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# THE FINAL CYCLE OF SPEECHES IN THE BOOK OF ACTS\*

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I MUST first (I) offer a summary of the form and function of the speeches of Acts in cycle I (chs. 1-5) and cycle II (chs. 6-20). This is to be followed (II) by a brief analysis of the whole section (chs. 21-28) with a view to appreciating the structure and the significance of its speeches, and (III) by an analysis of the main points made in these speeches in the order of their ascending importance and in the light of the speeches of cycles I and II.<sup>1</sup>

## I

In 1954 I published an article on "The Structure and Significance of Lk 24."<sup>2</sup> In it I suggested that Luke's own theology, at the heart of which the "proof-from-prophecy," or better, the theology of divine promise (LXX) and divine fulfillment (Luke-Acts), runs like a red thread throughout the two-volume work. Further research led me to undertake a literary analysis of the speeches of Acts and to the conclusion that all the speeches of Acts, not just the traditionally so-called "missionary speeches" (chs. 2, 3, 10, and 13), but also 1 16-22, calling for the election of Matthias to the college of the twelve apostles; 7 2-53, Stephen's speech, the longest of all the speeches of Acts; 15 7-11 and 13-21, the only speeches given by Peter and James at the apostolic council; 17 22-31, Paul's speech on the Areopagus in Athens, plus the preparatory speech at Lystra, 14 15-17; and 20 18-35, Paul's farewell speech in Miletus to the elders of Ephesus, are vital and prominent parts of Luke's theology based on the "proof-from-prophecy."

This was the burden of a lecture, delivered at the Centennial of the Divinity School of the University of Chicago, on "The Place of the

\* The Presidential Address delivered at the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature on December 28, 1967, at Union Theological Seminary, New York City.

<sup>1</sup> I find myself in essential agreement with the thesis which J. C. O'Neil, *The Theology of Acts in Its Historical Setting*, sets forth (and presupposes in his treatment of speech-material), pp. 71-72. "If the speeches [of Acts] differ from one another in theological emphasis, we must not expect to hear Luke's voice in one as against the other, but we should look for his theology in the dramatic contribution each of them makes to the progress of the story. The relationship of the speeches to one another in their similarities and differences is more important for our purpose than the contents of each of them taken by itself."

<sup>2</sup> In *Neutestamentliche Studien für Rudolf Bultmann*, ed. W. Eltester (BNW 21), pp. 165-86.

Areopagus Speech in the Composition of Acts.”<sup>3</sup> Here all the speeches of Acts 1–20 were analyzed, and 17 22–31 as well as 20 18–35 were understood as a more hellenistically worded climax of the promise-and-fulfillment theology of Luke. More precisely, the theology of Luke is a many-sided development of the theme of the *ὠρισμένη βουλή τοῦ θεοῦ*.<sup>4</sup>

The *βουλή*-theology of Luke-Acts (Acts 7 58–20 35) is closely and skillfully interwoven with a second motif or basic intention of Luke’s, namely, to show within the all-embracing plan of God, the significance of Paul, a significance which is different in kind from that of the Twelve but by no means inferior. Nowhere in Acts is Paul called an apostle except in 14 4 and 14. (Paul is here linked with Barnabas; is this a slip by Luke or a trial balloon?) The twelve apostles (including Matthias in place of Judas Iscariot) are the guarantors (eyewitnesses) of the facts about the earthly Jesus from the beginning of his ministry to his resurrection (Acts 1 21 f., 10 41 f., 13 31). They are the eyewitnesses of the ministry of Jesus and of his resurrection (10 39–42), of what they had “seen and heard” (Luke 10 23 f.; Acts 4 20, 10 37–39a). Paul’s authority is described significantly with the same words in 22 15, “for you will be a witness for him to all men of what you have seen, and heard,” but what Paul was a witness to, what he had seen and heard was, according to Luke, not the events of the earthly Jesus nor of his resurrection, but simply his seeing the Lord and hearing his voice in a vision, namely, his commissioning Paul as a missionary to all men (22 14 f., 26 16). Thus Luke’s view of the unsurpassable significance of Paul is qualitatively different from that of the Twelve. They are *chosen* (*ἐκλέγομαι*) by God to be eyewitness of the earthly Jesus (Luke 6 13 f.; Acts 1 21 ff., 10 41). Paul is chosen beforehand (22 14 and 26 16, *προχειρίζομαι*) “to know his will” (*τοῦ γνῶναι τὸ θέλημα αὐτοῦ*).

In short, the first cycle of the speeches of Acts is chs. 1–5. Here the main features of the Lukan theology are set forth. Peter is the spokesman for the Twelve. In the second cycle (chs. 6–20) the Lukan theology is fully developed in its various aspects (20 27, “I did not shrink [a typically Lukan litotes] from declaring to you the *whole* counsel of God (*πάσαν*

<sup>3</sup> To be published in a volume of essays by various authors, *Transitions in Biblical Scholarship*, ed. J. C. Rylaarsdam (Chicago University Press, probably in 1968).

<sup>4</sup> See *ὠρισμένη βουλή καὶ προγνώσει τοῦ θεοῦ* (Acts 2 23) and 4 28, 5 38, 13 56, 20 27, Luke 7 30 (Lukan or specifically Lukan tradition?); Luke 22 20 *τὸ ὠρισμένον* equals *ἡ βουλή τοῦ θεοῦ*, as does 18 31 *καὶ τελεσθήσεται πάντα τὰ γεγραμμένα διὰ τῶν γραφῶν*, spelling out specifically the *βουλή τοῦ θεοῦ*, etc. See the astonishing similarity of terminology in Eph 1 11 *κατὰ τὴν βουλήν τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ*; *θέλημα* (Acts 22 14) equals *βουλή* in Luke; see H. Conzelmann, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, *ad loc.* On the striking similarities and differences between Ephesians and Acts see E. Käsemann, “Ephesians and Acts” in *Studies in Luke-Acts*, edd. Leander E. Keck and J. Louis Martyn, pp. 288–97. In Ephesians the prophets are not, as in Acts, the chronologically prior prophets of the OT (LXX) but, together with the apostles, Christian witnesses to the fulfillment.

τὴν βουλήν του θεοῦ).” This development reaches its first climax in Paul’s Areopagus speech.

If the farewell speech of 20 18–35 is regarded as the end of the second cycle of the speeches of Acts, the statistics would furnish a rough indication that Luke is interested in creating a balance between Peter and Paul. From chs. 1–20 a total of 60 verses account for the speeches of Peter and 59 verses for those of Paul. The theological viewpoint of both classes of speeches is the same; it is Luke’s. The so-called Paulinisms are equally present in both Peter’s and Paul’s speeches; many of them may be little more than pre-Pauline Jewish-hellenistic-Christian notions common to both Paul and Luke.<sup>5</sup> So, e. g., the *charis*-motif is throughout Luke-Acts a special Christian development of pre-Pauline, Jewish-hellenistic traditions. It is indigenous to Luke’s theology, although Luke is aware of the fact that it fits Paul’s gospel with its radical theology of grace very well (Acts 13 43, 14 3, 15 11, 20 24 and 32).

The chief question is, how are the speeches of chs. 21–28 related to the two main intentions of the speeches of cycles I (chs. 1–5) and II (chs. 6–20), and to the whole of Luke-Acts? Although Luke’s first intention to set forth the main lines of the *βουλή τοῦ θεοῦ* had been accomplished with the Areopagus and the farewell speeches (chs. 17 and 20), the *βουλή*-theology of Luke’s remains the ultimate concern in the third cycle; in fact, it is extended in two specific climactic ways.<sup>6</sup> His second basic intention was carefully carried out in the second cycle of speeches (chs. 6–20), namely, to secure in the apostolic age a balance between the

<sup>5</sup> This suggestion should be thoroughly reinvestigated. On the other hand, M. S. Enslin’s suggestion that the author of Acts knew a corpus of Pauline letters (see *Christian Beginnings*, p. 419, and the whole chapter on Acts, pp. 413–25) is most suggestive. This theory was recently more fully and persuasively argued by Günther Klein, *Die Zwölf Apostel*, pp. 114–201; see especially pp. 191 f. Consider also E. J. Goodspeed’s hypothesis that the publication of Acts stimulated the effort to search for the Pauline letters (in Galatia, Philippi, Thessalonica, Corinth, and Rome) to collect and to publish them. See Goodspeed, *New Solutions of New Testament Problems*, esp. pp. 1–11.

<sup>6</sup> It should not be forgotten that H. J. Cadbury in his definitive work, *The Making of Luke-Acts*, arrives, in the language of the twenties, at a similar conclusion (p. 305): “the Book of Acts, especially in its speeches, probably reveals an integral part of the author’s own philosophy of history which he intended his history to substantiate.” See also p. 368 (the final paragraph of Cadbury’s book): “Instead of trying to conceal our real ignorance with plausible speculations, *obscurum per obscurius*, we shall turn our minds from the hidden underlying facts to the more accessible fact of the creation of this significant literary production. That fact itself — the making of Luke-Acts — by its concreteness, its verifiable fitness to its historical setting, and its irrefutable revelation of its author’s mind, times and heart can lend to our study of Scripture an element of historical certainty [is it this kind of “certainty” which Luke meant in Luke 1 4 (*ἀσφάλειαν*) and Acts 2 36, (*ἀσφαλῶς οὖν γνωσκέτω?*)] and human interest, which the more controversial and debatable subjects of date, authorship, inspiration, orthodoxy and accuracy do not permit.” Thus Cadbury takes his place as one of the fathers of the renewed search for the intention of Luke so vigorously and successfully pursued more recently by E. Haenchen, H. Conzelmann, and others.

significance of Peter as spokesman of the Twelve and that of Paul in the proclamation of the Word of God.<sup>7</sup> In the third cycle of speeches the unexcelled significance of Paul and Luke's interest in rounding out his own theology are most skillfully and climactically merged.

The most striking evidence is that the speeches of cycle III (chs. 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27 to 28 22) are in the "I" style. It is appropriate because they are given in the setting of a judicial procedure; Paul is a prisoner of the Roman authorities. Cycles I and II avoid the "I" style, except for the contrasting and balancing speeches of Peter before Cornelius (10 34) and of Paul on the Areopagus (17 22-23). In ancient as well as in modern times it is not unusual to begin a speech by using the first person singular, especially, if a *captatio benevolentiae* is involved. On the whole, the speeches of chs. 1-17 are in this merely syntactical respect remarkably impersonal and, I think, consciously so. However, the "I" style is characteristic of the farewell speech (20 18-35). But in using it, that speech simply follows its own law, namely, the law of the types of all farewell speeches and testamentary provisions. Nevertheless, the Lukan farewell speech, formally and contentwise, looks backward as well as forward.

A second formal observation of our section (chs. 21-28) is that more or less formal speeches continue at a noticeably increased rate. Eighty-three out of 266 verses are speeches. The rate of dialogue (between various judges and between Paul and his judges) is greatly increased; more than 50 verses are dialogue scenes; the letter of Lysias the tribune to Felix the governor (23 26-30) also should be added to the examples of direct speeches. All of these parts (140 out of 266 verses) lend an additional element of suspense and excitement to the total story.

## II

We now come to the literary analysis of the consecutive scenes of chs. 21-28. Luke, like many good and bad authors, gives us no clear clue to a detailed outline, only the clear narrative itself. Thus all detailed outlines of Acts are *a posteriori* undertakings.<sup>8</sup> We are primarily inter-

<sup>7</sup> Luke in both volumes is the most prominent, if not the most profound, Word-of-God theologian in the NT. In cycles I and II the term *λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ* or *λόγος τοῦ κυρίου* occurs twenty-five times as over against six times in the genuine Pauline epistles. E. Haenchen (*Die Apostelgeschichte*, p. 108, n. 4) is entirely right in saying that "in gewissem Sinne ist der *λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ* der Gegenstand der Apostelgeschichte." For Luke the proclamation of the *λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ*, of the *βουλή τοῦ θεοῦ*, of the *βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ* and of *τὰ περὶ Ἰησοῦ* (Luke 24 20; Acts 23 11, 28 31, 1 3b *λέγων τὰ περὶ τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ θεοῦ*) are closely related, nearly synonymous terms.

<sup>8</sup> E. Haenchen's essay, "The Book of Acts as Source Material for the History of Early Christianity," in *Studies in Luke-Acts* (see n. 4), pp. 258-76, offers a very illuminating outline of Acts from the standpoint of modern historiography, but with due regard also to Luke's literary intentions.

ested in the literary sequence of the major scenes of this narrative and in their contents.

1. 21 1–22 29. In 21 1–16 the main stations of the voyage from Miletus to Caesarea are given with such revealing details as Paul's seven-day stay at Tyre, where the disciple "through the Spirit" told Paul not to go on to Jerusalem, and at Caesarea his staying in the house of Philip the evangelist, where the prophet Agabus acted out his prophecy of impending disaster. In Jerusalem Paul meets with James and the elders, where after a speech by the elders (vss. 20–26) Paul's Nazirite vow was arranged.<sup>9</sup> By a rash and erroneous conclusion some Jews from Asia cause a violent riot against Paul, who is taken by the tribune Lysias, the representative of the Roman power in Jerusalem (not identified as such and by name until 23 26), into protective and interrogatory custody. A short dialogue between Paul and the tribune ends in the latter's permission to address the people (vss. 17–40).

Thus the whole of ch. 21, with its two subsidiary and variegated speech scenes serves as an elaborate, effective preparation for the major speech of 22 1–19. Very skillfully this speech begins with the statement "I am a Jew, born at Tarsus" . . . (22 1–3), anticipated in the immediately preceding dialogue between Paul and the tribune (21 39).

But from here on out (22 4–21) the body of the speech is most surprising. The autobiographical data of his birth in Tarsus and his education under Gamaliel (vss. 1–3) are followed by Paul's mention of his persecution activity which takes him to Damascus (vss. 4–5). The Damascus experience (retold with significant variations from the third person singular account of 9 3–22) is the center of this speech (vss. 6–16). His specific commission to the gentiles is located in the temple (!), with a typical cross-reference to Luke's account of the killing of Stephen in 7 58 (vss. 17–21). This speech will require our full attention again when the whole evidence is in.

The result of the speech (vss. 22–29) is another mob riot from which Paul is rescued by the tribune, who scourged and examined him, the subject of their concluding dialogue being a discussion of the respective kind of their Roman citizenship (cf. 16 35–39).

2. 22 30–23 11. This is clearly the second major section, although it is much shorter (12 verses in all) than others. It is an account of a meeting of Paul with the chief priests and all the council, which the tribune commanded. It is a question whether this account contains a speech; at any rate it is in dialogue form, about Paul's threatening the high priest and his apology. There can be no doubt, however, that formally and functionally vs. 6 must be regarded as the essential statement

<sup>9</sup> G. Bornkamm thinks that Paul's taking the Nazirite vow upon himself is historical, because it is in line with the principle enunciated in I Cor 9 20. See his essay, "The Missionary Stance of Paul in I Corinthians 9 and in Acts," in *Studies in Luke-Acts* (see above n. 4), pp. 194–205.

of Paul; it is in fact the shortest, but centrally important speech of Paul, "brethren, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees (cf. Phil 3 4-6); with respect to the hope and the resurrection of the dead I am on trial." Verses 6-10a underline in Luke's own words the importance of this statement. Linked to this dialogue is the vision of the Lord (vs. 11), "take courage, for as you have testified about me at Jerusalem, so you must bear witness also in Rome" (cf. 19 21, Rom 1 10-11a, 15 23b-24).

3. 23 12-24 27, the trial of Paul by the procurator Felix in Caesarea. The excitingly told plot of a band of Jewish opponents of Paul to kill him leads to his rescue (23 12-35) by the tribune Lysias (vs. 27), who sent Paul under military guard to Caesarea, accompanied by a letter of Lysias to the procurator Felix (vss. 26-30). This letter (direct speech!) is a succinct statement to Lysias of the course of bare events as they appeared to Luke. Its style is noticeably secular, as is that of the whole story of the plot and of the rescue.

The trial itself comes closer to achieving a judicial character than do the preceding and subsequent trials in our section. The prosecutor Tertullus (24 2-8) states the charges. Paul (vss. 10-13, 18-19) denies them, but then he (Luke!) takes the offensive (vss. 14-17) asserting a) "I worship the God of our fathers, believing everything laid down by the law or written in the prophets"; b) "having a hope in God which these themselves accept, that there will be a resurrection of both the just and unjust"; c) "now . . . I came [to Jerusalem] to bring to my nation alms and offerings [is this an echo of the "collection" of which the Pauline letters speak so frequently, Gal 2 10, I Cor 16 2-4, II Cor 8 and 9, Rom 15 26-27?]; d) in the aftermath of the trial (vss. 24-25) Luke reports that Paul talked to Felix and his Jewish wife Drusilla "about faith in Jesus Christ" and "argued about justice and self-control and the judgment to come . . ." These items are important to Luke, but they have little to do with the trial. The scene closes with the statement that Felix left Paul in prison beyond the end of his term as governor.

4. 25 1-12, the trial before Festus. It is a question whether this short section (of the same brevity as the trial before Felix) was in Luke's literary intention conceived as a separate step in the climactic movement of the so-called trial speeches, — the pretrial speech before the people on the steps of the fortress of Antonia, the trial before the high priests and council, before Felix, before Festus, and before Agrippa the king. Formal and material considerations make it a separate fourth scene, but the fifth is most skillfully and plausibly prepared for by the fourth scene. Throughout chs. 25 and 26 Festus is indirectly but clearly portrayed as a competent, businesslike and realistic representative of the Roman government. Already the fourth scene (24 1-12) makes this clear. Paul and his accusers are promptly brought before him, and Paul makes a blanket denial of all charges, "neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple,

nor against Caesar have I offended at all" (vs. 8). Paul decides to appeal to Caesar, and Festus promptly agrees (vss. 9–12). That much is accomplished.

5. 25 13–26 32. This is the fifth, final, elaborate, and climactic trial scene with a speech. In 25 13–22 Agrippa accompanied by Bernice comes to Caesarea to pay a courtesy visit to the new procurator, who brings the king up to date on the case of Paul. Agrippa replies, "I should like to hear the man myself." There are several indications that the real intentions of Paul's speech (26 1–23) exceed the framework of a trial. This is true also of the speech of ch. 22. Nevertheless Luke clearly and closely links the speeches of chs. 22–26, but the character as trial speeches is noticeably more clearly maintained in the speeches of chs. 23, 24, and 25 (before the high council, Felix, and Festus). The speech before the king Agrippa is to be understood primarily as the literary climax of the Lord's own word spoken to Ananias at the time of the Damascus vision (9 15), "for he [Paul] is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before (a) the gentiles and (b) the kings and (c) the sons of Israel; for (d) I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name." Thus a word of the risen Lord himself serves Luke three times (see Luke 24 26–27, 44–49, and Acts 1 3–8) as a literary topic-sentence for the book of Acts. In the case of 9 15–16 (b) is achieved climactically in ch. 26; (a) is achieved in the entire course of the story from 9 15–28 32, being specifically spelled out in all his speeches from chs. 13–28; (c) in the speech of ch. 22; and (d) is a prominent theme of the Lukan picture of Paul's career (see, e. g., 13 50, 14 19, 16 19–40, 19 8–10, 20 18–23). In chs. 21–28 this theme is prominently developed by the long imprisonment itself, the plot of ch. 23, and the shipwreck on the voyage to Rome in ch. 27.

The speech of ch. 26 is introduced by Agrippa giving Paul permission to speak and Paul's response with an appropriate *captatio benevolentiae* (vss. 1–3). In vss. 4–8 he makes use of the autobiographical data of 22 3, with several small but carefully considered, significant variations.<sup>10</sup> The thrust of this passage is that Paul as "a leader of the sect (*ἀρρεσις*) of the Nazarenes" (24 5) shares with "the strictest sect of our religion (*θρησκεία*), the Pharisees" (26 5), "the hope in the promise given by God to our fathers to which our twelve tribes hope to attain, . . . and for this hope I am accused by Jews, O king" (vss. 6 f.). Dibelius<sup>11</sup> has made the observation that this theme has here been mentioned for the third time (see 23 6, 24 15, 21) in the trial speeches. There is no doubt about its centrality in these three speeches, but it will be seen in section III that Dibelius has not yet seen the ultimate intention of the trial

<sup>10</sup> See E. Haenchen, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, p. 622: "Lukas hat die Rede des Paulus mit grosser Sorgfalt entworfen und genau auf die Umgebung abgestimmt, in der Paulus sprach."

<sup>11</sup> See Dibelius, *op. cit.*, pp. 170–74, 211 f.



speeches, though every worker on Luke-Acts is deeply indebted to his work.

In vss. 9–11 Paul proceeds to rehearse his persecution activity as he did in 22 3–6 and by Luke in 7 58b, 8 3, 9 1, 2, 5, 13–15. In Acts 26 9–11 Paul presents his persecution activity in stronger terms, thus heightening the contrast between it and the Damascus experience which in all three Lukan accounts immediately ensues. Verses 12–18 bring the third account in Acts of the Damascus experience in significant variations from chs. 9 and 22. In vss. 19–23 (end of the speech) Paul is made to summarize the effects of that experience to the time when he addresses king Agrippa.

The whole fifth scene ends with a dialogue between Paul, Festus, and Agrippa (vss. 24–29) and between Festus and Agrippa in which both agree that, “this man is doing nothing to deserve death or imprisonment,” and that Paul’s appeal to Caesar should stand (vss. 30–32).

The specific variations of this speech will occupy us again in section III. At any rate, it has become clear that the speech of ch. 26 is of considerable, in fact of climactic, importance. It rounds out and unifies the double aim of the Book of Acts — Luke’s intention to set forth his theology in the speeches and to clinch the significance of Paul.

This double theme is also the thrust of chs. 27 and 28. The story of Paul’s voyage to Rome and the shipwreck (27 1–44), told partly in the “we” style of the “itinerary” presents a number of problems:<sup>12</sup> its wealth of nautical detail and terminology, the interjection of Paul’s statements (vss. 10, 21–26, 31, 33 f.), etc. But the main problem is the rôle which this story, told for the most part in such a secular style, plays in the literary structure of Acts. A clue is furnished by Paul’s speech to the crew (vss. 21–26 when the storm was at its height, “last night there stood by me an angel of God . . . ‘Do not be afraid, Paul,’ he said; ‘it is ordained that you shall appear before the Emperor; and . . . God has granted you the lives of all who are sailing with you’ ” (vss. 23 f., NEB).<sup>13</sup> Luke tells the exciting story of the voyage and the shipwreck as the final and climactic obstacle which Paul has to overcome before his arrival in Rome. This obstacle is not brought about by the forces of nature but by the human decision to carry out the wrong plan for the voyage (vss. 9–12), a plan devised by the centurion, the captain, the owner of the ship, and the majority of the ship’s company (ἔθεντο βουλήν ἀναχθῆναι, vs. 12).<sup>14</sup> It is a clearly articulated Lukan motif, especially in the speeches, to distinguish sharply

<sup>12</sup> The most recent full treatment of the itinerary is E. Haenchen, “‘We’ in Acts and the Itinerary,” in *The Journal for Theology and the Church*, ed. Robert W. Funk, pp. 65–99; see also the essay by the same author quoted above, n. 8.

<sup>13</sup> Dibelius (*op. cit.*, p. 150) rightly lists this speech with the major speeches of Acts; Haenchen (*op. cit.*, pp. 638–95) accepts and develops this view. Note the LXX flavor of this speech.

<sup>14</sup> Is this a Septuagintism? See Ps 12 3, Judg 19 30, Jth 2 2.

between human and the divine *βουλή* and to make the former subservient to the latter (Acts 2 22–23, 3 17 f., 5 38 f., 13 27; see also Luke 7 30 and 23 51). In the details of the story — the telling of the progress of the storm, the countermeasures taken for weathering it, the hairbreadth rescue — the mere *Erzählerfreude* of Luke's takes over. The detailed military measures by which Paul is rescued from the plot in ch. 23 (see especially vss. 16–35) by being brought to safety from Jerusalem to Caesarea, is a good parallel. Other shorter examples of sheer *Erzählerfreude* are furnished in many of the narrative sections of Acts.

Chapter 28 completes the story of Paul's divinely willed arrival in Rome (vss. 1–16). In the "we" style of the itinerary it identifies the island of Malta as the place of rescue from the shipwreck (vs. 1). Before the natives occurs the incident of the viper fastening on Paul's hand, Paul shaking it off, and their conclusion "that he was a god" (vss. 2–8). Paul is entertained for three days by Publius, the chief of the island, and heals Publius' father and the rest of the people of the island who had diseases (vss. 7–10). This is another familiar motif of Luke's (cf. esp. 19 11–20). In vss. 11–16 the final travel stages leading to his arrival in Rome are given.

In vss. 17–22 Paul confers with the local leaders of the Jews and gives the last of his (post-) "trial" speeches (vss. 17b–20) culminating in the now familiar charge, "it is because of the hope of Israel that I am bound with this chain" (vs. 20; see 23 6, 24 15, 21, 26 6 f.). The reply is that the Jewish community has received no report, official or unofficial, of the charges against him (vs. 21).

In vss. 23–31, the final verses of Acts, Luke summarily states that Paul "spoke urgently of the kingdom of God and sought to convince them [the Jews] about Jesus by appealing to the law of Moses and the prophets." This aligns all of Paul's speeches with Luke's theology and summarizes it in a final climax (Luke 24 27, 46 f.; Acts 2 39, 3 18, 10 43, 13 27–32, 17 30 f., 20 27, 23 6, 24 14 f., 26 6–8, 22 f.). The results are a division between Jews who agree and Jews who disagree so that Paul, backed by Isa 6 9–10, makes "one statement": "... Let it be known to you [Jews] then that this salvation of God has been sent to the gentiles; they will listen." So, apart from the final confirmatory statement of vss. 30 f., the Book of Acts ends with a speech of Paul's. Dibelius has made the illuminating observation that vss. 25–28 are the third instance in Acts of the separation of the synagogue from the church.<sup>15</sup> This process is still continuing in Luke own day, and thus Luke's situation is reflected in his view of Paul's past. As a fourth instance of this separation of the "church" from the "synagogue" may be added Luke's notice in Acts 19 8–10 of Paul's withdrawal with his disciples from the synagogue to the hall of Tyrannus

<sup>15</sup> See Dibelius, *op. cit.*, pp. 149 f.; the other two are Acts 13 46 (at Pisidian Antioch) and 18 6 (at Corinth).

for the remaining two years at Ephesus.<sup>16</sup> Nor should it be forgotten that in the perorations of the very first basic speeches of Acts (2 39, "For the promise is to you and to your children to all that are far off," and of 3 25 f., "God, having raised up his servant, sent him to you first . . .) the theme is gently but clearly introduced.

The whole book ends on the optimistic note which fully expresses its main intention by saying that Paul was preaching "the kingdom of God and teaching the things about the Lord Jesus Christ quite openly and unhindered" (vss. 30–31).

Our literary analysis with a view simply to discover the literary intentions of Acts 21–28 has reached its end. The results and conclusions may be formulated as follows:

1. From the point of view of Luke these chapters form an ever-ascending climax of the whole two-volume work, of the story of Jesus and of his apostles, and of Paul.

2. The universality of the Christian mission is indicated by 22 15 ("you will be a witness to all men") and many other passages especially (17 25–26, 26 22). However, this is the only feature of a formal ecclesiology which Luke has in view; beyond this he has none. The world-wide church is to him simply a fact, gratefully and proudly accepted.

3. While chs. 27–28 have their own law by which the final climax is achieved, the trial speeches are those of chs. 22, 23, 24, 25, and 26. To these 28 17–20 should be added; it creates itself (vss. 17–22) — at least in part — its own situation and summarizes the content of chs. 22–26 very aptly, but it adds nothing of significance. So we shall, in our final section, concentrate on the speeches of chs. 22–26.

4. The elaborate and colorful preparatory settings of these speeches (21 1–40, 22 30, 23 12–35, 25 13–27) are themselves composed as an ascending climax, calling attention to the significance of the speeches they introduce.

### III

The preceding analysis demands a discussion of the main motifs of the trial speeches in the light of the speeches of the whole book of Acts. Three issues stand out in the content of the speeches of chs. 22–26. 1) Paul and with him the whole sect of the Nazarenes (24 5b, 14a) is innocent of the Jewish charges and the doubts entertained by Roman government officials. This issue is mentioned here, because it is formally important. It explains the specifically new setting and style of the trial speeches. 2) The main intention of the trial speeches is to round out the theology of Luke, a) by further development of the theme of the resur-

<sup>16</sup> Note H. Conzelmann's remarks, *op. cit.*, *ad loc.*, "in der Notiz über den Hörsaal steckt Lokaltradition . . . In der Tat war Ephesus das Zentrum einer organisierten Mission durch Mitarbeiter, wie der Col (auch im Falle der Unechtheit) zeigt."

rection of Jesus and its relation to the final judgment, and b) by effective and pithy summaries of Luke's theology. 3) In the literary structure and intention of Acts the main weight of the trial speeches falls on chs. 22 and 26, Paul's own version in speechform of the story of the Damascus experience which Luke had programmatically placed in 9 1-30. What is Luke's intention in this threefold, elaborate telling of the same story? This is, specifically, one of the most perplexing and revealing questions concerning the literary structure of Acts as a whole. Why should this story in this comparatively short book — although Luke-Acts comprises 27% of the whole NT — be told three times? One basic important conclusion is obvious: the threefold account binds the trial speeches and scenes very closely to the earliest mention of Paul in Acts. Closely related is the necessity of studying the direct and specific interrelations of all the speeches of Acts.

1. For the purpose of this paper the first topic has been sufficiently discussed in the preceding section. The speeches of chs. 23, 24, and 25 furnished the main clues regarding the trial itself and its real issue. Here only two comments are needed: First, a more detailed analysis of Luke's intentions than can be given in this paper is required before we can uncover the nature and extent (if any) of the traditions which he uses and, back of them, of the real course of the trials.<sup>17</sup> The same requirement applies to the subsequent issues 2 and 3. Second, Paul is represented as denying outright the Jewish charges (24 11-13, 25 8), and Luke adds in his own words that the Jews were "bringing against him many serious charges which they could not prove" (25 7). The whole story of the imprisonment (chs. 21-28) and Paul's anticipated death are no doubt by Luke conceived as the final fulfillment of 9 15, 19 21, 20 23 f., 29a, 26-28, 22 17-21, 27 24.

2. In 23 6-9 Paul in a simple, very effective manner transforms the whole judicial issue into a theological one, and proceeds to develop it in chs. 24, 25, and 26. This is the real issue in which Luke is interested: "when Paul perceived that one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council: . . . with respect to the hope and resurrection of the dead I am on trial" (23 6). As the resulting quarrel between Pharisees and Sadducees becomes violent and Paul's life is in danger, he is rescued by the soldiers of the tribune (vss. 7-10); but this is hardly more than a typically Lukan, colorful incident.

It is much more important to link the whole report to Acts 4 1-4. Here Luke describes the immediate reaction, especially by the Sadducees, to the basic speeches at Pentecost (2 14-36) and on Solomon's porch (3 12-26). The Sadducees were annoyed because Peter proclaimed "in

<sup>17</sup> In chs. 21-28 Haenchen (*op. cit.*, e. g., pp. 567-72) possibly assigns too much of the text to the author of Acts; H. Conzelmann (*op. cit.*, p. 113) is less radical also in chs. 22-26: "Jedoch gestaltet Lk wohl Szenerien, erfindet aber nicht Geschichten."

Jesus the resurrection from the dead" (4 2; see also 5 17). This is the real topic sentence for the speeches of chs. 23–26 (see also 5 17, 18) where the theme is fully developed. In the speech before Felix (24 10–21) the formally and materially decisive statement of Paul's, "I confess<sup>18</sup> to you this that . . . I worship the God of our fathers, believing everything laid down by the law and the prophets" (vs. 14), is prominently used in the speeches of Acts, and finds its climax in Acts 26 22 f. and 28 23.

The next verse (24 15) defines the hope in God specifically as "the resurrection of both the just and the unjust." This "hope in the promise made by God to our fathers" is also a main theme of the speech to king Agrippa (26 6); it pervades all the speeches of Acts, and is fully rounded out with complementary elaborations in the trial speeches. The climactic statements of 24 4 f., 26 6, and of 26 22 f., "I stand here testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses said would come to pass, that the Christ . . ., by being the first to rise from the dead, . . . would proclaim light both to the people and to the gentiles," are also complementary elaborations of the only major christological function of the Christ which first appears in the speeches of cycle II. In 10 42 Peter says, "[God] commanded us to proclaim to the people that [the Christ] is the one ordained by God to be judge of the living and the dead." In the Areopagus speech of Paul's (17 22–31), formally and materially the special counterpart of Peter's speech to Cornelius (10 34–43), Paul says in the peroration that God "has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed."<sup>19</sup>

In our analysis of the hope passages one more brief passage deserves our attention. In Acts 24 22–27 Luke gives us the impression that Felix conversed with Paul fairly often (*πυκνότερον*) during the latter's two-year imprisonment. The whole story is told with much colorful and gossipy detail. The essential content of these discourses Luke describes as dealing with "righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come" (*διαλεγόμενου δὲ αὐτοῦ περὶ δικαιοσύνης καὶ ἐγκρατείας καὶ τοῦ κρίματος τοῦ μέλλοντος*) as the main topic of his conversations with

<sup>18</sup> Is the connotation of *ὁμολογῶ* liturgical and theological ("confess," "hold," "affirm") or juridical ("admit"), or are both connotations present? Bauer-Gingrich (*Lexicon, s. v.*) decides for the juridical connotation; I believe both connotations should be heard, since the context of the passage is both theological and semijudicial.

<sup>19</sup> Dibelius, *op. cit.*, pp. 170–74, finds in the hope passages of the trial speeches their main intention, their *raison d'être*, namely, that they should serve as models of how a Christian missionary in the time of Luke ought to preach to Jews. This is true in a limited sense. Dibelius' method is also admirable in that it pays radical attention to the dissimilarities and the disparities of individual speeches; but slight attention is paid to their coherence, similarities, and other aspects of their positive interrelations. But Luke, being also in Dibelius' judgment a very gifted literateur, deserves to be studied seriously in both respects, the individuality of the speeches and their coherence.

Felix. Most commentators are inclined to interpret *ἐγκράτεια* from the immediate context as abstinence, as being particularly apt in view of Felix's adultery, (which is not mentioned by Luke), and by Felix's desire to get money out of Paul. Since this argument is rather feeble, these commentators try also to relate the Lukan meaning of *ἐγκράτεια* as abstinence to that common in second-century Christian writings of definitely encratitic tendencies. One could perhaps think of the *ἀπέχεσθαι* ("to abstain") of the apostolic letter (15 29; see also 21 25). Be that as it may, the possibility is real that Luke wanted to express by the whole triadic formula three salient points of his theology, putting it at the same time in the form of familiar Greek statements of triadic formulae summarizing the ideals or virtues of popular philosophy. The Greek ideal of righteousness goes back at least to Plato; for Luke it has special connotations. The Areopagus speech reaches its climax by proclaiming that God has fixed a day when he will judge the world in righteousness through the Christ (17 31; see also Luke 1 75), and Luke's christology centers in the elaborations and implications of calling the Christ by the title *ὁ δίκαιος* (see especially 22 14, 3 14, 7 52; cf. also Luke 23 47, 1 17).

In Epictetus there shines through very strongly the positive original notion of *ἐγκράτεια* from *ἐν κράτει εἶναι*. This is for Epictetus, and for popular hellenistic philosophy in general, the *δύναμις ἢ λογικὴ* (*Disc.* 1, 1, 1-4) which enables or empowers man to choose between what is in man's power (*τὰ ἐφ' ἡμῶν*) and what cannot be in his power (*τὰ οὐκ ἐφ' ἡμῶν*). For Luke *ἐγκράτεια* is the *δύναμις* of the Holy Spirit, which enables men to do certain things and to disregard opposite promptings. While the first two members of the triadic formula have a definitely hellenistic flavor, the third, which scares Festus, is definitely Jewish-Christian — the judgment to come. This *κρίμα τὸ μέλλον* is the last particular elaboration of Luke's theology. Jesus is the first to be resurrected from the dead (Acts 26 23; see Rom 8 29b), and therefore he is appointed as judge of the just and the unjust. Thus Luke is the first of all theological writers to bring the essentials of futuristic eschatology, the ultimate hope of Jews and Christians, in the last chapters of his book. Whatever the strengths and weaknesses of the theory of Luke's deschatologizing are, this fact should not be overlooked. The clear-cut differences between the answers of Luke and of Paul (in his letters) to the problem of future eschatology and that of the fourth gospel need to be understood and appreciated more sharply.

Thus the tripartite formula of Acts 24 15 appears to be an apt summary of Luke's theology in general. In addition it shows special affinities with the Areopagus speech: righteousness and the judgment to come (17 31) and *ἐγκράτεια* may well be suggested by Paul's meeting in Athens with the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers (17 18). Once more the coherence of all the speeches of Acts is confirmed.

It remains to consider the variations in the three accounts of the Damascus experience: of what kind their interrelations are, and what intentions caused Luke to cast the accounts of chs. 22 6–21 and of 26 2–29 in the form of direct speeches of Paul's after the narrative form of 9 1–19. The subject is worthy of a monograph to be written in the light of modern scholarship, from Franz Overbeck and Johannes Weiss to Haenchen and Conzelmann.<sup>20</sup> Here only a brief and tentative summary of the salient observations and conclusions can be given. It is held that no separate written sources for the three separate accounts are used; only a few, probably oral, traditions, not yet definitively identifiable, regarding persons, localities, and other descriptive and material details may be posited.<sup>21</sup> Given this view of the matter, chs. 9, 22, and 26 become a very instructive example, not to be rashly generalized upon, of how Luke can draw the last drop of blood out of the same data in three significantly different variations to serve his own literary intentions.

The characteristic intention of the first account is the double vision of the Lord of 9 1–19 to Ananias and to Paul, which is immediately followed (10 1–11, 18) by the equally crucial<sup>22</sup> double vision to Cornelius and Peter. In 9 10–18 Ananias serves as a representative and spokesman of non-Pauline Christians, among whom Paul is in some respects suspect.

In 22 6–21, after the career and missionary achievements of Paul have been the main concern of Luke's from 9 1–22 1 — only ch. 12 1–24 is a real exception — Paul himself can aptly and effectively retell his own (i. e., Luke's) second variation of the Damascus event. Here Ananias, tellingly identified as "a devout man according to the law, well spoken of by all the Jews who lived there" (i. e., in Damascus, 22 12), tells Paul of his commission by the Lord. The account of ch. 9 is in no way cancelled; the reader's acquaintance with it is definitely presupposed. The commission itself (vss. 14–16) is elaborated in its several clauses, by important theological and christological details and in terms which align it with the commission of the Twelve (Luke 6 12 ff.; Acts 5 20, 10 41) and of the Seventy (Luke 10 23 f.). The specific commission to the gentiles (9 15) is transferred to a special vision immediately following (vss. 17–19) in the temple of Jerusalem (!). To single out one detail, we may comment that in the initial clause of the commission, "the God of our fathers elected three (*προεχειρισάτο σε*; cf. 10 41) to know his will." His will (*θέλημα*) is for all practical purposes a synonym for *βουλή τοῦ θεοῦ*,<sup>23</sup> especially in 20 27, where Paul has "accomplished his course" (vs. 24) in "declaring to you the whole counsel of God" (*πᾶσαν*

<sup>20</sup> Franz Overbeck, *Kurze Erklärung der Apostelgeschichte von W. M. L. de Wette, bearbeitet und stark erweitert* (Leipzig 1870); Johannes Weiss, *Über die Absicht und den Literarischen Character der Apostelgeschichte* (Göttingen, 1897).

<sup>21</sup> See H. Conzelmann, on Acts 19 23–40 (*op. cit.*, p. 123).

<sup>22</sup> See Dibelius, *op. cit.*, "The Conversion of Cornelius," pp. 109–22.

<sup>23</sup> See Conzelmann, *op. cit.*, *ad loc.*, p. 125.

τὴν βουλὴν τοῦ θεοῦ). One sees that the whole second account is carefully rebuilt formally and contentwise, in accordance with the changed situation and Luke's over-all literary intention, and the two accounts together form a climactic progression.

In the third account, Paul's speech before king Agrippa, the full climax is reached. Here the commission is given to Paul directly in the vision by the Lord himself (26 12-17), agreeing with Paul's own account of Gal 1 15 f. It is the essential truth of Luke's three accounts. Luke was neither a fundamentalistic nor a scientific-historical literalist.

From the next verse on to the end of the speech Luke works a summary of important aspects of his own theology into the account, thus merging the basic aims of all of Acts: to present to the reader the significance of Paul as he understood it — the main concern of Acts since 9 1 — and to give his understanding of the essential Christian proclamation of the earliest witnesses (vss. 18-23). This, to be sure, turned out to be water turning the mills of ancient and modern advocates of "Early Catholicism" (*Frühkatholizismus*), but I doubt that this was Luke's intention.

These items should be successively listed and briefly commented on. In vs. 18 the purpose of Paul's commission to the Jews and gentiles is to "turn their eyes from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God." This is a fresh variation of the usual norm of Luke's, lending special emphasis to the omnipresent norm, "that they may receive forgiveness of sins." In vss. 19-20 begins the summary recital of what Paul has done throughout his career up to the present moment, namely, declaring to the Jews and gentiles alike, "that they should repent and turn to God and perform deeds worthy of repentance." Thus repentance and forgiveness of sin are closely linked; both are here climactically accompanied by fresh variations. The double theme of repentance and forgiveness occurs in speeches in Luke 24 47 and in Acts 3 19 and 5 31. (This short speech of Peter's before the high council in 5 28-33 constitutes as a whole a nice parallel and counterpart to 26 19-23.) In other speeches either term — forgiveness or repentance — is used alone, but either term connotes the other (see 2 38, 10 43b, 13 38, 17 30). The double emphasis is also a red thread throughout the Lukan Gospel.

With the next verse the speech glides into its peroration, "for this reason," i. e., for preaching during his whole career the message of repentance and forgiveness of sins, "I was seized in the temple" (vs. 21). This is the third and final reference in this speech to the trial situation (cf. vss. 2-3, 7b). The peroration reaches its full climax in formulating Paul's — or Luke's — message, not in characterizing its substance as "hope" (vs. 6) or as "repentance and forgiveness," but formulating very fully its decisive rationale: "to this day I have had the help that comes from God, testifying both to great and small, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses said would come to pass, that the Christ must



suffer, and that, by being the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light to the people and to the gentiles" (vss. 22 f.). Usually and properly this rationale is either stated or argued in the body of the speech. In this last, fully developed and climactic speech of Acts, it has its proper place as the capstone of the peroration.

So the speech before Agrippa summarizes the rationale of Luke's theology and its substance as the message of hope, of repentance and forgiveness. In 24 25, in Paul's discourses or conversations with Felix it is summarized as the message of righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come. The ultimate intention of the speeches in chs. 21–28 was that they should be the capstone of his understanding of the earliest Christian proclamation as the Word of God — the *βουλή τοῦ θεοῦ*, the message of the kingdom of God (28 31) of the things about Jesus, with *ἀκρίβεια* and *ἀσφάλεια*, being proclaimed "openly and unhindered."

The speeches of Acts are not like the speeches of Thucydides. The latter are "a possession forever" as unexcelled reflections on the story of the Peloponnesian war, and as such detachable from it, but there is also a complete and admirably told story. The speeches of Luke are an essential part of the story itself, "the story of the proclamation of the Word of God." Without them the book of Acts would be a torso consisting chiefly of a miscellany of episodes and summaries. Some primary dependence of Luke in the composition of his speeches on Greek-hellenistic historiography in general and on Thucydides in particular cannot be ruled out. In both cases, Thucydides and Luke, formal speeches occupy about one fourth of the total composition. Perhaps a more actual precedent for Luke's peculiar intentions as regards his speeches can be found elsewhere. In the case of Thucydides it is clear that the purpose of his speeches is "to use these speeches to give heightened meaning to the moment and to reveal the powers which are active behind the events."<sup>24</sup> But if Luke was influenced in some way by Thucydides, he made one radical change, in that by his speeches he no longer gives "heightened meaning to the moment," but transforms the Thucydidean tradition by making the speeches an integral part of his story itself, as the story of "the proclamation of the Word of God."<sup>25</sup> For in the Acts, at a conservative estimate, the speeches and their immediate settings — the latter chiefly preparatory but also subsequent to the speeches — occupy 74% of its whole text, while in Thucydides they occupy no more than about 25%. The settings, in the best Thucydidean style of brevity, hardly occupy any space and therefore do not detract from his main narrative at all.

<sup>24</sup> Dibelius, *op. cit.*, pp. 164 f. This judgment is in one way or another confirmed by most Thucydidean scholars.

<sup>25</sup> See Haenchen, above, n. 7. Dibelius sensed that too; see *op. cit.*, pp. 174 f.