

“Paul as Prophet in the Acts of the Apostles”  
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I. Introduction: Framing the issue

The central thesis of this paper is that Luke intentionally presents Paul as a prophetic figure in the Acts of the Apostles. We will begin by addressing some of the framing issues that surround the question of Luke’s literary, historical, and theological presentation of Paul in Acts.

First, we should note that Luke’s portrayal of Paul has been a point of controversy in contemporary Lukan and Pauline studies. In the pre-critical era, it was assumed that the traditional understanding of Lukan authorship could be trusted. Early interpreters accepted that Luke, a companion of Paul, was the author of Acts. They could point to the so-called “we” passages<sup>1</sup> in Acts as incontrovertible proof that the author of Acts was a protégé of the great early Christian leader. They also harmonized the various references in the Pauline epistolary literature to a certain “Luke”<sup>2</sup> with the author of both the third Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles. With the understanding that Luke was an eye and ear witness of the life of Paul, these pre-critical interpreters could assume that Luke’s account of Paul was historically legitimate and accurate. There was no gap between the Paul of Acts and the Paul of the epistles.

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<sup>1</sup> Acts 16:10-17; 20:5-15; 21:1-18; 27:1—28:16; and possibly 11:28 (according to Codex Bezae).

<sup>2</sup>Col 4:14; Phlm 23-24; 2 Tim 4:11a; and possibly, according to tradition, 2 Cor 8:18-19.

This assumption came under fire, however, with the rise of modern, historical-critical scholarship. There are at least three seismic shifts that have occurred in the study of Acts:

1. The shift of Acts away from Luke (the author).

Once again, in the pre-critical era, interpreters thought it perfectly acceptable to reconstruct the life of Paul holding Acts in one hand and the Pauline epistles in the other. This traditional assumption has been challenged in the modern era, and many have abandoned the identification of Luke as the author of Acts. Along with this, has come doubt as to whether or not the author was a companion of Paul.

An example of this challenge to tradition, is the rejection of the identification of Luke as a physician (based on Col. 4:14). The traditional view was defended by William K. Hobart in an 1882 monograph,<sup>3</sup> and his ideas were supported by the research of Adolph Harnack.<sup>4</sup> H. J. Cadbury's 1913 dissertation, however, completely dismantled their arguments by meticulously demonstrating that the author of Luke and Acts shows no more knowledge of medical language than would have been expected of any educated person of his day.<sup>5</sup> Since then it has been quipped that Cadbury gained his doctorate by showing that Luke did not have one! The conclusion drawn by Cadbury concerning Lukan authorship has come to rule the day in academic scholarship: "The tradition may

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<sup>3</sup>William K. Hobart, *The Medical Language of St. Luke: A proof from internal evidence that "The Gospel According to Luke" and "The Acts of the Apostles" were written by the same person and that the writer was medical man* (Dublin: University Press, 1882).

<sup>4</sup> Adolph Harnack, *Luke the Physician*, trans. J. R. Wilkenson (London: Williams and Norgate, 1907).

<sup>5</sup> Henry Joel Cadbury, *The Style and Literary Method of Luke* (New York: Kraus Reprint, 1969).

be right, but it is without adequate proof, and we must be content, as in the case of the greatest books, to be ignorant of the author.”<sup>6</sup>

This shift away from traditional views on authorship has had a corresponding affect on estimations of the historical and theological accuracy of Luke’s Paul. If the author of Acts was not the “beloved physician” who accompanied Paul on his journeys, then where did his information about Paul originate? Can it be trusted as historically accurate? How might the author have shaped his portrait of Paul to serve his artistic, literary, polemical, and theological purposes?

## 2. The shift of Acts toward Luke (the Gospel).

Though Lukan authorship of the third Gospel and Acts has long been affirmed in the tradition, the view that Luke and Acts form a continuous and unified narrative is a more recent phenomenon. H. J. Cadbury coined the hyphenated term “Luke-Acts” in 1927, and this has become the standard designation of the two-volume work.<sup>7</sup> Though this notion has recently been challenged by Mikeal Parsons and Richard Pervo,<sup>8</sup> the *opinio communis* remains in place. With regard to the portrait of Paul in Acts, the closer association of Acts with Luke’s Gospel as a narrative unity has led to interpretation of the character of Paul in light of the third Gospel. This most often occurs in parallels drawn between Jesus in Luke and Paul in Acts. The fact that Acts is held tightly in the orbit of

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<sup>6</sup> Henry Joel Cadbury, “The Tradition,” in *The Beginnings of Christianity*, Part 1. The Acts of the Apostles, vol. 2, ed. F. J. Foakes Jackson and Kirsopp Lake (London: Macmillan and Co., 1920-33): 264.

<sup>7</sup> Henry Joel Cadbury, *The Making of Luke-Acts* (New York: MacMillan, 1927).

<sup>8</sup> Mikeal Parsons and Richard Pervo, *Rethinking the Unity of Luke and Acts* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993). The unity of Luke and Acts is challenged on canonical, generic, narrative, and theological grounds.

Luke has had a significant impact on modern critical scholars' understanding of Luke's Paul.

3. The shift of the Paul of Acts away from the Paul of the epistles.

Acts stands at the crossroads of the New Testament canon, bridging the gospels, on one side, and the epistles, on the other. Corresponding with the movement of Acts toward the third gospel in modern scholarship has been the movement of Acts away from the Pauline corpus. Particularly important in this regard has been an essay published at mid-century by P. Vielhauer.<sup>9</sup> Vielhauer contends that the Paul of Acts differs substantially from the Paul of the epistles in his understanding of Christology, his espousal of natural theology, the concept of the law, and eschatology. Particularly with regard to eschatology, Vielhauer reflects the views of Conzelmann, who had argued that Luke-Acts was composed in an environment in which Christians were no longer expecting the imminent return of Jesus but coming to terms with the delay of the *parousia*.<sup>10</sup>

The views of Vielhauer exerted great influence in the next generation of Acts scholarship. For example, skepticism with regard to the value of Acts as a reliable source for determining the life of Paul can be traced in the struggle to develop a Pauline

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<sup>9</sup>Philipp Vielhauer, "Zum 'Paulinismus' der Apostelgeschichte," *EvT* 10 (1950-51): 1-15. Translated by W. C. Robinson and Victor P. Furnish as "On the 'Paulinism' of Acts" and reprinted in *Studies in Luke-Acts*, ed. Leander E. Keck and J. Louis Martyn (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1966), 33-50.

<sup>10</sup>Hans Conzelmann, *Die Mitte der Zeite* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1953, 1957). Translated by Geoffrey Buswell and published as *The Theology of St. Luke* (New York: Harper and Row, 1961).

chronology.<sup>11</sup> Acts came to hold a place of “secondary” value as a source for reconstructing the life of Paul while the epistles had “primary” value.<sup>12</sup>

The distancing of Acts from the Pauline epistles has led most who study the Paul of Acts to be hesitant to draw any conclusions or parallels that might be readily applied to the Paul of the epistles. Instead, studies typically speak of what theological or polemical considerations motivated Luke to portray Paul as he does, without any consideration of the relation of this portrayal to the historical Paul. More pointedly, some see the Paul of Acts as a sub-Pauline distortion. J. Christiaan Beker is particularly harsh in his assessment of the Paul of Acts: “Therefore we can only consider Luke’s adaptation of Paul an acute deformation and distortion of the historical Paul.”<sup>13</sup> The spirit of Vielhauer lives on.

The seismic shifts sketched above have, quite naturally, affected the understanding of Luke’s portrait of Paul in Acts. If Luke was not a companion of the historical Paul, then the information he supplies is assumed to be less historical, since it has been shaped by apologetic or polemical aims. His purpose was not to report the historical details of Paul’s life and ministry, but to present Paul as he wished him to be seen and understood in the Christian communities for which he wrote Acts. Since Acts is the continuation of a narrative account begun in the Gospel of Luke, the author also

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<sup>11</sup>Cf. John Knox, *Chapters in a Life of Paul: Revised Edition* (Macon, Ga: Mercer University Press, 1987); Robert Jewett, *A Chronology of Paul’s Life* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979); Gerd Lüdemann, *Paul, Apostle to the Gentiles: Studies in Chronology* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984).

<sup>12</sup>J. C. Hurd, “Chronology, Pauline,” *IDBSup*, ed. Keith Crim (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1976), 166-67.

<sup>13</sup>J. Christiaan Beker, *Heirs of Paul: Paul’s Legacy in the New Testament and in the World Today* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 92.

shapes his account of Paul's life in a way that parallels the narrative structure of the first volume. According to many scholars, the Paul of Acts, then, does not necessarily agree with Paul's own self-presentation in the epistles.

A frequently cited example of the discontinuity between the Paul of Acts and the Paul of the epistles relates to the understanding of Paul as an Apostle. In the Pauline epistles, Paul makes clear that he understands himself to be an apostle of Jesus Christ. When one comes to the book of Acts, however, this is not the primary emphasis. Paul and Barnabas are only twice called "apostles" in Acts (14:4, 14), and in that context the meaning of "apostle" is closer to a "sent one" or "missionary" rather than that of a foundational office in the early church. Peter is clearly an Apostle in Acts, but Paul is not. The skeptics ask how Luke could possibly fail to present Paul as an apostle in Acts if he were truly familiar with the historical Paul.

Recent attempts to examine Luke's portrait of Paul in mainstream scholarship have reflected the influence of the shifts sketched above. In his influential commentary on Acts, the German scholar Ernst Haenchen argues that Luke presents Paul primarily as an impressive orator and miracle worker, rather than as an Apostle, demonstrating the utter discontinuity between Luke's Paul and the Paul of the epistles.<sup>14</sup> Following F. C. Bauer and the Tübingen school, Robert Brawley argues that Luke's apologetic aim is to defend Paul from those in the Jacobean/Petrine camp who would attack him.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Ernst Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary*, trans. B. Noble et al. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1971).

<sup>15</sup> Robert L. Brawley, *Luke-Acts and the Jews: Conflict, Apology, and Conciliation*, SBLMS 33 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987); "Paul in Acts: Aspects of Structure and Characterization," *SBLSP 27*, ed. David J. Lull (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988): 90-105.

Furthermore, Luke harmonizes Paul's views with those of his theological opponents. Luke's aim, then, is to rehabilitate Paul and present him as a legitimate religious leader in early Christianity. J. C. Lentz goes in another direction arguing that Luke's aim is to present Paul "as a man of high social status and moral virtue."<sup>16</sup> Luke, according to Lentz, wants to show that "Christianity has grown beyond its Jewish roots," and he presents an image of Paul that would be accepted in the Roman world.<sup>17</sup> Finally, Marie-Eloise Rosenblatt has focused on the trial narratives in Acts to argue that Luke's primary concern is to present Paul as a prisoner and witness in order to encourage members of the Christian community facing similar struggles.<sup>18</sup> Luke's Paul is, then, according to Rosenblatt, a model presented in order to offer pastoral comfort to the Christian community.

## II. Paul as Prophet in Acts

In this paper I want to suggest an alternative view of Luke's presentation of Paul in Acts that, I believe, both supports the traditional understanding of Lukan authorship, including the corresponding legitimacy of Luke's portrait of Paul, and makes sense of the distinctive way in which Luke presents Paul in the Acts narrative. The key to this view is the idea that Luke intentionally presents Paul in Acts as a prophetic figure. Paul appears in Acts as both a prophet in the classical Old Testament tradition and as a prophet of early Christianity.

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<sup>16</sup> John Clayton Lentz, Jr., *Luke's Portrait of Paul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993): 3.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 1.

<sup>18</sup> Marie-Eloise Rosenblatt, *Paul the Accused: His Portrait in the Acts of the Apostles* (Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1995).

It is not uncommon for interpreters to give emphasis to prophetic themes in Luke and Acts. Most, however, have cast the net too widely and identified almost every major figure in Acts as a prophet.<sup>19</sup> If everyone is a prophet in Acts, however, then it hardly makes any difference if anyone is a prophet. In contrast to this view, I would argue that Luke uses the term “prophet” in Acts judiciously and intentionally. Only those who fill the office of prophet in Acts are identified as prophets. Accordingly, only eight persons in Acts are identified as first century prophets. They are Agabus (11:27-28), the five prophets and teachers of Antioch (13:1), and Judas and Silas (15:32). Paul emerges from these prophets as the central figure in Acts, and he dominates the narrative from Acts 13:1 forward.

One notes a distinct literary pattern in Acts with regard to the presentation of various offices and officers in early Christianity. In Acts 1:13 Luke presents a list of the eleven Jerusalem based apostles. As the narrative progresses, Peter steps forward to play a central role (see 1:15). For Luke, Peter embodies the office of Apostle. In Acts 6:5, a list is given of the seven ministers (deacons) in Jerusalem. From these, both Stephen and Philip step forward in the narrative to play central roles. Finally, in Acts 13:1, the five prophets and teachers of Antioch are listed (Barnabas, Simeon Niger, Loukios of Cyrene, Manaen, and Saul). Among them is Saul, whose name will change to Paul (after 13:9), and who will also become the central figure in the remainder of Acts. For Luke, Paul is the embodiment of the early Christian prophet and teacher.

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<sup>19</sup> See Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke* (Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1991); idem, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1992); Roger Stronstad, *The Prophethood of All Believers: A Study in Luke's Charismatic Theology* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999).

### III. Paul and the Prophetic Profile in Acts

How does Luke paint the Pauline portrait? The Acts narrative presents Paul in terms familiar from what we might call a classical Old Testament prophetic profile. This profile consists of at least five elements:

1. The prophet is commissioned by God.
2. The prophet serves as God's messenger.
3. The prophet is a miracle worker.
4. The prophet accurately predicts the future.
5. The prophet is an iconoclast whose message is rejected by a stubborn people.

We should note that these are the characteristics that Luke and his first century contemporaries would have anticipated in the life of an authentic prophet.<sup>20</sup> Some Old Testament scholars, for example, might argue that the primary focus of the great Old Testament prophets was not future predictions. A study of both Greco-Roman and Jewish literature in the first century (Sirach, Josephus, *The Lives of the Prophets*), however, reveals that prediction of the future would have been a popular, first-century expectation for any legitimate prophet.

On these terms, Luke's Paul emerges from the other Christian prophets in Acts as the one who most distinctly embodies the characteristics of a prophet. Luke's Paul, therefore, carries a weight and authority that exceeds that of his contemporaries and rivals that of the prophets of the Old Testament. Let us now look more closely at Luke's development of each of these elements in his presentation of Paul:

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<sup>20</sup> See John Barton, *Oracles of God: Perceptions of Ancient Prophecy in Israel after the Exile* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); and Rebecca Gray, *Prophetic Figures in Late Second Temple Judaism: The Evidence from Josephus* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

## 1. Paul's Prophetic Commissioning

One of the most frequently recognized prophetic events in Acts is the prophetic call of Paul, which appears three times in the narrative (Acts 9, 22, 26).<sup>21</sup> Krister Stendahl was influential in shifting the emphasis in the study of these narratives from the idea of "conversion" to that of "call."<sup>22</sup> It is generally agreed that Luke has borrowed heavily from Old Testament prophetic call narratives to describe Paul's call. Joseph Fitzmyer sees the third call narrative in Acts 26 as the place where the prophetic imagery is most explicit:

In chap. 26, the emphasis is rather on Paul as the prophet (vv. 16-18), with allusions to the inaugural vision of Ezekiel (2:1,6) and Jeremiah (1:8); compare Isa 35:5; 42:7; 61:1. Moses and the prophets support his message about Christ (26:21); finally, he asks whether Agrippa believes the prophets (16:27). Thus one detects the Lucan effort to present Paul as one who continues the work of Jesus, the Prophet....<sup>23</sup>

What Fitzmyer sees as an emphasis primarily in Acts 26 is certainly the thrust of all three presentations of Paul's call. Paul is set apart from the beginning as a prophet.

## 2. Paul as God's Messenger

In the Old Testament, the prophet is one who hears directly from God and conveys his message to the people. Paul does not say "Thus says the Lord" in Acts,<sup>24</sup> nor

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<sup>21</sup>See Hans-Martin Storm, *Die Paulusberufung nach Lukas und das Erbe der Propheten: Berufen zu Gottes Dienst* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1995).

<sup>22</sup>Krister Stendahl, "The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West," *HTR* 56 (1963): 199-215.

<sup>23</sup>Joseph Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, AB 31 (New York: Doubleday, 1998) 144.

<sup>24</sup>Although Agabus says, "Thus says the Holy Spirit" in Acts 21:11, echoing the great prophetic Old Testament expression.

does Luke present Paul as giving extended prophetic oracles of the sort we see in the great prophetic corpus of the Old Testament. However, Paul does appear as one who proclaims “the word of the Lord.”<sup>25</sup>

As God’s messenger, Paul is often presented in Acts as a man who receives visions and supernatural visitations. The Old Testament expectation for the prophet is expressed by the Lord to Moses: “If there should be among you a prophet of the Lord I will be made known to him in a vision [ἐν ὁράματι], and in sleep will I speak to him” (Num 12:6). The Old Testament prophets report visionary encounters with the Lord, and the writing prophets often describe their prophecies as visions or oracles.<sup>26</sup> Peter’s pivotal Pentecost sermon quotes the prophet Joel, who predicts, “In the last days ... your young men shall see visions and your old men shall dream dreams” (2:17).

It comes, then, as no surprise to find that Paul too is depicted as receiving visions. Before Paul meets with Ananias, he sees him “in a vision [ἐν ὁράματι]” (9:12). Before crossing into Philippi, Paul has a vision during the night of a man from Macedonia saying, “Come over to Macedonia and help us” (16:9-10). Previously he had “been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia” (v. 6) and not allowed by “the Spirit of Jesus” to cross into Bithynia (v. 7). Paul is led and directed by the Spirit through visions and supernatural visitations. While in Corinth, the Lord (Jesus?) speaks to Paul one night in a vision (δι’ ὁράματος) and tells him: “Do not be afraid, but speak and do not be silent; for I am with you, and no man shall attack or harm you; for I have many

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<sup>25</sup>For Paul presenting ὁ λόγος τοῦ κυρίου or ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ, see 13:5; 15:35-36; 16:32; 17:13; and 18:11.

<sup>26</sup>Cf. Isa 1:1; 6:1, 13:1; 19:1; 21:1, 2, 11; 30:6, 10; Ezek 1:1; 8:3-4; 11:24; 40:2; Dan 1:17; 2:19; 7:1; 8:15; 10:1; Obad 1:1; Nah 1:1.

people in this city” (18:9-10). This passage has several significant prophetic echoes. The divine voice’s command “Do not be afraid [μὴ φοβοῦ]” is part of the stock Old Testament encouragement to the prophet-leader, as is the assurance “for I am with you [διότι ἐγὼ εἰμι μετὰ σοῦ].”<sup>27</sup> Even the last phrase, “for I have many people in this city” may be a thematic (but not verbal) echo of the word of both assurance and rebuke offered to Elijah: “Yet I will leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him” (1 Kgs 19:18).

Later in Jerusalem, when Paul recounts his prophetic call, he describes a vision of Jesus he received while “in a trance [ἐν ἑκστάσει]” (21:17), and not long after this, the Lord appears to him again (23:11). In Jerusalem as in Corinth, the Lord has encouragement for Paul and insight into what will come. In the final account of Paul’s calling before Agrippa, he refers to it as a “heavenly vision [οὐρανίῳ ὀπτασίᾳ]” (26:19). Finally, aboard the ship on the trip to Rome, Paul assures his fearful shipmates that an angel of the God to whom he belonged and whom he worshipped had stood by him the night before and said, “Do not be afraid, Paul” (27:24). Although Paul is certainly not the only character in Acts to receive divine visions or visitations, he has as many as any other, if not more.<sup>28</sup> He is a man with whom God frequently communicates.

As noted above, Paul is like the prophets of old in that he receives visions, but he is unlike the prophets of old in that he does not present “oracles” to the people as an

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<sup>27</sup>Cf. Josh 1:9; Isa 41:10; 43:5; Jer 1:8, 19. Note that in Isa 41:10, this is the Lord’s assurance to his servant. Paul, in Acts, is an Isaianic servant (cf. Acts 13:47; 26:16). In Luke’s Gospel, the phrase μὴ φοβοῦ makes several appearances, and is spoken by the angel to Zechariah (1:13); by Gabriel to Mary (1:30); and by Jesus to his followers (5:10; 8:50; 12:32). Cf. also Acts 27:24.

authoritative word from God (“Thus says the Lord!”). Acts never uses the term προφητεύω to describe Paul’s activity in Acts. What then does Paul do in Acts that shows him acting like a prophet? A valuable clue to what Luke considers to be the activity of prophets is provided in the description of Paul’s fellow prophets, Judas and Silas, in Acts 15:32: “And Judas and Silas, who were themselves prophets, exhorted the brethren with many words and strengthened them.” These seem to be two key activities of prophets: to exhort or encourage (παρακαλέω) and to strengthen (ἐπιστηρίζω). This is the kind of activity in which we find Paul engaged in Acts. When Paul and Barnabas return to Antioch from their “first” mission journey, they are “strengthening [ἐπιστηρίζοντες] the souls of the disciples, exhorting [παρακαλοῦντες] them to continue in the faith” (14:22). Paul and Silas go through Syria and Cilicia “strengthening the churches [ἐπιστηρίζων τὰς ἐκκλησίας]” (15:41). Before leaving Philippi, they “exhorted the believers [παρακάλεσαν τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς]” (16:40). Paul goes through the regions of Galatia and Phrygia “strengthening all the disciples [ἐπιστηρίζων πάντας τοὺς μαθητάς]” (18:23). Before leaving Ephesus, Paul “sent for the disciples and having exhorted [παρακάλεσας] them took leave of them and departed for Macedonia. When he had gone through all these parts and had given them much encouragement [παρακάλεσας αὐτοὺς λόγῳ πολλῶ], he came to Greece” (20:1-2).

In his study of early Christian prophecy, David Hill has argued that “the prophetic ministry has the characteristic of pastoral preaching.”<sup>29</sup> Hill has also examined the close

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<sup>28</sup>Cf. Ananias (9:10); Cornelius (10:3); Peter (10:17, 19; 11:5; 12:9); and perhaps Stephen (7:55-56).

<sup>29</sup>David Hill, *New Testament Prophecy* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1979), 102.

connection between the roles of prophet and teacher in early Christianity.<sup>30</sup> We are drawn back to the list of prophets and teachers in the Antioch church (13:1). Clearly Paul in Acts is one who engages in the prophetic activity of encouragement and strengthening and this also includes teaching and instruction. Haenchen had been disconcerted by the fact that Luke's Paul is "an outstanding orator" whereas the Paul of the epistles is a far from impressive speaker (cf. 2 Cor. 10:10).<sup>31</sup> Could it be that Luke's emphasis on Paul as orator in Acts serves his purpose of portraying Paul as a prophetic figure? As a prophetic proclaimer and teacher, Luke's Paul is, necessarily, an adept orator.

In addition to exhortation and teaching, Paul's prophetic role as God's messenger in Acts also includes his ability to interpret and expound scripture for the Christian community. Paul appears in Acts as an interpreter of the scriptures. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the Pisidian Antioch speech of Acts 13. After the reading of the law and the prophets, Paul is urged to give a word of encouragement to the people (λόγος παρακλήσεως πρὸς τὸν λαόν) (13:15). Paul's synagogue address is laced with the language of the Old Testament (e.g., Pss 2:7; 16:10; Isa 49:6; 55:3; Hab 1:5). He defines his own life as a fulfillment of Isaiah 49:6: "For so the Lord has commanded us saying, 'I have set you to be a light for the Gentiles, that you might bring salvation to the uttermost parts of the earth'" (13:47). The study of scripture is part of Paul's ministry wherever he finds himself. In Philippi, the narrator says, "The Lord opened her [Lydia's] heart to listen eagerly to hear what was said by Paul" (16:14). This recalls the events of

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<sup>30</sup>David Hill, "Christian Prophets as Teachers or Instructors in the Church," in *Prophetic Vocation in the New Testament and Today*, ed. J. Panagopoulos (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1977), 108-30.

<sup>31</sup>Haenchen, *Acts*, 114.

Luke 24, as the two disciples encounter the risen Jesus and say to each other: “Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?” (v. 32). Paul, like Jesus, opens the scriptures and hearts are opened to receive the message about Jesus. When Paul is in Thessalonika, Luke describes his synagogue ministry: “And Paul went in, as was his custom, and on three sabbath days argued with them from the scriptures, explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Messiah to suffer and rise from the dead, and saying, ‘This is the Messiah, Jesus, whom I am proclaiming’” (17:2-3). It is therefore Paul’s custom (κατὰ δὲ τὸ εἰωθὸς τῷ Παύλῳ) to engage in scripture discussion in the synagogue. The pattern continues among those of the Berean synagogue whom Luke praises, “for they welcomed the message very eagerly and examined the scriptures to see if these things were so” (v. 11). Even in the midst of pagan Athens (vv. 16-34), Paul’s speech is filled with Old Testament allusions.<sup>32</sup>

Luke stresses that mere familiarity with the scriptures alone, however, is inadequate, as the example of Apollos (18:24-28) illustrates. Apollos is “eloquent and well versed in the scriptures” (v. 24), but Priscilla and Aquila must explain “the Way of God to him more accurately” (v. 26). What Christian instruction adds to scripture knowledge is the understanding that Jesus has fulfilled the Messianic expectations, as expounded prophetically (cf. 17:3). When Paul stands before Agrippa and tells of his prophetic call, he states that, like Isaiah, he has been sent “to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light” (26:18; cf. Isa 42:7, 16). Later, he pleads with Agrippa to believe the prophets (v. 27). Part of Paul’s task is opening blinded eyes to the truth of scripture. Even as he enters Rome at the conclusion of Acts, Paul is meeting with large

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<sup>32</sup>Cf. Acts 17:24-32 and Gen 1:14, 27, 28; Exod 20:11; Deut 4:28, 29; 32:8; Isa 40:18; 42:5; 55:6; 57:15; Jer 23:23; and Pss 9:9; 96:13; 98:9; 145:18; 146:5.

numbers and arguing from morning to evening, “testifying to the kingdom of God and trying to convince them about Jesus both from the law and from the prophets” (28:23). The climax of Acts has Paul dividing his Roman auditors with his stinging quotation of Isaiah 6 (28:25-27). Until the end, he continues his attempt to appropriate the scriptures of the past for the realities of the present.

Paul appears in Acts as an authoritative interpreter of scripture who uses the language of scripture as naturally as the air he breathes. He also reinterprets the scriptures of old to apply to contemporary circumstances. E. E. Ellis asserts, “The interpretation of scripture as an activity of a prophet was not unknown in the first century since it was explicitly ascribed to Daniel (9:2, 24). It may be inferred also from other Old Testament texts in which the prophet uses and reapplies older biblical phraseology and ideas.”<sup>33</sup> Ellis, like Hill (as noted above) says that there was little difference between the role of the prophet and the teacher: “With respect to the interpretation of scripture, then, there was not a sharp division between the prophet and the teacher.”<sup>34</sup> In Acts Paul reinterprets the scripture and applies it to new circumstances, and in so doing, he fills the role of a prophet.

To affirm that Acts presents Paul as a prophetic interpreter of scripture is not, however, an endorsement of Eugene Boring’s theory of Christian prophets as interpreters

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<sup>33</sup>E. E. Ellis, “The Role of the Christian Prophet in Acts,” in *Apostolic History and the Gospel*, ed. W. Ward Gasque and Ralph P. Martin (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1970), 58.

<sup>34</sup>*Ibid.*, 58-9.

of the sayings of Jesus.<sup>35</sup> In Acts, the words that Paul reports from Jesus are not new ethical sayings or teachings but, instead, *ad hoc* instructions and directions (cf. 16:7; 18:9-10; 20:23-24; 22:6-10, 17-21; 23:11; 26:12-18). Even the non-gospel saying of Jesus spoken by Paul in Acts 20:35 is not presented as a revelation from the exalted Jesus but more as a recollection of the earthly Jesus. Paul's primary concern with scripture in Acts is to reflect on the ways in which Jesus has fulfilled the Old Testament expectations for the Messiah (9:22; 17:2-3; 18:5, 28; 26:22-23; 28:31). To use Boring's terms, Paul, the prophet and teacher of scripture in Acts, is more in the "scribal-rabbinic" camp as opposed to the "pneumatic-apocalyptic" camp.<sup>36</sup> He "perceives the scriptures to be an authoritative, objective, external collection of documents that contain deposits of God's eternal truth."<sup>37</sup> That Luke's Paul, and Luke himself no doubt, take this stance does not necessarily mean that Luke is distant from the early church, or that for him "prophecy has become history."<sup>38</sup> Rather, this may, indeed, be the way that Luke had experienced Paul and other early Christian prophets as they functioned within his community.

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<sup>35</sup>M. Eugene Boring, *The Continuing Voice of Jesus: Christian Prophecy and the Gospel Tradition* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991). Boring follows and expands Bultmann in arguing that early Christian prophets interpreted sayings of the post-Easter Jesus that were then incorporated into the Gospels and placed on the lips of the pre-Easter Jesus. Boring himself admits that this is less likely in the case of Luke. He concludes that "Luke, who pictures the church as guided by Christian prophets, does not understand these prophets to have produced new words of Jesus" (265). Boring does, however, make a credible argument for early Christian prophets functioning "as interpreters of scripture in light of contemporary events and contemporary events in light of scripture" (138). For a critique of Boring's views, see Witherington, *Jesus the Seer*, 320-27.

<sup>36</sup>Boring, *The Continuing Voice*, 138-47.

<sup>37</sup>*Ibid.*, 138.

<sup>38</sup>*Ibid.*, 272.

### 3. Paul as Miracle Worker

One of the marks of the Old Testament prophet was the working of miracles. The continuing expectation of the prophet as miracle worker in the post-exilic era can be perceived in places like Sirach 48, *The Lives of the Prophets*, and Josephus. We have already asserted that in Acts prophets are primarily inspired messengers who encourage, strengthen, and instruct churches and disciples. It is fair to say that for this reason the Paul of Acts engages in relatively few miracles.<sup>39</sup> Although Luke certainly does not make this a central concern in his portrait of Paul, he does not entirely shrink from presenting Paul as a man of miracle. In fact, Luke plainly states: “God did extraordinary miracles through Paul” (19:11).

What miraculous things are accomplished through Paul in Acts? The first miracle he performs is a punitive one: the blinding of Elymas (13:6-12). The focus of the miracle is less the power of Paul, however, and more the end result: “When the proconsul saw what had happened, he believed for he was astonished at the teaching of the Lord” (13:12). Miracle supports *didache*. As Paul and Barnabas travel to Iconium, Luke notes that the Lord “testified to the word of his grace by granting them signs and wonders to be done through them” (14:3), but they are mistreated, nearly stoned and flee (vv. 5-6). Next, in Lystra Paul heals the man who was born lame (14:8-10). When Peter performs a similar miracle in Acts 3:1-10, it leads to an extended narrative account of preaching (vv. 11-26) and then opposition (4:1-22). Paul’s miracle is told with much less fanfare and follows a different track. Paul and Barnabas first meet with acclamation as

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<sup>39</sup>These include: blinding Elymas (13:6-12); healing a lame man at Lystra (14:8-10); escaping stoning (14:19-20); clothing with miraculous effect (19:12); raising Eutychus (20:7-12); and surviving a serpent bite (28:3-6).

gods (vv. 11-18), but then Paul is stoned and left for dead (vv. 19). His resuscitation in v. 20 is another miraculous event, but its impact is tempered by the knowledge that those to whom Paul preached were the ones who attempted to take his life. Luke subordinates miracle to exhortation in Acts.

The de-emphasizing of miracle in Luke's presentation of Paul is not to say that Paul is presented as without power in Acts. In fact, even handkerchiefs and aprons that have touched his body are brought to the sick to bring about healing and exorcism (19:12).<sup>40</sup> This parallels the power of the personal presence of Peter whose shadow itself brought healing (5:15). The episodes that follow the comment on Paul's miraculous clothing (19:11-20) provide a critique of magical attempts to manipulate external events. First, the "itinerant Jewish exorcists [τῶν περιερχομένων Ἰουδαίων ἐξορκιστῶν]" are exposed for falsely speaking "in the name of Jesus whom Paul proclaims" (v. 13). Then, a valuable collection of magical books is burned (v. 19). Luke differentiates false power from authentic.

Among the miracles in which Paul participates, one stands out as a paradigm for prophetic activity: the raising of Eutychus (20:7-12). Here Luke clearly draws on the Old Testament story of Elijah's raising the son of the widow of Zarephath (1 Kings 17:21) and Elisha's raising of the Shunamite woman's son (2 Kings 4:34) to parallel

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<sup>40</sup>In the synoptic gospels we also find descriptions of the healing power of Jesus' clothing (cf. Matt 14:36; Mark 6:56). Note that Luke's Gospel does not contain this parallel. Cf. also the healing of the woman who touched Jesus' cloak (Matt 9:20-21; Mark 5:27-28; Luke 8:44). Luke does not include the detail of the woman's internal thinking: "If I but touch his clothes, I will be made well" (Mark 5:28; cf. Matt 9:21). Jesus' question, then, is not "Who touched my clothes?" (Mark 5:30), but "Who touched me?" (Luke 8:45).

Paul's prophetic resuscitation of Eutychus (Acts 20:10).<sup>41</sup> Paul is a prophet like Elijah and Elisha who is able to bring back the dead to life. This is the only Pauline miracle in Acts that Luke presents in a purely positive mode.<sup>42</sup> Still, Luke's Paul is a man capable of performing signs and wonders to legitimate his prophetic authority.

#### 4. Paul as Predictor of the Future

We noted above that Luke has a strong conviction that the Old Testament prophets had predicted events like the suffering of Christ (3:18) and that prophets in his day were also engaged in prognostication (cf. Agabus in 11:27-28; 21:11). David Hill argues that Agabus's prediction of future events is atypical of Luke's perspective on prophecy: "Whatever view we take of the Agabus stories ... it is clear that for the author of Acts prediction is not the main function of the Christian prophet."<sup>43</sup> Hill stresses instead the pastoral role of prophets in Acts, but his position is open to challenge. Others have rightly pointed to a "proof-from-prophecy" motif in the Lukan writings,<sup>44</sup> but it is

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<sup>41</sup>Cf. T. L. Brodie, *Luke the Literary Interpreter: Luke-Acts as a Systematic Rewriting and Updating of the Elijah-Elisha Narrative* (Rome: Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas, 1987).

<sup>42</sup>Haenchen, *Acts*, argues that Luke's Paul does not parallel the Paul of the epistles, because he is too much a man of miracle in Acts (112-16). When one compares the two, however, one can see parallels between Luke's Paul and the man who both reminds the Thessalonians that he had been among them in power (1 Thess 1:5) and receives criticism from the Corinthians for his weakness (2 Cor 10:10; cf. 12:9-10). Luke's Paul is, likewise, a man of both power and vulnerability.

<sup>43</sup>David Hill, *Prophecy*, 108.

<sup>44</sup>The idea of "proof-from-prophecy" focuses on Luke's concern to show that Old Testament prophetic predictions find fulfillment in events that transpire in Luke and Acts. Cf. the influential study by Paul Schubert, "The Structure and Significance of Luke 24," in *Neutestamentliche Studien für Rudolf Bultmann*, ed. W. Eltester (Berlin: Töpelmann, 1957), 165-86.

also important to take note of the fact that prediction and fulfillment happen within the narrative itself.<sup>45</sup> This is seen in the predictions of future events made by Lukan prophets and the subsequent narration of their fulfillment.

We have already noted Agabus's predictions, but do any other prophets in Acts also anticipate the future? More specifically, does Paul engage in this activity? There is indication in Acts that Paul also takes on this aspect of the prophetic role. For example, while Paul is in Corinth, he is told by the Lord that "no one will lay a hand on you to harm you, for there are many in this city who are my people" (18:10). Later in the narrative, when Paul is attacked and taken before the tribunal of Gallio, he is released, while Sosthenes, the synagogue official, is beaten (vv. 16-17). Talbert comments: "The promise is fulfilled in 18:12-17.... It does not point to continuity between the church and Israel in holy history but rather to the confidence the Christian may have when Jesus promises him protection."<sup>46</sup> Paul is given knowledge from the Lord that enables him to know the future.

A second example of Paul as prognosticator is found in Paul's address before the Ephesian elders in chapter 20. Paul says:

And now, as a captive to the Spirit, I am on my way to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and persecutions are waiting for me.... And now I know that none of you, among whom I have gone about proclaiming the kingdom, will ever see my face again (vv. 22-23, 25).

Paul's hearers within the narrative take this prediction seriously: "And they all wept and embraced Paul and kissed him, sorrowing most of all because of the word he had spoken,

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<sup>45</sup>This point is made by Charles H. Talbert, "Promise and Fulfillment in Lukan Theology," 93-96.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., 95.

that they should see his face no more. And they brought him to the ship” (20:37-38). Paul’s prediction of suffering is partially fulfilled when he is arrested in Jerusalem (21:27-36). Clearly Paul is a predictor of the future. He also announces that he will not see these people again. The implication is that he will not see them because he will be separated from them by death. This prediction must look beyond the narrative for its completion (external prolepsis).

Another place where Luke’s Paul makes a prediction about his future is found in his encounter with the Lord (Jesus?), after he is seized in Jerusalem (23:11). As with the vision in Corinth (18:9), Paul is given encouragement and also has the future revealed to him: “Keep up your courage! For just as you have testified for me in Jerusalem, so you must bear witness also in Rome” (23:11). This explains Paul’s appeal to the emperor (25:11-12).<sup>47</sup> The prediction (completing prolepsis) hastens to fulfillment as Paul arrives in Rome (28:16) and “testifies [διαμαρτυρούμενος]” to the Roman Jews (v. 23). It may find further completion beyond the narrative (external prolepsis) in Paul’s actual appearance before Caesar.

A fourth example appears in the sea voyage of chapter 27. Luke’s Paul tells his shipmates: “Sirs, I perceive that the voyage will be with injury and much loss, not only of the cargo and ship, but also of our lives” (27:10). When they fail to heed his warning and the ship runs into trouble Paul offers an “I told you so” and also redirects his prediction:

Men, you should have listened to me, and should not have set sail from Crete and incurred this injury and loss. I now bid you to take heart; for there will be no loss of

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<sup>47</sup>In light of 23:11, Paul’s appeal to the emperor becomes an act of conformity to God’s will. On Paul’s concern for doing God’s will, see 13:22; 21:14; 22:14; cf. Luke 12:47.

life among you, but only of the ship. For this very night there stood by me an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I worship, and he said: “Do not be afraid, Paul you must stand before Caesar;<sup>48</sup> and, lo, God has granted you all those who sail with you.” So take heart, men, for I have faith in God that it will be exactly as I have been told. But we shall have to run on some island (27:21b-26).

The continuation of this episode confirms the accuracy of Paul’s prediction. The ship is lost, but the human occupants survive (27:44). Paul’s prediction has been fulfilled.

We conclude from these examples that Agabus is not the only prophet in Acts who predicts the future. Paul himself also performs this prophetic activity. Just as the prophets of the Old Testament were able to predict future events and Jesus the prophetic Messiah was able to predict his suffering and resurrection (Luke 9:21, 44; 18:31-33), Paul too is given insight into future events. When Luke presents Paul in this manner he accentuates his identity as an authentic prophet.

##### 5. Paul as Iconoclast and Rejected Prophet

The Old Testament prophet is an “iconoclast.” This applies not only to his disdain for pagan idolatry but also to his ability to critique the worship and theology of God’s own people. Luke’s Paul fits this profile. First, we see Paul’s disdain for the idolatry of the pagan environment. At Lystra the fickle crowds are ready to sacrifice oxen at the temple of Zeus to Paul and Barnabas as gods, before Paul and Barnabas tear their clothing in horror and restrain them: “Friends, why are you doing this? We are mortals just like you, and we bring you the good news, that you should turn to the living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them” (14:15). At Philippi, Paul exorcises a slave girl who has a Pythian spirit of divination [παῖδίσκη]

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<sup>48</sup>This prediction gives us a clue as to what will happen to Paul in Rome, thus resolving somewhat the dilemma of the unfinished ending in Acts 28.

τινὰ ἔχουσαν πνεῦμα πύθωνα] (16:16-24). In Athens, Paul is deeply distressed when he sees that the city is “full of idols” (17:16), and he proclaims to them the monotheistic, biblical God of the Hebrew scriptures (17:22-31). Like the great prophets of the Old Testament, including Isaiah, he admonishes those who listen “not to think that the deity is like gold, or silver, or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of mortals” (v. 29; cf. Isa 44:9-20). In Ephesus, Paul comes into open conflict with Demetrius the silversmith and other artisans who make shrines for the temple of Artemis (19:23-41). Shipwrecked at Malta, Luke’s Paul confounds the superstitions of the local residents who marvel that he escapes the ill effects of a serpent’s bite (28:1-6). Paul never appears more Jewish in Acts than in his open disdain for the errors of Gentile paganism and idolatry.

Luke’s Paul is an “iconoclast” not only in relation to Gentiles but also in relation to his own Jewish community. Soon after his call in Damascus, Paul is proclaiming Jesus in the synagogues (9:20), and “the Jews plotted to kill him” (v. 23). This initial glimpse of Paul discloses what proves to be a Lukan pattern: Paul enters synagogues, causes conflict by proclaiming Jesus, both wins converts and faces opposition, and then moves on to a new location. This pattern is repeated in the synagogues of Pisidian Antioch (13:13-52), Iconium (14:1-7), Corinth (18:1-11), and Ephesus (19:8-10). Jewish opposition to Paul reaches a fever pitch when Paul is seized by the mob in the Jerusalem temple, his life spared only by the intervention of Gentile soldiers (21:27-36; cf. Luke 13:33-34). Controversy continues to swirl around Paul. On trial before the Jewish Council, Paul divides the body over the theology of the resurrection (23:6-10). On trial in Caesarea before Felix, Paul is denounced by Tertullus: “We have, in fact, found this

man a pestilent fellow, an agitator among all the Jews throughout the world and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes” (24:5). When Festus assumes Roman leadership, once again “the Jews who had gone down from Jerusalem surrounded [Paul], bringing many serious charges against him, which they could not prove” (25:7). Before Agrippa, Festus introduces Paul as “this man about whom the whole Jewish community petitioned me, both in Jerusalem and here, shouting that he ought to live no longer” (v. 24). Among the final pictures of Paul in Acts is his audience with the Roman Jews, where he once again divides those gathered with his teaching about Jesus (28:24-28). Luke’s Paul creates conflict in the Jewish community.

Paul is also presented in Acts as a controversial figure in the Christian community. This is anticipated in Paul’s first appearance in the narrative, as the Jerusalem disciples are hesitant to associate with him (9:26). Paul continues to be a controversial figure among the believers. Paul and Barnabas “had no small dissension and debate” with the Judean believers who were teaching the necessity of circumcision in Antioch (15:1-2). After sharp disagreement with Barnabas, he parts ways with his former prophetic partner (15:36-41). In Jerusalem, James tells Paul that the Jewish believers have heard that Paul has been teaching “all the Jews who live among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, and that you tell them not to circumcise their children or observe the customs” (21:21). Baur saw evidence of Luke’s attempts to ameliorate differences between Pauline and Petrine factions in the early church.<sup>49</sup> If Luke’s purpose was to paint a picture of a purely irenic Paul, however, these scenes and descriptions might just

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<sup>49</sup>F. C. Baur, *Paul, His Life and Works*, vol. 1.

as well have been avoided. Luke's iconoclastic and prophetic Paul, however, is one who causes deep divisions, even within the Christian community.

The controversial prophet naturally meets with opposition that leads to persecution and suffering. This too fits the expectation of an Old Testament prophet. Any prophet worth his salt will be persecuted (cf. *The Lives of the Prophets*). In another example of prophetic prediction within the Acts narrative, the exalted Jesus at Paul's prophetic commissioning says, "I myself will show him how much he must suffer [παθεῖν] for the sake of my name" (9:16).<sup>50</sup> Jewish antagonism leads to plots and threats against Paul's life (14:5; 20:3; 23:12-22; 25:1-3). Luke's Paul endures stoning (14:5, 19), beatings (16:22-23), mob violence (19:28-41; 21:30-36), trials (18:12-17; 22:30--26:32), imprisonment (16:23-24; 23:25; 24:27; 28:16), and shipwreck (27:39-44). Luke's Paul thus follows in the footsteps of the Old Testament prophets and the prophetic Messiah Jesus (cf. 8:32-35).

We have seen that Paul in Acts is presented in terms familiar from the Old Testament prophetic profile. Luke's Paul receives a prophetic call; serves as God's messenger by encouraging, strengthening, and instructing the believers; performs miracles as did the prophets of old; accurately predicts future events; and appears as an iconoclast who is rejected by many. E. E. Ellis gives this definition of a Christian prophet: "The prophet is the Lord's instrument, one among several means by which Jesus leads his church. As one who makes known (γνωστός) the meaning of scripture, exhorts and strengthens the congregation, and instructs the community by revelations of the future, the Christian prophet manifests in the power of the Spirit the character of the

Lord, who is the prophet of the end-time (3:22).”<sup>51</sup> Luke’s Paul is a prophet of this kind, but he also exceeds the other Christian prophets in the Acts narrative in fulfilling the dominant expectations for a classical Old Testament prophet. By presenting Paul as a prophetic figure, Luke accentuates Paul’s standing and authority.

#### IV. Conclusion: Why does it matter?

The central character in the Acts narrative is Paul. This paper has argued that one of Luke’s primary concerns in Acts is to present a portrait of Paul as a prophetic figure. The appearance of Paul and other prophets within the narrative demonstrates that these are the “last days,” the Spirit is being poured out, and “the sons of the prophets” are being called out. Paul receives a prophetic commission from the Lord. He follows in the prophetic tradition of Jesus himself, the prophet like Moses. Paul is the Lord’s messenger, “a chosen instrument,” who exhorts and strengthens the disciples. He is a man who can perform miraculous deeds like the prophets of old and is given prophetic insight into the future. Paul is an iconoclast who is withering in his criticism of both idolatrous outsiders and insincere insiders. His rejection and imprisonment is, therefore, a partial fulfillment of his prophetic vocation.

Now we must ask why this conclusion matters. What difference does it make? Modern critical scholarship has largely cast doubt on Lukan authorship of Acts, has tied the interpretation of Acts to a perceived narrative unity with the gospel of Luke, and has distanced the Paul of Luke from the Paul of the epistles. The impact of these trends in Acts studies is evident in the shifting understandings of Paul in Acts. Paul’s presentation

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<sup>50</sup>Other than Paul, Jesus the Messiah is the only one who is said to suffer (παθεῖν) in Acts. Cf. 1:3; 3:18; 17:3; 26:23.

<sup>51</sup>Ellis, “The Role of the Christian Prophet in Acts,” 67.

in Acts is now primarily seen as a function of the author's apologetic or literary, rather than biographical or historical, concerns.

It is my contention that an understanding of Luke's Paul as a prophetic figure supports both a traditional understanding of Lukan authorship and the historical reliability of Acts. Luke knew Paul to function as a prophetic figure within the early church, with a degree of authority comparable to the classical prophets of the Old Testament. Luke's Paul is not merely a literary character created by an author, but a descriptive portrait painted by an artist, based on his observations of the subject, to present a reliable presentation of the man that reveals his distinct personality and achievements. This view also dovetails nicely with a current movement in Pauline studies toward Paul's self-understanding as a prophetic figure. It has been advanced, among others, by Karl Olav Sandnes in his 1991 monograph, *Paul—One of the Prophets?*<sup>52</sup> In that work he submits the following thesis: "Paul really did conceive of his apostolate and his commission to preach the gospel to the Gentiles in prophetic terms."<sup>53</sup>

Luke's Paul, therefore, corresponds to the Paul of history. This is not to say that apologetic concerns are entirely absent from Luke's presentation of Paul or that his presentation is a mechanical recounting of historical events. Luke's presentation of Paul as a prophet, with an authority that recalls that of the Old Testament prophets, undoubtedly underscores Paul's Jewish identity and perhaps justifies his ministry in the face of Jewish or Jewish-Christian criticism.

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<sup>52</sup> Karl Olav Sandnes, *Paul—One of the Prophets?* WUNT 43 (Tubingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1991).

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 240.