficult arguments...indicates that his poetic moments are more deliberate than accidental’ (2006, 413). Hence, ‘Paul is functioning with the awareness that his discursive

### 8.3 The Repentance of ‘All Israel’?

There exists endless debate regarding the exact nature of Paul’s statement that ‘all Israel will be saved’ (Rom. 11:26).<sup>40</sup> While it may be more accurate to say that all Israel is the ‘total elect from the nation’ (Zoccali 2008, 289-318), there appears to be developing a basic consensus that ‘all Israel’ refers to historical Israel being saved in the Parousia. Regardless of the exact identity of Israel, most scholars agree that Paul believed ‘Israel’ would be saved at some undetermined point in the future.<sup>41</sup> But what exactly would lead to their conversion in the end? Scholars such as Scott have pointed out Paul’s heavy dependence on Deuteronomy in Rom. 9-11, and have thus concluded that Israel’s repentance will precede their conversion. Scott argues that ‘all Israel “will be saved”...when the Deliverer – the resurrected Lord – comes from Zion at the parousia...This hearing of the voice of the Lord will be in keeping with the repentance that is a precondition of Israel’s restoration according to Deut 30:1-10’ (Scott 2001, 525). While Scott correctly alludes to Paul’s usage of Deuteronomy in these passages, it is what Paul does *not* use in Deuteronomy that ought to be noteworthy. Nowhere in Romans does Paul mention any of the multiple repentance terms in Deut. 30, but instead he modifies it drastically. In Rom. 10:6-10, he redirects the emphasis away from repentance and toward having the word of Christ preached and believed in. Paul’s apparent movement away from repentance was observed by Allison who suggested that, in contrast to Luke (Acts 3:19-20), who believed that the repentance of Israel preceded ‘the end’, Paul believed the repentance of Israel was ‘no longer the hinge upon which all else turns’ (Allison 1985, 30).

In place of repentance leading to the salvation of Israel, Paul describes a God whose calling and gifts were themselves – irrevocable (Rom. 11:29). It was not the moveable nature of Israel that would lead to their salvation but the unmovable nature of God. Israel could not depend on its own μετάνοια but it could depend on God’s call that

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language is not fully capable of capturing and expressing the mystery of grace...by moving into poetic language, the language of superabundance that points beyond what is said to the unsaid’ (2006, 417).

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Longenecker’s article ‘Different Answers to Different Issues: Israel, the Gentiles and Salvation’ in which he shows universal salvation (i.e. salvation open to Jews and Gentiles) is not bound by ethnic symbols but is indeed brought about via an ethnic people – the Jews (1989).

<sup>41</sup> While some believe Paul damages his own logic to do so (cf. for example, Refoulé’s article, ‘Coherence ou incoherence de Paul en Romains 9-11?’ (1991, 51-79), this discounts Paul’s notion of superabundance.

is ἀμεταμέλητος. While some argue that Paul in chapter 11 is going against his own argument in chapter 9-10 (Johnson 1984), others argue that chapter 11:25-32 is a ‘summary of key ideas developed in chaps. 9 through 11’ (Getty 1988, 457).<sup>42</sup> Hence, Paul affirmed God’s agency in salvation, as his call and his gifts can not be repented of and as such salvation would not depend on the movement of humanity towards him (i.e. in repentance; cf. Rom. 10:20).

#### 8.4 The Process of Conversion in Paul’s Theology

In an otherwise brilliant thesis about conversion, Chester disappoints in his confession that his work will contribute little ‘in terms of the event itself’ (i.e., the event of conversion; 2003, 61). As we observed in Chapter Two, Chester rightly points out strong calling language of God in Rom. 9 but fails to pick up on the corresponding calling language of mankind in Rom. 10 (cf. 2.4). As we will see, it is precisely the event of conversion that reverberated in Paul’s mind in Rom. 10. In between establishing God’s agency in Rom. 9 and his irrevocable call in Rom. 11, Paul in Rom. 10 explained how one responds to this call of God. In v. 12 it is the Lord who bestows riches on all who ‘call on him’ [πάντας τοὺς ἐπικαλουμένους αὐτόν] and in v. 13, quoting Joel 2:32, Paul states ‘everyone who calls [ἐπικαλέσεται] on the name of the Lord will be saved’. Hence it appears that Paul *does* use human calling language in relation to God’s call. Yet, the question that must be answered is *how* and in *what way* can humanity call back to God? What is the nature of the human response to God’s call?

Recent scholarship supports the idea that Rom. 10 is indeed the beginning of a new section in Paul’s argument.<sup>43</sup> Lambrecht observes that in ‘10.1-4 God is no longer spoken of as actor’ (1999, 147) and concludes that ‘the focus lies on human responsibility and culpability’ (1999, 147). Jews are responsible for their own sin; yet in view of human responsibility, Paul also shows how Jews as well as Gentiles respond to God’s irrevocable call with a converting call of their own. As chapter 10 begins, Paul restates his deep desire for the salvation of non-believing Jews. In verses 2-4 he summarizes the

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<sup>42</sup> Cf. Aageson who shows that the tightly bound literary structure of chapters 9-11 demonstrates its unity (1986).

<sup>43</sup> This is not to say that the traditional break in 9:30ff. has been overturned but that there is an observable shift in thought beginning in 10:1, which scholarship now recognizes as important (cf. Lambrecht above).

character of their current state of unbelief, and in vv. 5-8 he contrasts two different ways of salvation. In vv. 9-13 Paul describes how one converts to Christ.

#### 8.4.1 Step One: Diagnosis of the Unserved – Ignorance, Sin and Shame

In 10:2 Paul noted a positive aspect of non-believing Jews - they had zeal.<sup>44</sup> To Paul this zeal reflected that non-believing Israel represented not just ethnic Jews but ethnic Jews who were, in their own way, faithful to Torah. Nevertheless, despite the wholeheartedness of Israel's zeal, it was οὐ κατ' ἐπίγνωσιν (Rom. 10:2) and this ignorance caused a fatal error in their approach to God. Zeal in the Second Temple period was the 'impassioned defense of the covenant by observance of the Law' (Smiles 2002, 298). Smiles suggests that 'the fault of "zeal" is that it misses that simple fact of the grace of love. In any religious tradition, pious zeal has much to commend it, but the perennial problem is that its righteousness is always in danger of missing "the righteousness of God"' (Smiles 2002, 299). Therefore, non-believing Jews, according to Paul, lost sight of the notion of salvation via election and tried to establish their own righteousness apart from the action of God (Rom 10:3).<sup>45</sup> God's righteousness was demonstrated most explicitly in the Christ event, and by not believing in it, they attempted to establish their own righteousness. For Paul, then, Israel's myopic understanding facilitated their inability to submit to God's righteousness.

To what extent does Paul see Israel's problem primarily as a lack of knowledge (ἐπίγνωσις, 10:2; ἀγνοέω, 10:3)? Is there a difference between the 'absence of knowledge' and 'fatefully inadequate knowledge of God' (Käsemann 1980, 280)? In order to answer this we must look to Paul's overall point that *all* humanity was truly ignorant of the ways of God, as he asked τίς γὰρ ἔγνω νοῦν κυρίου (Rom. 11:34)? No human possessed self-discovered *saving* knowledge of God (Rom. 1:19-20, 2:13-16). Paul's message was that all have a 'fatefully inadequate knowledge of God', and it is precisely for this reason Paul emphasized salvation by grace and not by works 'otherwise

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<sup>44</sup> Interestingly, he compliments those in Christ in a similar way (the affliction and poverty of the Christians in Corinth, 2 Cor. 8:3).

<sup>45</sup> While it may be argued that the Jews to whom Paul was referring would not have a 'theology of salvation by election' to lose sight of, this is precisely what Paul was accusing them of – whether or not they would agree with him and whether or not Paul's thought was in accordance with most Second Temple Jewish thinkers.

grace is no longer grace' (Rom. 11:6). The ultimate problem for Israel was the ultimate problem for all humanity (Rom. 3:23), which was that apart from Christ, Israel was still in her sin. It was only the Deliverer who could take that sin away (Rom. 11:27).

In addition to being in sin, having tried unsuccessfully to establish her own righteousness, Israel was found to be in shame. In Rom. 10:11, Paul, repeating Rom. 9:33b (cf. Is. 28:16) wrote that *whoever* believed in Christ would not be put to shame. Paul himself was not ashamed of the Gospel *because* it led to salvation to everyone who believed (Rom. 1:16).

What does 'shame' mean for Paul and why does he use it of unbelieving Israel?<sup>46</sup> Biblical scholars are increasingly aware that 'honor and shame' values were of great importance in the New Testament era and carried significant social ramifications (deSilva 1996, 433). But does Paul's use of 'shame' reflect more than just a social consequence? While Paul acknowledged the social aspect of shame,<sup>47</sup> he believed one should be more concerned with shame before God than with shame before family or other forms of social shame.

One finds striking parallels and differences between Paul's use of shame and that found in *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*.<sup>48</sup> In the passage below (2:9-11, 13), the writer warns his son that service to the Lord will not be without temptations (2:12). Yet, fear and trust in the Lord will be rewarded accordingly (2:8):

(9) You who fear the Lord, hope for good things, for everlasting joy and mercy. Consider the ancient generations and see: who ever trusted in the Lord and was put to shame? (10) Or who ever persevered in the fear of the Lord and was forsaken? Or who ever called upon him and was overlooked? (11) For the Lord is

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<sup>46</sup> Earlier in the letter (5:5), Paul stated that 'hope' does not κατασχύνει, but he almost certainly used this term to indicate 'disappointment' rather than 'shame'. This is reflected in all major English translations of the Bible (NASB, NIV, NET, NKJV, NLT, RSV); only the KJV and ESV rendered it 'shame'.

<sup>47</sup> This concept lends credence to the notion that Paul is indeed writing about conversion in Rom. 10. See my definition of conversion in chapter one, in which I follow Chester's argument that conversion is a noticeable change in self and is observed by society. That is, there is a social aspect of conversion.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. deSilva's article 'The Wisdom of Ben Sira: Honor, Shame, and the Maintenance of the Values of a Minority Culture' (1996), in which suggests that for the writer of Ben Sira it was 'obedience to Torah' by which one had a 'definitive claim to honor' (1996, 443-446).

compassionate and merciful; he forgives sins and saves in time of affliction...(13)  
Woe to the faint heart, for it has no faith! Therefore it will not be sheltered.

Ben Sira's wisdom highlighted God's mercy (2:9, 11) and relied on the compassionate character of God. As Skehan states, 'The reason why the faithful will never be put to shame or be forsaken or rebuffed is that the Lord is "compassionate and merciful"' (Skehan 1987, 151). Those who have faith in the Lord were not put to shame. Whoever called on the Lord would be answered by God in a positive fashion (2:10). The combination of God's character and one's call to God resulted in forgiveness and salvation (2:11).

This passage has striking parallels to Rom. 10. For Paul and Ben Sira, faith in the Lord led to the absence of shame. This absence of shame for Ben Sira was used in a context where those who were faithful were humiliated socially (2:4).<sup>49</sup> Thus the promise of not being ashamed concerned the opinion of God more than the opinion of mankind. Both Paul and Ben Sira did not want *God* to be ashamed of them.

Both writers equated calling to the Lord with salvation. For Ben Sira salvation was rescue from a 'time of affliction' and for Paul salvation guaranteed the love of Christ in the midst of affliction (Rom. 8:35-39). Despite motivational differences, both writers emphasized a positive response from God to whoever called on the Lord. Representing another similarity to Paul's passage (10:9 cf. v. 10), Ben Sira mentioned the importance of faith located in the heart. Indeed, the heart with no faith had no protection on the day of affliction. Where the writers diverge, of course, is with the content of faith. For Ben Sira faithfulness to the Lord was exemplified by the return to faithful Torah practice (v. 16 'those who love him will be filled with the law'; deSilva 1996, 443). For Paul, it was a turning from the practice of the law to a belief in Christ as the law's τέλος (10:4).

Ben Sira viewed Hellenization as a great danger to the fidelity of the Jewish people to their God. He taught, therefore, in opposition to the prevailing culture of his day, that true wisdom led to a strict obedience to Torah and that honor awaited those who obeyed. The converse was true, however, for those who did not follow the law. The disobedient would be put to shame. Indeed, 'transgression of the Law and apostasy from

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<sup>49</sup> 'Accept whatever befalls you, and in times of humiliation be patient.'

the covenant cancel out other claims to honor and meet with disgrace' (deSilva 1996, 454). For Paul, understanding Christ as the τέλος of Torah led one to salvation. Paul, in stark contrast with Ben Sira, believed that following the Torah as a way of salvation actually led to shame.<sup>50</sup>

#### 8.4.2 Step Two: Deconstructing the Way of Salvation through the Law (Rom 10:4-8)

Having studied the plight of the unsaved in this passage, we now look to the notion of salvation. Paul contrasted two different soteriological systems in vv. 4-8 – one via the law and the other via Christ. In Rom. 10:4 these two are pitted against each other – τέλος γὰρ νόμου Χριστός εἰς δικαιοσύνην παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι. The degree of their adversarial relationship, however, is difficult to assess.

Wright correctly identifies Rom. 10:4 as 'one of the most famous problems in all of Paul' (Wright 2002, 655). Calvin encapsulates the interpretive difficulty well by his comments on this verse: 'For Christ is the end of the law. The completion, or perfection, as Erasmus has translated it, is, I think, quite appropriate in this passage. Since, however, the other reading has received almost universal approval, and is also quite suitable, I leave it to my readers to retain it' (1961, 221). Calvin believed τέλος ought to be read as 'completion, or perfection' and yet insisted his readers understand it also as 'end.' The obvious internal inconsistency exemplifies the interpretive difficulty of this verse.<sup>51</sup> Interestingly, both ends of modern interpretation can be found in the quote from Calvin above. On one end of the interpretive spectrum are those following the *inclination* of Calvin such as Hays and Wright. Hays, for example, states that for Paul, 'This sentence explains...the real aim of the Law, the righteousness of God, *is* Jesus Christ' (1989, 76). Similarly, Wright argues that 'when the task is done and the time is up, the Torah reaches

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<sup>50</sup> Paul had unbelieving Israel in mind when he referred to the vessels for dishonor (ἀτιμία) in 9:21, and yet he continued by noting God's exceedingly patient nature in regard to them. Indeed, when unbelievers received salvation as in 10:10, they were effectively no longer vessels of dishonor. As it appears, Paul's primary purpose in Rom. 9-11 extended beyond an explanation of the unbelief of Israel. He trumped the discourse with a further explanation of God's method of election and hardening that gave hope of conversion to Israel even while she was in shame (Davis 2006).

<sup>51</sup> As such, this 'notorious' verse is at the heart of the controversy regarding the relationship between Paul and Judaism. Recent scholarship often adds to the controversy as it holds views across the spectrum of interpretive possibilities.

its goal, which is also the conclusion of its intended reign, not because it was a bad thing to be abolished but because it was a good thing whose job is done' (1991, 241). Furthermore, Wright states that the content of righteousness is found in the Torah: 'the Messiah is the goal of the Torah so that there may be righteousness – the righteousness of the "Torah of righteousness"! – for all who have faith' (Wright 2002 656-657). Wright concludes that 'in 10:4 Paul does not intend to declare the law's abrogation in favor of a different "system," but rather to announce that the Messiah is himself the climax of the long story of God and Israel, the story Torah tells and in which it plays a vital though puzzling part' (2002, 658).

At the other end are those following the *advice* of Calvin and see Christ as the decisive end of the law.<sup>52</sup> Käsemann, for example, states that '[t]he Mosaic Torah comes to an end with Christ because man now renounces his own right in order to grant God his right (3:4)' (1980, 284). He continues: 'Even for Israel no other possibility of salvation exists. Failing to understand the law, it falls into illusion and is overthrown. Christ exposes the illusion. When a person accepts him and his work he does not harden himself...' (Käsemann 1980, 283). Therefore, 'v. 4 refers to the end of the law, vv. 5 and 6...form a sharp antithesis extending even to details of the formulation' (1980, 284).<sup>53</sup>

According to Watson, the purpose of quoting Lev. 18:5 in v. 5 is to 'confirm the assertion of the previous verse, that "Christ is the end of the law" (10.4)' (Watson 2004, 332). He thus argues that the τέλος in v. 4 is best read as 'end' and not 'goal'. He further observes that '[t]he antithetical structure of Paul's language appears to rule out the possibility that the one could develop into the other in some kind of linear process...In its proclamation that "the person who does these things will live by them", the law promotes the pursuit of a righteousness of one's own, arising from an unformed zeal for God that is ignorant of God's saving action in Christ (cf. 10:2-3). In this context and in this sense, the law is brought to an end by Christ' (Watson 2004, 332). He concludes: 'The law that

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<sup>52</sup> Sanday and Headlam: τέλος = 'termination' (284)

<sup>53</sup> Representing a 'middle of the road' opinion between Wright and Käsemann, Moo emphasizes that Christ is the end of the law and that he was the 'culmination of the law' (1996, 642). As he states, 'Paul presents Christ as both end and goal of the law, much like the finish line of a race course' (Moo 2002, 63).

is brought to an end in Christ is the law whose soteriological rationale is summed up in the Leviticus citation' (Watson 2004, 333).<sup>54</sup>

The connection between 'establishing one's own righteousness' and the law must be noted. Paul argues that Israel's lack of knowledge about the law led them to use their revealed system (Rom. 9:4) in a way that was radically altered by the coming of the Christ. While Paul previously argued that the law led to the goal of the person of Christ (Gal. 3:24-25), here he chooses a different emphasis. Paul is advocating a Christ of a different 'system.'<sup>55</sup>

How one reads Romans 10:4 affects one's reading of vv. 5-8. Hays emphasizes that Paul seeks 'to establish his exposition in Israel's sacred text' (1989, 34) as at the beginning of his letter to the Romans, Paul noted that the scripture promised the coming of the Gospel (Rom. 1:2). Yet in 10:5-8 readers are greeted by perhaps the most idiosyncratic series of quotations of the Jewish Scriptures in all of Paul's writings.<sup>56</sup> The question subsequently posed to interpreters is 'what is Paul *really* doing in these verses?'

Similar to how Paul contrasted Christ and the Law in v. 4, in vv. 5-6, he contrasted the written word of Moses (Lev. 18:5) with that of the personified Word of righteousness. In Rom. 10:5, Paul stated that Moses presented righteousness from the

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<sup>54</sup> Watson explains the correlation of works and doing in Lev. 18:5 as follows:

That this correlation between 'works' and 'doing' was available to Paul is clear from Exodus 18.20 LXX, words of advice to Moses by this father-in-law: *And you shall proclaim to them the decrees of God and his law, and you shall show them the ways in which they shall walk, and the works which they shall do.* It is only a short step from this scriptural reference to God's 'law' and the 'works' it prescribes to the Pauline 'works of law'; and it is equally a short step from 'doing' to 'works' (2004, 334).

<sup>55</sup> However, Christ ending the law was actually predicted in the law itself. Ito suggests that while Paul explicitly contrasts his orally communicated Gospel with the written Torah, the Torah prophesied its end in Christ. Ito states that '[i]f we understand Romans 10 correctly, Paul's approach to the Torah seems to tally with his programmatic statement in Rom. 3:20-21. On the basis of Ps. 143 (LXX; 142):2 he declares that no one is justified by works of the Torah before God...but that the righteousness of God is manifested apart from the Torah, being witnessed by the Torah and the prophets...The saving efficacy of Torah is explicitly denied while its prophetic function is affirmed.' (Ito 2006, 259). Cf. Schreiner who also suggests rendering τέλος as end yet notes helpfully that 'this does not deny that Paul could use Lev. 18:5 in another context as a way of describing life within the covenant by the redeemed. What Paul objects to in Rom 9:30-10:8 is the use of the law as the source of righteousness or life' (1993, 134). Also see Badenas' monograph which leaves a 'both-and' position open while arguing that Paul primarily had 'goal' in mind here (1985).

<sup>56</sup> Paul by his radical rereading and rewriting of the Jewish Scriptures became 'the catalyst in a radical tendency criticism of the NT' (Käsemann 1980, 253). Along similar lines, Esler states that Paul's usage of the Jewish Scriptures is a blatant 'attempt to suppress Israel's identity' and it would have been 'bitterly resented' and 'laughed to scorn, by Israelites who came to hear of it' (2003, 287).

law, which emphasized personal effort, but this is at the conclusion of Paul's discussion of the principle of election and calling and does *not* occur by human effort. In Rom. 10:6, righteousness comes to life and assumes a personified state and appears to distance itself from Moses. Righteousness called on humans not to engage in an impossible *pursuit* of gaining Christ as if he were a prize to be earned. In v. 8 the word of faith then replaced the word of the law spoken of by Moses (Deut. 30:14). Moses wrote that the 'word', which was near, *was* the law and the return to the faithful observance of the law was the great sign of repentance that brought about salvation (Deut 30:1-10). But for Paul, the word of faith was the message of God's saving work in Christ. Thus 'doing' the law as Moses described, which brought about and preserved soteriological security, was to deny God's *definitive* work of salvation in the Christ-event.<sup>57</sup>

Wright suggests that 'the "doing of Torah", as specified in Leviticus, is practically fulfilled, according to Deuteronomy, when anyone, Jew or Gentile, hears the gospel of Christ and believes it' (1991, 244). Furthermore, 'Each of the three verses in Deuteronomy quoted here ends with the phrase "so that you may do it"; *this*, Paul is asserting, is the true "doing" of the Torah, of which Leviticus speaks' (1991, 244).<sup>58</sup> Likewise, 'Christ and Torah are fused together, so that when Christ is preached and believed, Torah is being paradoxically fulfilled' (1991, 244).<sup>59</sup> However, I find it difficult to deny Paul's contrast scheme. He seems to be overtly drawing a clear distinction between the notion of man's doing/action and God's doing throughout the whole of Rom. 9-11. To Paul, if 'believing' was the true 'doing', then would not 'believing' become another 'work' which Paul is arguing against (9:11, 32, 11:6)?<sup>60</sup> Paul does not appear to

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<sup>57</sup> The obvious question resurfaces, 'How does soteriology work for the Jew now that the law has met its end in Christ?' In anticipation of the needed explanation, Paul in Rom.10:9-10 explains the functions of the heart, mouth, confession, belief, and righteousness in formulaic fashion. It is *how* an unbeliever *becomes* a believer.

<sup>58</sup> Wright continues, 'Verse 5 is not a statement of a legalism that Paul will sweep aside. The *de* (de) that links vv. 5-6 does not indicate a direct antithesis or contraction, but a modification, a redefinition: "Yes, Moses does write Lev 18:5; but its key terms are then further explained in Deuteronomy 30" (2002, 662). Yet why does *Moses* write Lev 18:5? Was it not to show the link between doing and its result of life? And is it not that idea which Paul challenges by replacing 'works' with 'faith' and 'Christ'?

<sup>59</sup> Similarly, Hays argues that while Paul employs a hermeneutic of freedom, these 'novel interpretations' are nonetheless the 'true, eschatologically disclosed sense of the ancient text' (1989, 154). Indeed, 'The gospel Paul preaches is – so he contends – the hidden meaning of the word that was always near to Israel' (Hays 1989, 155).

<sup>60</sup> Wright would, no doubt, object to this by suggesting that, after all, it is the Holy Spirit who is at work, not the individual, so it is not really a 'work' in the meritorious sense of the term (Wright 2009, 239).

give a ‘fresh and creative reading of Deuteronomy 30’ (Wright 2002 663), but instead a different one.<sup>61</sup>

Paul wanted to emphasize the illegitimacy of works and human effort toward righteousness and salvation.<sup>62</sup> Watson states that the ‘journey would be to bring Christ down from heaven, the point of the other would be to bring him up from the realm of the death: the journeys are thus characterized as quests, arduous endeavors to acquire a remote and valuable object’ (2004, 337). Regarding the context of the Deuteronomy passage the quest of this ‘heroic agent’ is to ‘acquire the remote and valuable object...the commandment – that is needed for the people’s well-being’ (Watson 2004, 337). The result of such a quest was so that ‘the hero should bring back the commandment so that, hearing it, we might *do it*’ (Watson 2004, 337; emphasis mine). The ‘nearness’ of the word, for Moses, meant that ‘you can do it’, and obeying it was a choice between life and death (Watson 2004, 338). Therefore, Watson argues that Paul believed the ‘Deuteronomy text must be rewritten so that it testifies to the righteousness of faith, and *against* the righteousness of the law as articulated in the Leviticus citation’ (2004, 388).<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Others say that Paul is not really engaging with Moses here but he is just employing a simple gloss to prove his point. Calvin, for example, states, ‘He does not, therefore, repeat what Moses has said syllable by syllable, but employs a gloss, by which he adapts the testimony of Moses more closely to his own purpose’ (1961, 225). Sanday and Headlam along similar lines state ‘The Apostle selects certain words out of this passage and uses them to describe the characteristics of the new righteousness by faith as he conceives it’ (Sanday and Headlam 1902, 286).

<sup>62</sup> Of course, Paul *did* have a positive understanding of human works and effort as he showed elsewhere (Phil. 2:12-13, 3:10-12; Gal. 5:6). His point here though is to show the uselessness of works/human effort in achieving righteousness apart from Christ’s work.

<sup>63</sup> Watson continues ‘In rewriting Deuteronomy from the perspective of the righteousness of faith, Paul is addressing himself to the Leviticus text, with its articulation of the righteousness that is by the law. At this point, it becomes possible to answer another of the many questions raised by this enigmatic passage: the question why Paul is interested in the prohibited quest motif (Rom 10. 6-7), and why he does not confine himself to the statement about the nearness of the word (10:8-10). According to Paul’s rewrite of Deuteronomy, we are not to undertake a self-directed quest for Christ, seen as a passive object resident either in heaven or in the underworld – it hardly matters which. We are not to undertake any such quest because the inert Christ who must be brought to us by human initiative simply does not exist. The incarnate and risen Christ is already present among us as the result of a divine saving initiative that we can only acknowledge and confess, thereby attaining the righteous standing before God that the divine saving initiative itself intends. The motif of the impossible quest for Christ serves as a foil for Paul’s subsequent statements about the actuality of God’s saving action’ (2004, 340).

Paul's overall disagreement, then, with his brothers according to the flesh was that 'they strive to live out the programme summarized in Leviticus 18.5, literally understood' (Watson 2004, 335).<sup>64</sup> Furthermore, what Paul wished them to know was the following:

The law's project has now been brought to an end by the divine saving action in Christ. The continuing practice of the law as the way to righteousness and life presupposes that God has *not* acted in Christ, in his descent from heaven to take human form and in his resurrection from the dead (cf. Rom. 10.6-9). But in fact, God *has* so acted, and his action intends its own acknowledgement in human mouths and hearts' (Watson 2004, 335).<sup>65</sup>

Dewey notes the missional aspect of Rom. 10:6-8 (1994). Jews, who were zealous for the law, desired others to follow it as well, and Dewey argues that this Deut. 30 text was used implicitly as motivation for the Jewish mission. Thus Paul in this text acknowledges its popular usage but contrasts it with the Gospel mission. It is not the attainment of the law through transcendent effort that saves, but actually putting faith in the word of Christ that has been already preached to them that saves. Note how Dewey shows this contrast:

(6) But the relationship of trust says: (Pauline personification)

'Don't say in your heart, (Deut 9:4)

who will climb up to the sky?' (Deut 30:13) which is, to bring  
Christ down (Jewish Mission language applied)

(7) 'Or who will plunge into the abyss?' (Deut 30:13)

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<sup>64</sup> Another option, offered by Fuller, is that Paul understood Lev. 18:5 in its original sense of offering temporal life with blessing in the land but for that reason is inadequate to bring eternal life, which it never promised to offer (2000, 463-474).

<sup>65</sup> Therefore, the heart of the disagreement concerns the difference between 'human and divine saving initiative' and not 'Jewish exclusiveness and Pauline universalism' (Watson 2004, 335-336). Watson concludes 'Paul's controversy with "Judaism"...is whether interpretive priority is to be given to a particular mode of divine agency (the making of an unconditional promise) or of human agency (the observance of the commandments)' (2004, 528).

which is, to bring Christ back from the dead. (Jewish Mission language applied)

(8) But what does it say? (Pauline personification)

‘Near you is the word – in your mouth

in your heart,’ (Deut 30:14)

that is, the word of trust which we announce. (Gospel Mission language applied)

In summary, the Gospel mission of preaching the word of Christ which is in one’s heart is contrasted with the attainment of the law which is worked for by going up in the sky or down into the abyss. Hence faith for Paul was not a work but an acknowledgement that the work has already been done by Christ. Without Christ one is in sin and shame. Without Christ one is left to establish one’s own righteousness. One can try to achieve what Christ has already achieved or one can respond to the word of Christ which testifies to that which is already accomplished.

#### 8.4.3 Step Three: Establishing the Oral Gospel against the Written Law

As observed by countless scholars, Paul draws a distinction between the written law and the oral Gospel. For example, the groundbreaking work of Kelber (1983) detected the oral aspect of Paul’s letters in general and Romans 10:14-17 in particular, calling it the *locus classicus* of this phenomenon. It is in here that ‘the oral gospel partakes in the itinerant mode of apostolic action’ (Kelber 1984, 149). Building on the work of Kelber, Dewey has broadened the scope of orality in this passage to Rom. 10:1-19 and believes it to be the key, which unlocks the meaning of this chapter: ‘The essential clue in Romans 10 is its fundamental orality. Here orality is not the indication of a social traditionalist. Rather, this orality signals a direction contrary to the basic directions of the established social lines and centers. It is much more a grass roots approach, an attempt at building a popular coalition, which would permit universal access to the source of genuine power – God’ (Dewey 1994, 126).

While Dewey may be overstating his case, the following reading of Rom 10:1-19 from Dewey indeed shows an emphasis on the orality of the Gospel *and* the orality of how it is to be responded to:

- (1) *Comrades*, my heart's desire and *prayer* to God is for their well-being.
- (2) I *swear* they have desire for God but not understanding.
- (3) For, in being unaware of the proper relation with God, and in attempting to maintain their own, they haven't come to terms with the proper relation with God.
- (4) Christ is the point of [the] tradition, for a solid relation with everyone who trusts.
- (5) Now *Moses writes* about the relationship from tradition: 'The person who does these things will live by them'
- (6) But the relationship of trust *says*: 'Don't *say* in your heart, who will climb up to the sky?' which is to say, to bring Christ down.
- (7) 'Or who will plunge into the abyss?' which is, to bring Christ back from the dead.
- (8) But what does *she say*? 'Near you is the *word* – in *your mouth* – in your heart,' that is, the *word* of trust that we *announce*.
- (9) Because if you *confess with your mouth* 'Jesus is Lord!' and trust in your heart that 'God raised him from the dead,' you will be all right.
- (10) Trusting in one's heart results in genuine relationship and *confessing with one's mouth* brings well-being.
- (11) For the *written* tradition *says*: 'Everyone who trusts in him will not be ashamed.'
- (12) Nor is there any social distinction between Jew and Greek – the same Lord is Lord of all, enriching all who *appeal* to him.
- (13) For 'everyone who *appeals* in the Lord's *name* will benefit.'
- (14) Now, then, how can they *appeal* to someone whom they haven't trusted? How can they trust one they haven't *heard about*? How can they *hear* without someone *announcing* [it]?

- (15) How can they *announce* unless they are sent? Just so, it is written: ‘How welcome are the feet of those who *deliver* good *news*.’
- (16) But not all listen to the *news*. Isaiah says: ‘Lord, who believed what they *heard* from us?’
- (17) Trust, thus, comes from actually *hearing*, *hearing through the word* of Christ.
- (18) But, I say, did they not *hear*? Of course! ‘Their *voice* went out to all the earth to the ends of the world their *words*.’
- (19) But, I say, didn’t Israel understand? First *Moses* says: ‘I will make you envious of a non-people. I will make you angry over a foolish people.’
- (20) Thus *Isaiah* dares to *say*: ‘I was found by those not looking for me. I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me’
- (21) But regarding Israel *he* says: ‘All day long I help out my hands to a disbelieving and contrary people.’

In these 21 verses there are 26 references to orality, which can at first be seen in contrast to the written word (v. 5) but then are confirmed by the written word (v. 11). Orality is important because it is explicitly related to conversion: one hears the word and one confesses the word and is thus saved. The role of the preacher is that he exemplified the means of God’s righteousness – one does not earn it, one merely listened to it. Ito states that ‘Rom 10 occupies a central place in the larger section, chapters 9-11, where Paul struggles with the problem of Jewish rejection of the gospel...he squarely faces the fact that many Jews have not believed in the oral gospel, but his optimistic tone seem to be heard in his emphasis on the orality of the gospel’ (Ito 2006, 260). This optimism occurred because Paul believed in the effectiveness of his Gospel and that individuals could and would respond. Therefore, in establishing a strong notion of an ‘oral’ Gospel, Paul wishes to build a novel way one can respond to the Gospel so that it could not be construed as a work. The means by which one *hears* the Gospel is a clue to show how one is to *respond* to the Gospel.

#### 8.4.4 Step Four: Confessing Jesus as Divine

If Watson is correct to insist that vv. 5-8 are about the importance of divine agency over and against human agency, then the verses that immediately follow show that Paul was not afraid to articulate the role of human agency within that of the divine. Not surprisingly, Calvin sensed the soteriological difficulty with these verses as he bluntly criticized Paul. He stated that ‘the order would have been better if the faith of the heart had been put first, and the confession of the mouth, which arises from it, had followed’ (1961, 227). He explained further that ‘We should not, however, conclude from this that our confession is the cause of our salvation. Paul’s desire was solely to show how God accomplishes our salvation, viz. by making faith, which He has put into our hearts, show itself by confession’ (Calvin 1961, 228).<sup>66</sup> Yet, the striking aspect of this confession is the formulaic structure of it.<sup>67</sup> The conditional ἐὰν ὁμολογήσῃς ἐν τῷ στόματί σου κύριον Ἰησοῦν is uncomplicated as are the results: σωθήσῃ.

In his monograph, *The Deliverance of God*, Campbell argues against *any* notion of conditionality as it concerns salvation (2009). He suggests that Paul in Rom. 10:9-10 explains the normative beliefs/confessions of saved people – not how one becomes a ‘saved’ person at a particular point in time. He states that ‘Paul’s account of saving belief in Romans 10 affirms them in their current saved location rather than presenting them with a condition that they need to fulfill in order to be saved’ (Campbell 2009, 831). The problem with this, however, as stated in the introduction, is that the immediate context of Romans 10 is the *unsaved* ‘location’ of non-Christian Jews and, furthermore, Paul’s desire to see them become saved. Hence Campbell’s assertion that Paul is affirming the *already* saved in this text is unlikely.

Another problem in Campbell’s thesis regards the *reoccurring* nature of the confession/belief in Rom. 10:9-10 – especially when read in light of Paul’s description of baptism in Rom. 6:3-11. Paul begins that section with the question ‘Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?’ Similar to the conditional statements in Rom. 10, Paul *twice* states conditional sentences in response to this initial question. Paul states in Rom 6:5, ‘For if [εἰ γὰρ] we have been

<sup>66</sup> Regarding the mouth and the heart, Paul may be referencing a passage in Ezekiel (33:31) in which the word of the prophet was on the mouths of Israel, yet their heart was after greedy gain.

<sup>67</sup> While there may have been a pre-Pauline confession of Jesus as Lord, attempts to define just what it was have been largely unsuccessful (Beasley-Murray 1980, 147-154).

united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his' and he follows that in v. 8 with 'Now if [εἰ δε] we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.' Paul's point is that in order to have the power of the risen Christ in overcoming sin, one *must first* have been baptized/united with Jesus in his death; only then could one also be united with him in his resurrection. Paul points back to a certain time when (or if) this had happened in the life of his readers; that is, Paul points to their conversion/baptism as the foundation from which they can now 'walk in newness of life' (Rom. 6:3).<sup>68</sup> As it relates then to Rom. 10:9-10 it is no coincidence that what is to be believed in is precisely Jesus' resurrection. Hence there is good reason why the 'confession' and 'belief' in Rom. 10:9-10 has been understood as a 'one-time' event in connection with baptism stretching back at least 1600 years.<sup>69</sup>

The role of confession is an important aspect of Paul's notion of the event of conversion. Rowe observes that 'What is generally missed...is the cumulative rhetorical effect of the return to the use of the connective γάρ in 10:10, 11, 12 [2], 13 in conjunction with both the thematic coherence of the opening sentence in 10:1 with 10:13, and the shifting logical question of 10:14. The use of γάρ five times within 10:10-13 not only connects the phrases to each other, but also gives the reader a sense of being pulled or drawn toward some expected end' (2000, 140-141). The end for which Rowe is arguing is the unbiased way that an individual, whether Jew or Gentile, is saved. Note the progression that Rowe outlines:

*For* in the heart it is believed...

*For* the Scripture says...

*For* there is no distinction...

*For* the same Lord is Lord of all...

*For* all who call on the name of the Lord shall be saved...'

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<sup>68</sup> Paul's act of baptism was a very important 'point in time' experience as expressed in its ultimate malfunction in 1 Cor. 1:14-17.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. Dodd 1959, 178; Kasemann 1980, 291; Bultmann 1951, 81 and 312; Cranfield 1979, 527 and reaching as far back as Augustine who stated regarding Rom. 10:9-10 'This condition is fulfilled at the time of baptism, when faith and profession of faith are all that is demanded for one to be baptized' in *The Christian Life*, 13 (noted in Bray's *Romans Ancient Commentary* 1998, 276).

As Rowe states, ‘this progression...recalls Paul’s initial entreaty in 10:1,...picks up four uses of γάρ (10:2, 3, 4, 5) preceding Paul’s rereading of Deuteronomy, and...deepens the “you will be saved” (σωθήση) of 10:9...even as it...presses forward with rhetorical force toward the climatic quotation of Joel 2:32 in 10:13.’ (Rowe 2000, 141). The call to the Lord demonstrates the openness of those who can respond – that is, anyone, whether Jew or Gentile can call to the Lord.

Hence the call of mankind to God shows two things: first, the nature of the call is that of an oral confession of what Christ has already done. Second, calling shows that responding to God is not limited to a particular ethnicity – all who call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

While this climatic confession is open to all, one must not downplay the deep religious conversion it requires – becoming a Christian meant you had to change Gods. As we saw in Chapter Two, Bultmann points out that for Paul faith has a dogmatic quality to it. Faith was always ‘faith in...’ something (2.1; 1955, 300). It is a ‘confession’ in which one believes in certain facts. But what is this ‘faith in’ at its core for Paul?

Capes states: ‘at the level of exegesis he [Paul] brings Christ into intimate relation to YHWH and posits Christ in an eschatological role which Scripture reserves for God’ (Capes 1994, 124). Regarding Paul’s usage of Joel 2:32, ‘So in light of the christocentric focus of Rom. 9:33-10:13, the emphasis upon the resurrection, the relation with Paul’s eschatology, and the confession “Jesus is Lord,” there can be little doubt that, in quoting Joel 2:32, Paul refers this YHWH text to the Lord Jesus Christ’ (Capes 1994, 136). It is necessary for to have one’s fundamental understanding of God changed, to experience conversion, for Paul requires that at the center of YHWH would be Jesus himself.<sup>70</sup>

#### 8.4.5 Step Five: Believing in the Heart

The genius of the oral Gospel for Paul was that it could penetrate into one’s heart. As has already been established, it was the heart of humanity that at the core was its deepest problem. The heart of mankind, because of sin, was fundamentally unable to

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<sup>70</sup> Cf. Lührmann’s article ‘Confesser sa foi à l’époque apostolique’ in which he argues that Paul’s ‘faith’ language refers to the act of conversion itself and to the transference of belief from the Jewish creed of God being one to that of Christ being Divine (1985).

turn itself to God (Rom. 2:5). However, in having the word of Christ preached, that word is already in the heart to begin the regenerative effect of salvation. One can try (unsuccessfully) to attain the word or one can respond to the word that is already proclaimed.

Keck has suggested that the pivot upon which the ‘logic of Paul’s soteriology’ swings is the resurrection of Jesus from the dead (Keck 2004). Indeed, as has been argued by Martyn, it is in understanding the death and *resurrection* of Jesus that Paul’s way of understanding salvation becomes clear: ‘The cross is the epistemological crisis for the simple reason that while it is followed by the resurrection, it is not replaced by the resurrection’ (1997, 109). Yet, it is by virtue of Jesus’ resurrection that Paul is confident that he is at the crossroads of that age which is to come (1997, 95). As for those who confess and believe in Jesus’ resurrection, they themselves are the fruits of this age as they could be called a *καὶνὴ κτίσις* (2 Cor. 5:17). For Paul, Jesus’ resurrection was the ‘generative event’ that enables salvation. It is with the resurrection that the necessity for conversion is felt in that at Jesus’ resurrection the times of ignorance were officially over (Rom. 3:25). Keck questions that resurrection for Paul can ever be ‘demythologizable’ (1 Cor. 15:17), because simply ‘obeying Jesus and following his example’ is insufficient to ‘save us from our sins’ (Keck 2004, 20). Therefore, while the ‘connection of salvation with verbal confession of Jesus as Lord is not so obvious’ (Wright 1991, 664), its connection with belief in the resurrection of Jesus shows this to be a moment of salvation, that is, conversion. Thus, while Käsemann states that v. 9 ‘does not mean...the faith of the heart but adherence to the confession’ and a ‘summary of the gospel which can be taught and learned, as in 1 Cor 15:3-5’ (1980, 291), this view appears short-sighted. Paul wishes to show the immediacy of salvation to those who believe in Jesus’ resurrection through a crying out to the Lord. The result of this confession is justification,<sup>71</sup> just as the result of the belief in the heart is salvation.

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<sup>71</sup> Wright states ‘At this point I am implicitly in dialogue with a general trend, at least since the sixteenth century, to make “conversion” and “justification” more or less coterminous – a trend that has been on its way when “conversion” is understood as “the establishment of a personal relationship with God” and justification has been understood in a “relational” sense, with the meaning not of membership in the covenant as in the Old Testament, but of the personal relationship between a believer and God...Paul has a regular technical term for this moment, and it is neither “justification” nor “conversion” (though he can employ the latter from time to time); the word in question is “call” (Wright 2006, 255-256 in *Justification in Perspective* edited by B. McCormick; See Piper’s criticism of Wright in *The Future of Justification: A*

## Conclusions

At this point we can draw some conclusions about Paul and conversion. Referring to our three theological questions established in Chapter One, we see that the change involved in conversion is one in which God calls something into existence. God's call is what makes one a son or daughter of God. In order to answer the question whether or not God's word had failed in the face of Jewish rejection of the Gospel, Paul explained that God's call and God's own mercy creates his children as a potter makes objects out of his own clay.

The reason why conversion was necessary was because of sin and shame. In the previous chapter we saw that humanity was given over to the power of sin. In this chapter we see what happens if one pursues one's own righteousness via the law. That is, if one did not choose Christ one was left to his or her own righteousness which leads to being shamed by God. While choosing Christ may cause social problems for an individual, leading to that person being shamed by society, for Paul it was more important not to have God ashamed of the individual.

Regarding the third question about agency we see two dynamics at play. First, Paul believed in the agency of God in salvation. God's agency did not highlight arbitrary behavior but rather was used in an outwardly focused way that ironically benefited both the elect and the hardened. That is, God's action in election and hardening had a forward propulsion to it which emphasized God's agency but also demonstrates the ever expanding trajectory of his kindness and mercy to all. Second, God's agency highlighted the decreased role of mankind in salvation – the clay has nothing to say to the potter but is completely in his hands. Because God is the agent, humanity is therefore humbled – it can do nothing in regards to achieving its own status as children of God. God's call creates a people who are not in existence into a people who are in existence. For Paul the solution of mankind, furthermore, is not found in the simple return to God in accordance

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*Response to N.T. Wright 2007 and Wright's response to Piper in Justification 2009).* But as 10:10 shows, justification, at least as it is used by Paul here, is coterminous with conversion. Furthermore, it is specifically tied to the confession of Jesus' resurrection. Paul states in Rom. 4:25 that Jesus ἠγέρθη διὰ τὴν δικαίωσιν ἡμῶν.

with what we saw in Chapter Seven. Rather, with Paul's exalted theology of God's agency in salvation established, Paul then had room to describe how one *is* converted to Christ and it is here that we see how human agency in conversion works for Paul. This agency could not be perceived as itself a work but instead simply as a confession of what Christ has already accomplished by *his* work of resurrection (Rom. 10:6-7). As we saw in Chapter Seven, it was the human heart that was the main problem for mankind (Rom. 2:4-5) and yet Paul's 'the word of Christ' based on Deut. 30, had the ability to go *into* the human heart. That is, the word of Christ is 'near you, in your mouth and in your heart' (Rom. 10:8).

In contrast to the written law, which highlighted the 'doing' of salvation, Paul presented an oral Gospel which was itself a clue by which one could respond to God's action salvifically. It is precisely through the vehicle of an oral confession or call by an individual by which one can be saved. Also, because this is a verbal call this means that such a response was open to anyone – whether Jew or Gentile. Furthermore, we saw that as Bultmann observed, this call is also a confession of something in particular – a 'faith in...'. For Paul this call is a confession of the Lordship of Jesus. This human call to the Lord was a weighty one in that, especially for Jews, it required them to place Jesus in the center of their fundamental orthodox confession of the oneness of YHWH.

## CHAPTER NINE

### CONCLUSIONS TO PART TWO

At this point we can answer our three theological questions posed in Chapter One.

#### *What is the change involved in conversion?*

As we discovered in Chapter Seven the change for Paul in conversion was not understood as a traditional ‘return’ to God. We argued that Paul’s use of repentance in Rom. 2 was a tool to show that this means of restoration with God was no longer viable. Paul wanted to bring his readers to despair by taking away the normal means of conversion – repentance. Humanity did not just have an impenitent heart, but because of the power of sin, the human heart was actually incapable of repentance. Hence, for humanity to have restoration with God it was in total need of God to act on its behalf. In Chapter Eight we saw how this happens. The change in conversion was based on a divine call in which God creates a people out of nothing. God creates his children and as such conversion is an act in which there is an ontological discontinuity between the individual in the past and the one who is now a believer. The key to conversion then, based on God’s call, is to understand that Christ has achieved by his resurrection that which all other religious endeavors try but fail to achieve. By preaching the word of Christ, the word has the ability to penetrate the unrepentable human heart. Thus conversion is a recognition and confession that the work of salvation has already been accomplished by Christ. In this way conversion is itself not a work for Paul but an acknowledgement of the work of Christ.

#### *Why is conversion necessary?*

Conversion is necessary because God had, in times past, handed people over to their own sin. As such, all sinners are subject to the wrath of God. By not repenting they were storing up even more wrath from God. But as we saw, even repentance was not really an option anymore. The human heart was infected by and under the power of sin. Thus humanity could not do on their own what they needed to do, and what God required them

to do to escape God's wrath. Conversion was necessary but humans were in total need of God to act on their behalf to reconcile them to himself. The state of not being converted to Christ is that of shame. Paul acknowledged that social shame may be a negative byproduct of conversion. However, he reminded his readers that social shame is much more tolerable than to endure being shamed by God.

*Who is responsible for conversion?*

God is the ultimate agent in conversion. God creates his children as a potter makes objects out of clay – both the child and the objects have nothing to do with their own existence. However, there is an aspect to human agency, within this notion of divine agency. The word of Christ can penetrate the human heart, and in confessing the work of Christ in resurrection, one can be converted. In this way, faith or believing cannot be construed as a work. Instead, faith or believing is the confession that this saving work has already been accomplished by the Christ.

As we saw in Chapter Seven, Paul's description of repentance alluded to a Deuteronomy passage that depicted a return to the law. While Paul does have a positive use for repentance, it is in the context of a restoration of a wayward Christian – not connected with the conversion of a non-Christian. In Chapter Eight we see that Christ is the end of the law. In this way, because repentance was closely connected to a return to the law, Paul described conversion without using repentance language in order not to confuse his message about the work of Christ in accomplishing salvation. Hence, Paul describes humans as *unchangeable*; their only hope is to encounter a God whose call is equally *unchangeable*.

## CHAPTER 10

### LUKE AND PAUL: COMPARISONS AND CONCLUSIONS

*Don't bury the lead in the body of your story. As a TV news viewer,  
I'm poised to change the channel.*

- Quoted from Steve Garagiola in *TV News: Writing and Surviving*, p. 20.

In the first chapter of this dissertation, I noted my hope to extract and communicate as best I can what Luke and Paul actually believed regarding the phenomenon of conversion. Due to my methodological approach, I have knowingly imposed the agenda of this thesis *onto* the writings of Luke and Paul and have asked them to answer questions that they may or may not have been asking themselves. However, I have tried to remain true to the details of text. As such, it has been acknowledged throughout this thesis that the actual thoughts of Luke and Paul may have, at certain points, given way to the purpose of my thesis.

The rise of the early church numerically is an historical fact; and to engage in a theological and exegetical exploration into Paul's and Luke's notions of conversion is an important task both theologically and historically. Borrowing from Bockmuehl's imagery of investigative reporting (1998), we have attempted to probe the theology of Luke and Paul by looking closely at selected portions of their rhetorical/literary products. We have used the three theological questions posed in Chapter One throughout this project to help us probe deep into the conversion theologies of Luke and Paul. At this point we can now see what these theological questions have helped us discover regarding the theological relationship between Luke and Paul. With the advice not to 'bury the lead', let me now turn to our top-line findings.

## 10.1 Justification of Texts Used

An important element of this dissertation has been the selection of texts in Luke and Paul that could reasonably be considered representative of their views on conversion. Beginning in Chapter Two we explored the contribution of important Pauline and Lukan scholars and one of our three stated aims in that chapter was to discover which texts in the Lukan and Pauline corpus were most relevant to the topic of conversion. Based on our findings in that chapter we saw that Luke 15, Acts 17:16-34, Acts 2, Rom. 9-11 and Rom. 2 were considered in many ways the nuclei of Luke's and Paul's theologies of conversion. Furthermore, in *each* of the following chapters additional justification was offered for selecting these texts for our exploration. While studying these texts alone could, in *no way*, provide material for an exhaustive analysis, I trust that enough justification has been offered to affirm that they *characterize*, in some ways, Luke's and Paul's overall thought process regarding the notion of conversion. Yet, my limited approach diminishes one's confidence that these texts are indeed representative because I have not been able to explore enough of the corresponding conversion texts in Luke and Paul to make such a claim. Hence as the title of my thesis suggests: below are the findings of *some* exegetical and theological studies of conversion in Luke and Paul.

## 10.2 Similarities between Paul and Luke

Since the groundbreaking work by Baur in the nineteenth century a theological wedge has divided these twin towers of early Christianity and we have seen in our investigation that, indeed, notable dissimilarities emerge between them. However, before we get to these differences, I do not want to overlook the *similarities* between Luke and Paul, some of which are quite significant.

Both Luke and Paul understood successful conversion to be impossible without the intervention of an agency outside of the pre-convert. For Paul this agency is depicted as God's dramatic action of New Creation – making something out of nothing. Conversion for Paul was ultimately a 'decision' made by God about people, not people about God. For Luke this agency was depicted as the father in Luke 15, Paul's spirit and proclamation in Acts 17 and Peter's preaching in Acts 2; without these agencies, the son,

the Athenians and the Jews in Jerusalem were, in terms of being able to achieve restoration with God, *dead* to God. As the father in Luke 15:24 stated, ‘For this my son *was dead*, and is alive again.’ Hence there is a sense of fundamental ontological disunity in both Luke and Paul between someone before and after conversion.

Luke and Paul both make room for a responding human agency in conversion. While Luke allows for an expanded notion of human agency (see below) both he and Paul reveal a confession of the Lordship of Jesus as a key element of conversion. This confession, while prompted by God’s agency, is a genuine expression of human agency nevertheless. Both quote from Joel 2:32 at crucial points in their depictions of conversion revealing a ‘point-in-time’ appropriation of salvation in response to the action of the divine agent. Indeed, ‘everyone who calls on the name of the Lord [יְהוָה] shall be saved.’ Moreover this confession, in which both Luke and Paul point to Jesus as *YHWH*, shows a common belief between them regarding the divine status of Jesus.

Another similarity between Luke and Paul is the centrality of Christology in conversion. For Luke, the context of the prodigal son was *Jesus* being surrounded by repentant sinners whom he had welcomed into fellowship. For Luke, it was *Jesus* who poured out the Spirit on the day Pentecost in Acts 2. For the Athenians and the Jews in Jerusalem it was the resurrection of Jesus and his return in judgment that prompted the need for conversion. For Paul, it was the confession of Jesus’ achievement of resurrection and ascension, which, like the Jews in Jerusalem, prompted the confession of the Lordship of Jesus. In all these cases, it was the significance and magnitude of Jesus, his triumph in resurrection and his position of authority, which permeated the entire conversion process. Before the resurrection, God had overlooked times of ignorance, but with the resurrection both God’s wrath on sin and salvation in his risen Son is declared. In these ways, the theologies of Paul and Luke come into alignment.

### 10.3 Dissimilarities between Luke and Paul

With these similarities noted above, we now turn to the dissimilarities. For Luke, conversion was depicted primarily as a *return* to the Lord, the Creator and Father. The very notion of return (repentance) assumed a fundamental changeability in humanity that is absent in Paul. For Paul, conversion was an act by God as a New Creation – it was not

a *return* at all but a bringing into existence of something that did not exist before. The only time Paul used repentance in an effectual sense was within the context of wayward *Christians* returning to faithfulness – not of the conversion of non-Christians to Jesus. While we noted above that *successful* repentance, for Luke, was never achieved without the agency of God Luke was much more comfortable expanding the boundaries of human agency than Paul was.

For Paul the notion of human changeability was no longer valid because of the power of sin in the heart of humanity. Effective human turning to God was rendered impossible because the heart was, itself, unrepentable. Humanity could *not* change and its only hope was to encounter an outside rescuing force that could transform them into something new. For Paul, the hope of conversion rested in an understanding of God whose call and gifts are unchanging, not in an understanding of humanity whose nature is changeable. Paul's vision of conversion consisted of a radical act of New Creation, while Luke's vision of conversion consisted of a restored *imago dei* depicted in the original creation.

A key text that both Luke and Paul referred to in these important passages was Deut. 30. I argued that the repentance used by Paul in Rom. 2:4-5 evoked the type of repentance expressed in Deut. 30. The function of this repentance for Paul was to show humanity to be in a more desperate situation than a simple *return* to the Lord conveyed. Moreover, the repentance mentioned in Deut. 30 was a return *to the law*; the very action Paul was arguing against. Hence he used this sort of repentance to show it was not useful towards restoration with God. Paul evoked this same passage in Rom. 10 to suggest a way to overcome the sinful heart problem which had rendered human centered repentance void. Paul saw imbedded in Deut. 30 that the *word of Christ* as declared in preaching could penetrate into the sinful and unrepentable human heart. If one confessed this word of Christ found in one's heart, which stated that Christ had achieved what they could not achieve, then salvation could become a possibility.

In contrast, Luke used Deut. 30 positively to evoke one's desire to return to God. However, Luke suggested that *effective* and *lasting* repentance did not, in the end, rest on the quality of the repentance of the individual. Regardless of the sincerity of one's repentance, it was God – the one who circumcises the heart – who would enact final

restoration. As Luke showed in Luke 15, the repentance of the prodigal could, at best, earn the status of a servant. Only the father had the power to declare the prodigal to be fully restored as a *son* not just as a servant.

For Paul, understanding agency in conversion begins with a strong notion of God's calling. Within this notion of divine agency, human agency is explained as a human call and confession to God about Jesus' achievement of resurrection. While acknowledging God's overarching sovereignty, Luke's *starting point* in describing conversion was not that of divine agency, but that of human reasoning and curiosity. The son comes to his senses first and then comes to the Father. The Athenians ask questions, are seeking after God, worshiping him, then later find out what it is God has done with the 'man' with whom God will judge the world. Likewise, the Jews in Acts are worshiping God, asking questions about the Spirit and only later find out who Jesus really is and learn how it is God has treated him. For both the Jews and the Athenians questions were asked and answers were provided which led to their conversions. Hence, both human *intellect* and *dialogue* played an important role in Luke's conception of the conversion process.

In his writings, Luke describes God-fearers and other 'righteous' pre-converts who seek after God and indeed, after being confronted with the gospel, actually find God. The son had 'come to his senses' *before* encountering the father. The Athenians were *already* worshiping before being confronted by Paul. The Jews in Jerusalem were described as 'righteous' and were *already* worshiping before being confronted by Peter. The Ethiopian was *already* reading scripture before being confronted by Philip. Cornelius was *already* praying and giving alms to the poor before being confronted by a heavenly messenger and Lydia was *already* praying before being confronted by Paul. These seekers, as depicted by Luke, were already headed in the right direction. Of course, without meeting Paul, Peter, Philip and God's angel these seekers would never find God; however, Luke does not downplay the sincerity of their quest. In contrast to Luke, Paul writes that *in spite* of what they may think, people actually have *no* fear of God. *In spite* of an appearance of seeking God, people, in reality, do *not* seek after him (Rom. 3:18). Indeed, as if to make his point painfully clear, those who do *not* seek God are the ones who, ironically, are found by him (Rom. 10:20). It is as if Luke wishes to validate and

*perhaps even encourage* an idea of seeking and curiosity in the mind of his readers while Paul wishes to subvert any notion of *human centered* reaching towards God.

For Luke, conversion has a sense of belongingness to it. The son was in a far off country and yet *missed* his home and came back – this whole process was ‘coming to his senses’. The Jews in Acts were witnessing the Spirit and yet this was the Spirit that was *for them* – it was *their* promise that they were missing out on. For the Athenians, they *were* God’s offspring – searching for him and groping for him. Furthermore, they knew they ought to be worshipping him as well. In all these cases, Luke projects a sense of continuity between a pre-convert’s *searching* and his or her eventual *finding*.

Of course, in all of these, their sense of longing and their searching is not good enough alone. Luke seems to tap into what the seekers may be actually feeling and thinking. Luke tries to understand the assumptions of these seekers. However, he unsettles them by saying that their seeking alone is not good enough. They must turn home to the father. They must deal with the Messiah whom they had rejected. They must engage with the God who will one day judge the world.

Luke’s articulation of conversion begins with what the pre-converts actually know and believe. After that foundation is built, he then constructs what it is these pre-converts do not know. For the Jews in Acts 2, Luke explains the Gospel to them by beginning with what they know about Jesus (he was a miracle worker) and then from that he explained what they did not know – Jesus was risen from the dead, Lord and Messiah. To the Athenians, Luke affirmed that they knew they ought to worship God, indeed, they even believed they were God’s children (offspring) – yet, onto that, Luke builds the case that this God *also* created the world. Furthermore, to worship the creation rather than the Creator offends him. This God will judge the world one day, hence Luke creates in this audience an uneasiness that is a motivation for conversion. They ought to find out about the real meaning of Jesus and resurrection.

Paul did not wish to build on what his readers already knew, but rather wanted to subvert their previously held understanding about how they attained their status as children of God. Paul’s description of conversion produced fear and humility among those who were already saved. He explained conversion in a way that the already converted could not take personal pride or credit for their state of salvation. The

converted could not look down with arrogance upon those who were not converted. If one was a child of God one ought to be humbled not prideful because being a child of God had *nothing* to do with the person but everything to do with the Father who called them to be so. They were God's children based solely on what God had done, not based on what they had done themselves. Moreover, Paul's description of the plight of non-Christian Jews was that their zeal was *not* according to knowledge (Rom. 10:2).

#### 10.4 Further Possible Explorations

At this point, I would like to suggest two issues that ought to be explored further based on the findings of this study. First, while it is difficult to determine historically, from this theological exploration, could it be that Luke is writing from an angle to explain the Gospel to an audience that is *still discovering* what they believe about Jesus? Indeed, it seems that Luke may wish to persuade his readers that they themselves ought to 'come to their senses' and 'turn' now that he has filled them in on the details of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Hence, a fresh invitation into Luke's motive for writing Luke/Acts is needed. While J.C. O'Neill's dating of Acts is idiosyncratic, his insight that Acts may have been written to unbelievers is worth further consideration.

Second, an exploration is needed regarding the core message of the historical Jesus. Perhaps the sometimes-contrasting conversion theologies of Luke and Paul studied in this investigation had a common historical origin: Jesus' message: μετανοείτε καὶ πιστεύετε ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ (Mark 1:15). To divide faith and repentance might be to separate what the historical Jesus believed ought to be communicated together in order to gain converts to his mission. N. T. Wright has pointed to a fascinating parallel between Jesus' message to repent and believe with Josephus' political summons to repent and believe (1996, 250-251; Josephus *Life*, 110). Hence an historical investigation into the various aspects of Jesus' core kingdom message is needed to help understand better the reason why the Jesus movement produced converts. Not only would this possibly help to understand the common origin of Paul's and Luke's conversion theologies but it may very well shed further light on the question of Christian origins itself.

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