CHAPTER 7
James and the Gentiles (Acts 15.13–21)
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INTRODUCTION

The speech of James in Acts 15.13–21 plays a key role in Luke’s account of the Council of Jerusalem (and therefore in his whole account of the origins of the Gentile mission). Peter’s speech, which opens the proceedings, reminds his hearers of the conversion of the first Gentile converts, when the evident charismatic phenomena (15.8; cf. 10.44–47; 11.15–17) constituted a clear declaration by God himself that Gentiles were acceptable to him as Gentiles (15.9; cf. 11.12). Thus Peter’s argument is from miraculous events making God’s will clear. Barnabas and Paul follow up this argument in the same vein, alleging “the signs and wonders that God had done through them among the Gentiles” (15.12) as evidence that their Gentile mission is the valid continuation of what began in the house of Cornelius. But Luke does not represent this line of argument as the finally decisive one. After all, the matter under discussion is one of halakah (15.5), which could only be decided from Scripture. It is therefore left to James to provide the clinching argument: that according to Scripture itself the Gentiles who, it predicts, will join the eschatological people of God will do so as Gentiles. On this basis James proposes the terms of the Apostolic Decree (15.19–20; cf. 15.28–29; 21.25) as a definitive decision on the issue of what the Torah itself requires of Gentile Christians. The key role which James’ speech here plays in determining the Jerusalem church’s stance with regard to the Gentile mission makes it worth asking, amid the complex of other difficult historical problems which surround Luke’s narrative in Acts 15.1–35, whether the argument of the speech has any historical credibility as an argument deriving from the Jerusalem church itself.

Study of the speeches in Acts has unfortunately paid little attention to this speech of James. The observation that not only is the scriptural quotation in 15.16–18 dependent on the LXX of Amos 9.11–12, but also its value for James’ argument seems to depend on precisely the LXX text where it differs from the MT of Amos 9.12, has often been considered sufficient to rule out any possibility that the argument of the speech goes back to the historical James or to the Jerusalem church. Either the whole speech, with its scriptural quotation, is simply a Lucan composition, or else Luke is dependent, as some think he is in the other speeches in the first half of Acts, on Hellenistic Christian exegetical tradition, which supplied him with the quotation as a prooftext for the Gentile mission.

What has been lacking is a thorough study of the speech in the light of first-century Jewish exegetical methods. In the

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4 For a discussion of the attitude of the Jerusalem church to the Gentile mission, which sets the argument of the present chapter in a wider context, see R. Bauckham, “James and the Jerusalem Church,” in R. Bauckham (ed.), The Book of Acts in its Palestinian Setting (Grand Rapids, 1995).


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context of what we now know of these, especially from the study of the Qumran pesharim, the peculiar text-form of the conflated quotation in Acts 15.16–18 requires to be studied and understood as a product of skilled exegetical work. Such a study, pursued in this chapter, will show that the quotation is more precisely adapted to the issue under discussion at the Council in Acts 15 than has usually been recognized and also that it is more closely connected than has previously been noticed with the terms of the Apostolic Decree, to which, in James’ speech, it leads. These conclusions will put the historical question in a new perspective, in which it can be seen to be probable that Luke has accurately, if rather summarily, preserved the exegetical basis on which the Jerusalem church, under James’ leadership, was able to endorse Paul’s Gentile mission, with the important proviso embodied in the Apostolic Decree.

THE QUOTATION IN ACTS 15.16–18

Acts 15.16–18

Metà taòta ánastérwµ
kai ánôkoðomíµa
'thn skhnì Davwì 'thn
pîtwkówma,

kai tà katasteðamína
aùtìs ánôkoðomíµa
kai ánôrðwsi aùtìs,

(17) òpòs òn keºsthísmou
oi katalloìtei tòn
anðróstw tòn kûrìou,

kai pànìa tì ðènì
ev oûs èptiñklîtæ

(18) 'gnwstì òpì 'aìwos,

James’ quotation is far from simply a quotation of the LXX text of Amos 9.11–12 “with small variations.” It is a conflated quotation, with its text-form both selected and adapted to suit the interpretation, in the manner now familiar to us not only from the New Testament but also from the Qumran pesharim. The opening words (μετὰ τοῦτο ἀνάστησιν) and the closing words (γνώστα ὑπ’ αἰώνας), which do not occur in Amos 9.11–12, frame the main text with allusions to other texts which have been interpreted in close relationship to it (Hos. 3:5; Jer. 12:15; Isa. 45:21). We shall return to these after studying the text of Amos 9.11–12. Here there is obvious dependence on the LXX, but also significant and evidently deliberate divergences.

In the description of the restoration of the “tent” of David, Acts 15.16 omits two whole clauses of the LXX (καὶ ἀνακτημένα τὰ πεπτωκότα σπέρματι καὶ καθὼς ἡ ἡμέρας τοῦ αἰώνος). It also replaces the two occurrences of ἀνάστησιν in the LXX (rendering ἀνάστησις) with ἀνακτημένα and the one remaining occurrence of ἀνακτημένα in the LXX (rendering ἀνακτημένα) with ἀνακτημένα. These substitutions are acceptable translations of the Hebrew verbs, though ἀνάστησις is a more literal translation of לִשָּׁךְ than ἀνακτημένα. But it should be noticed that they would not have been made had the exegete who produced this form of the text not wished it to be quite clear that the reference is to the restoration of a building. There is no possibility that, as has sometimes been suggested, he understood Amos 9.11 as a prophecy of the resurrection of Christ, since the LXX’s repeated ἀνάστησις, for which he substitutes ἀνακτημένα, would have been admirably suited to such an interpretation. Nor would an interpretation of the text as referring to the restoration of the Davidic family to the throne (in the messianic rule of Jesus) easily account for our exegete’s insistence that it is a building that is to be built.

9 For Paul’s quotations, see now C. D. Stanley, Paul and the Language of Scripture (SNTSMS 69; Cambridge, 1992).
10 Variation between καταστραμμένα καὶ καταστραμμένα occurs in the manuscripts of both Acts 15.16 and Amos 9.11 LXX, so that it is virtually impossible to know whether the original text of Acts here differed from the LXX.
Most likely the exegete understood the σκηνή Δαυίδ to be the Temple of the messianic age. This would be a quite natural understanding of the text of the LXX, which regularly uses σκηνή to render מֹלֶךְ and מָשָׁל with reference to the tabernacle, and in Tobit 13.11 uses σκηνή of the Temple that will be built again in Jerusalem in the eschatological age. If, as we shall see is likely, our exegete consulted the Hebrew text, he could also have found reason for understanding מַעַלְתָּךְ דָּרוֹד to be the eschatological Temple. Most other occurrences of מַעַלָתְךָ in the Hebrew Bible would give no help in the interpretation of the phrase, but דָּרוֹד, which is a variant of the same word, occurs in Lam. 2.6 with clear reference to the Temple, while the obscure מַעַלָתְךָ in Ps. 42.5 was evidently understood by the LXX translator as a reference to the Temple (LXX Ps. 41.5; κύριος σκηνής). Moreover, a reader of Amos might well connect the מַעַלְתָּךְ מִלְּכָּךְ in 9.11 with מַעַלָתָךְ in 5.26, as the author of CD 7.14–16 did. Though the LXX translator took the latter phrase (or at least מַעַלָתָךְ מִלְּכָּךְ in connection with the idolatry to which the rest of 5.26 refers and translated it την σκηνή του Κυρίου, it could also be taken in connection with 5.25 as a reference to the tabernacle.

It is noteworthy that the σκηνή of Amos 9.11/Acts 15.16 is both associated with David and to be built by God. Jewish writers of this period were accustomed to contrast the present Temple, made by human hands, and the eschatological Temple, which God himself will build.12 Thus 4QFlor. 1.1–13, which is a pesher of 2 Sam. 7.10–14, takes the “house” which YHWH will build (2 Sam. 7.11b) to be the eschatological Temple to which Exod. 15.17 (“the sanctuary of YHWH which your hands have established”) also refers, and pointedly omits 2 Sam. 7.13a, which predicts that David’s seed, the Messiah, will “build a house for my name.”13 Such an interpretation of Exod. 15.17 as referring to the eschatological Temple which God will build with his own hands is also found in the Mekhilta of R. Ishmael.14 (For the expectation that God himself will build the eschatological Temple, see also 11Q1 29.9–10; 1 Enoch 90.29; Jub. 1.15–17.) Although 4QFlor. evidently thinks it incompatible with the idea that the Messiah will build the Temple, such a view was not always taken. Sibylline Oracle 5.44–434 ascribes the building of the eschatological Temple both to the Messiah (422–423)15 and to God (423–433). The Messiah presumably acts as God’s agent. Even more relevant for our purposes, Jesus’ alleged prophecy of the destruction and rebuilding of the Temple is quoted in Mark 14.58 in the form: “I will destroy this Temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another not made with hands” (cf. Matt. 26.61; John 2.19). Here the term ἀρχιστροφισίς alludes to the Jewish tradition of interpretation of Exod. 15.17,16 The eschatological Temple will be built miraculously, by divine action, but the building is at the same time associated with the Messiah, in accordance with 2 Sam. 7.13; Zech. 6.12–13. Thus the exegete whose work is embodied in Acts 15.16–18 may have understood the phrase σκηνή Δαυίδ to mean that God himself will build the eschatological Temple miraculously through the agency of the Davidic Messiah, though he may simply have taken it to refer to the Temple of the messianic age, which God will build when “David” rules God’s people (cf. Ezek. 37.24–28).

We are now in a position to understand the omission of the two phrases καὶ ἀνακοσμήσῃ τὰ πεθωκότα σωτῆς and καθός αἱ ἡμέραι τοῦ αἰῶνος from the LXX text of Amos 9.11

12 A similar contrast is between the earthly Temple, built by human hands, and God’s Temple in heaven, not built by hands: SibOr 4.8–11; Heb. 9.11, 24; ApPet 16.9; cf. 2 Enoch 22.2; Acts 7.48, 17.24.
13 4QFlor. 1.12 quotes part of Amos 9.11 (“And I will raise up the booth of David which is fallen”) in connection with 1 Sam. 7.12–14, but takes “the booth of David” to mean “the branch [Ḥayyīn, found in later Hebrew for biblical דֹּרֵכָה, ‘branch’] of David,” identified with מַעַלְתָּךְ דָּרוֹד (1.11), i.e. the Messiah of David.
15 The figure described in lines 414–415 is the figure of Daniel 7.13 interpreted as the messianic ruler; see A. Chester, “The Sibyl and the Temple,” in W. Horbury (ed.), Templeum Amicitiae, FS E. Bammel, JSNTSS 48 (Sheffield, 1991), pp. 49–56. For the expectation that the Messiah will rebuild the Temple, see also Tg. Zech. 6.13; Isa. 53.5.
16 Juel, Messiah, pp. 147–154, rejects this possibility because in Mark 14.58 it is the Messiah, not God, who builds the Temple “not made with hands.”
in Acts 15:16. The first could have been regarded as merely repetitive of the previous clause. But if our exegete was working with the Hebrew of Amos as well as the Greek, he had a stronger reason to omit these words. The Hebrew יַעֲנוּ יָדוֹתְךָ (“and I will repair the breaches [in the walls]”) suggests more obviously the walls of a city than those of a temple. The phrase καθός οἱ ἥμεραι τοῦ οἰκώμου will have been omitted because it conflicts with the common belief that the eschatological Temple will be vastly superior to the Temple of the present age (1 Enoch 90:29; SibOr 5.422-425; 2 Bar. 32.4; 4 Ezra 10:55).

The text of Amos 9:12 in Acts 15:17 is much closer to the LXX than that of the previous verse. Moreover, whereas in Amos 9:11 the LXX is a faithful translation of the MT, in 9:12 the LXX diverges notably from the MT. The words ἔκπνησις of καταλύοντας τῶν ἁρπακτῶν must presuppose a Hebrew text which had וְשַׁלֵּם (“they will seek”) for MT’s שִׁלָּם (“they will possess”) and Ἀνθρωπότης for MT’s ἄνθρωπος (“Edom”) (and presumably also lacked the accusative particle ὧν). When Lake and Cadbury remark that the LXX here is “apparently based on a misreading of the original Hebrew,” and conclude that, “It is incredible that a Jewish Christian could thus have used the LXX in defiance of the Hebrew,” they entirely misunderstand the way in which Jewish exegesis of this period treated the biblical text, as the Dead Sea Scrolls in particular have now made clear to us. A Jewish Christian familiar both with the Hebrew and the LXX of this verse would not regard the latter as a misreading of the Hebrew. He may have known a Hebrew text like that translated by the LXX, but, even if not, would have recognized that the LXX represents, not a misreading, but either a variant text or a deliberate alternative reading of the text. Jewish exegetes were accustomed to choosing among variants the reading which suited their interpretation, or to exploiting more than one. But in a case such as ours, it is scarcely possible to distinguish a variant text which has arisen accidentally in the transmission of the text from one which results from the exegetical practice of deliberately reading the text differently by means of small changes (known as ἀληθινή in later rabbinic terminology). The “misreading” of the Hebrew text presupposed by the LXX of Amos 9:12 is quite comparable with many examples of deliberate “alternative readings” (ἀληθινή) in the Qumran pesharim. Thus there is not the slightest difficulty in supposing that a Jewish Christian exegete, familiar with the Hebrew text of the Bible but writing in Greek, should have welcomed the exegetical potential of the LXX text of Amos 9:12 as a legitimate way of reading the Hebrew text of that verse.

In addition to following the LXX text of the first clause of Amos 9:12, Acts 15:17 adds an interpretive gloss: τοῦ κύριον. The verb ἔκπνησις clearly requires an object, lacking in the

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17 For omissions from the text as an exegetical device in the Qumran pesharim, see G. J. Brooke, Exegetis at Qumran: QFlorilegium in its Jewish Context, JSOTSS 29 (Sheffield, 1985), pp. 91-92.

18 In LXX ἄγρυπνος most often translates שַׁלֵּם.


sight the change is puzzling, since ἡ τάστα presupposes preceding events which are not explained. By contrast, in Acts 15.17 the words μετὰ ταύτα in Joel 2.28 LXX are replaced by ἐν τοῖς ἐκχώροις ἡμεραῖς. We may be justified in wondering whether the quotation of Amos 9.11–12 in Acts 15.16 has been extracted from a larger context, but in any case the opening words of Acts 15.16 must be intended to make it clear that the building of the eschatological Temple will take place after a situation in which God has turned away from Israel in judgment. However, the words are not improvised. They allude to other biblical prophecies of the building of the eschatological Temple and the conversion of the nations to the God of Israel.

The words μετὰ ταύτα probably come from Hos. 3.5. In the LXX Hos. 3.4–5a reads:

For the children of Israel shall dwell many days without king or ruler or sacrifice or altar or priesthood or Urim. And after these things the children of Israel shall return and shall seek the Lord their God (μετὰ ταύτα ἐπιστρέψοντοι οἱ υἱοὶ Ἰσραήλ καὶ ἐπιτρέποντοι κυρίον τὸν θεὸν αὐτῶν) and David their king.

The links with Acts 15.16–17 are both verbal (italicized words above) and thematic. Both passages associate the restoration of the Temple and seeking the Lord in it with the restoration of Davidean rule.

For the source of the Lord’s promise to return (ἀναστρέψει) in Acts 15.16a, we must turn to two other passages. An allusion to Zech. 8.3 LXX (“I will return to Zion (ἐπὶ Σιω) and I will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem”) is possible, in view of the probable allusion to Zech. 8.22 which we have detected in Acts 15.17. But a more probable source is Jer. 12.15. Following a passage which refers to God’s abandonment of the

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23 Eusebius, Dem. Evang. 2.3 quotes the LXX text with the addition of με.  
25 These opening words of Amos 9.11 (ὁ λαός μου) must have been missing from the Hebrew text from which part of the verse is quoted in 4QFlor. 1.10 and CD 7.16: (CD) הַעֲשֵׂרֵהַם יָדֶךָ לָמוּת (CD) מַמְנוֹת מִצְמָעָם לָמוּת (CD) מַמְנוֹת (CD) מַמְנוֹת (CD) מַמְנוֹת (CD) מַמְנוֹת (CD) מַמְנוֹת (CD) מַמְנוֹת (CD) מַמְנוֹת (CD) מַמְנוֹת (CD) מַמְנוֹת (CD) מַמְנוֹת (CD) מַמְנוֹת (CD) מַמְנוֹת (CD) מַמְنوֹת (CD) מַמְנוֹת (CD) מַמְנוֹת (CD) מַמְנוֹת (CD) מַמְנוֹת (CD) מַמְנוֹת (CD) מַמְנוֹת (CD) מַמְנוֹת (CD) מַמְנוֹת (CD) מַמְנוֹת (CD) מַמְנוֹת (CD) מַמְנוֹת (CD) מַמְנוֹת (CD) מַמְנוֹת (CD) מַמְנוֹת (CD) מַמְנוֹת (CD) מַמְנוֹת (CD) מַמְנוֹת (CD) מַמְנוֹת (CD) מַמְנוֹת (CD) מַמְנ OPTION 1: וַיַּמְנוֹת יָדֶךָ לָמוּת (CD) מַמְנוֹת (CD) מַמְנוֹת (CD) מַמְנוֹת (CD) מַמְנוֹת (CD) מַמְנוֹת (CD) מַמְנוֹת (CD) מַמְנוֹת (CD) מַמְנוֹת (CD) מַמְנוֹת (CD) מַמְנוֹת (CD) מַמְנ OPTION 2: וַיַּמְנוֹת יָדֶךָ לָמוּת (CD) מַמְנוֹת (CD) מַמְנוֹת (CD) מַמְנוֹת (CD) מַמְנוֹת (CD) מַמְנוֹת (CD) מַמְנוֹת (CD) מַמְנ OPTION 3: וַיַּמְנוֹת יָדֶךָ לָמוּת (CD) מַמְנוֹת (CD) מַמְנוֹת (CD) מַמְנוֹת (CD) מַמְנ OPTION 2: וַיַּמְנוֹת יָדֶךָ לָמוּת (CD) מַמְנוֹת (CD) מַמְנוֹת (CD) מַמְנוֹת (CD) מַמְנ OPTION 3: וַיַּמְנוֹת יָדֶךָ לָמוּת (CD) מַמְנוֹת (CD) מַמְנוֹת (CD) מַמְנ OPTION 4: וַיַּמְנוֹת יָדֶךָ לָמוּת (CD) מַמְנ OPTION 2: וַיַּמְנוֹת יָדֶךָ לָמוּת (CD) מַמְנ OPTION 3: וַיַּמְנוֹת יָדֶךָ לָמוּת (CD) מַמְנ OPTION 4: וַיַּמְנוֹת יָדֶךָ לָמוּת (CD) מַמְנ

26 Ezek. 20.39 LXX is less probable.  
Temple (Jer. 12.7) and judgment of his people, Jer. 12.14–17 refers to Israel’s pagan neighbors. In the LXX, verses 15–16 read:

And it shall be that, after I have cast them out, I will return (ἐπιστρέψω) and have mercy on them, and will cause them to dwell, each in his inheritance and each in his land. And it shall be that, if they will indeed learn the way of my people, to swear by my name, “The Lord lives,” as they taught my people to swear by Baal, then also they shall be built (οἰκοδομησόμεθα) [αι. i.: shall be built: οἰκοδομήσεται] in the midst of my people.

Here the reference to building could easily have been understood as a reference to the eschatological Temple, especially if, as we shall argue, the Jewish Christian exegete who created the text in Acts 15.16–18 understood the eschatological Temple, not as a literal building, but as the eschatological people of God, composed of both Jews and Gentiles. In that case, Jer. 12.16 would be understood similarly: The Gentile nations are to be “built in the midst of my people,” i.e. form part of the eschatological Temple.

In both Zech. 8.3 and Jer. 12.14, the LXX has ἐπιστρέψω (in both cases translating forms of גוֹרֵשׁ), whereas Acts 15.16 has ἀναστρέψω. 28 This may be due to a desire to relate this verb to the following verbs (ἀνακοινώμενο, ἀναφόρουμα), but it might indicate that at this point our exegete was not dependent on the LXX. 29

Turning now to the end of the quotation (Acts 15.18), we note that the words ποιῶν τοῦτο, which occur in the LXX of Amos 5.12, are given a different sense by the addition of γυναικά ἀπ' αἰώνος. 30 The resulting clause (ποιῶν τοῦτο γυναικά ἀπ' αἰώνος, “making these things known from eternity”) conflates Amos 5.12 with Isa. 45.21, where the Hebrew

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28 But the D-text of Acts has ἐπιστρέψω.
29 Both ἐπιστρέψων and ἀναστρέψων are good translations of הָגֹרֵשׁ, which both are used to translate in the LXX.
30 The longer readings at Acts 15.16 probably result from the assumption that a sentence must end with τοῦτο, where the text of Amos 9.12 LXX ends, and so expand γυναικὰ ἀπ' αἰώνος into a sentence. The defence of the longer reading by G. D. Kilpatrick, “Some Quotations in Acts,” in J. Kremer (ed.), Les Actes des Apôtres, BETL 48 (Louvain, 1979), pp. 84–85, is not convincing.
only at Qumran, was very widespread in early Christianity (1 Cor. 3:16–17; 2 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:20–22; Heb. 13:15–16; 1 Pet. 2:5; 4:17; Rev. 3:12; 11:1–2,32 Did. 10:2; Barn. 4:11; 6:15; 16:1–10; Hermas, Vis. 3; Sim. g; Ignatius, Eph. 9:1).33 This in itself suggests its early origin. But Paul’s description of James, Peter, and John as “those who are regarded as pillars” (Gal. 2:9) enables us to be sure that the early Jerusalem church understood itself in this way, since it most probably means that they were regarded as pillars in the eschatological Temple (cf. Rev. 3:12).34 Moreover, the letter of Jude, which in my view provides good evidence of the kind of scriptural exegesis, comparable with that of the Qumran pesharim, which was pursued in James’ circle35 and of which therefore Acts 15:16–18 could preserve another example, also uses the image of the church as Temple (verse 20).36

Acts 15:16–18 is not the only text which associates the inclusion of the Gentiles in the eschatological people of God with an interpretation of the eschatological Temple as the eschatological people of God. Eph. 2:11–22 and 1 Pet. 2:4–10 do the same, and although the association is not explicit in Paul it is surely implied, especially in 2 Cor. 6:16–18. It must have been a critically important association of ideas. The Temple was at the heart of Israel. It was where God’s people had access to God’s presence, whereas Gentiles, allowed only into the outer court of the Second Temple, were banned, on pain of death, from the sacred precincts themselves. A people of God defined by and centered on this Temple as the place of God’s dwelling with them could not include Gentiles unless they became Jews. But numerous prophesies portrayed the Temple of the messianic age as a place where the Gentiles would come into God’s presence (Ps. 96:7–8; Isa. 2:2–3; 25:6; 56:6–7; 66:23; Jer. 3:17; Mic. 4:1–2; Zech. 14:16; 1 Enoch 90:33).37 If these were understood to refer to the Gentiles as Gentiles, rather than to Gentiles as proselytes,38 then the early church’s self-understanding as itself the eschatological Temple, the place of God’s presence, could accommodate the inclusion of Gentiles in the church, without their becoming Jews by circumcision and full observance of the Mosaic Law. It is therefore entirely plausible that Amos 9.11–12, interpreted as a prophecy that God would build the eschatological Temple (the Christian community) so that Gentiles might seek his presence there, should have played a decisive role in the Jerusalem church’s debate and decision about the status of Gentile Christians.


35 Other instances of the frequently used metaphor of “building” the Christian community are probably also evidence of the widespread currency of the image of the church as the eschatological Temple: see Matt. 16:18; Acts 9:31; 15:16; 20:32; Rom. 14:19; 15:2,20; 1 Cor. 8:1; 10:23; 14:3.5, 12, 17, 26; 6:2; 10:8; 12:10; 13:10; Gal. 2:18; Eph. 4:12, 16; Col. 2:7; 1 Thess. 5:11; Jude 20; Polycarp, Phil. 3:2; 12:2; OdesSol 22.12.

36 C. K. Barrett, “Paul and the ‘Pillar’ Apostles,” in J. N. Visitant and W. C. van Unnik (eds.), Studia Paulina, FS J. de Zwaan (Haarlem, 1953), pp. 1–19. For an alternative interpretation, see R. Aus, “Three Pillars and Three Patriarchs: A Proposal Concerning Gal. 2.9,” ZNW 70 (1979), 259–261 (comparing the Jewish tradition that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were the three pillars on whom the world was supported). But the idea of pillars in the eschatological Temple was current (1 Enoch 90:28–29; JudeAsen 1:7; Hermas, Fig. 3:8:2) and coheres best with other early Christian imagery. On Rev. 3:12, see also R. H. Wilkinson, “The Στρούνος of Revelation 3:12 and Ancient Coronation Rites,” JBL 107 (1988), 498–501.

Since the account of the eschatological Temple in 1 Enoch 90:28–29 emphasizes its pillars, this text may be the source of the image of the pillars in the early Jewish Christianity. In that case, it is notable that 1 Enoch 90:33 portrays all the Gentile nations “gathered together in that house.” Since the letter of Jude reveals how important 1 Enoch was in the messianic exegesis of circles close to James (see R. Bauckham, Jude and the Relativity of Jesus in the Early Church [Edinburgh, 1990], especially chap. 4), it is possible that 1 Enoch 90:28–36 was an important text in convincing James and his circle that Gentiles should be included in the church, in addition to Amos 9.11–12. If so, it would not be surprising that Acts omitted reference to this non-canonical text. (Of the use of 1 Enoch 91:13 in Barn. 16:6–10.)

38 For the temple image here, see R. Bauckham, Jude, 2 Peter, WBC 20 (Waco, 1983), pp. 112–113.


37 T. L. Donaldson, “Proselytes or ‘Righteous Gentiles’? The Status of Gentiles in Eschatological Pilgrimage Patterns of Thought,” JSP 7 (1990), 3–27, argues that the predominant Jewish eschatological expectation was that in the endtimes the Gentiles would be converted to the God of Israel as Gentiles, rather than by having
However, the issue which divided the Jerusalem church at the time of the Council of Acts 15 was evidently not whether Gentiles could join the messianically renewed Israel, but whether they could do so without becoming Jews. Few of the prophecies of the Gentiles coming to worship in the eschatological Temple could have been used to decide that issue. To understand how Amos 9.11–12 could be so used we must turn to the second remaining issue of interpretation, which concerns the phrase: πάντα τὰ ἔθνη ἐφ’ οὐς ἐπικάληται τὸ ὄνομα μου ἐπ’ οὕτως (“all the nations over whom my name has been invoked”). Discussion of the quotation in Acts 15.16–18 has rarely appreciated the significance of this phrase.

The expression ἐφ’ οὐς ἐπικάληται τὸ ὄνομα μου ἐπ’ οὕτως is a literal renderings of the Hebrew idiom לְקֹדֶם לֵיכָנֶר עֲבָדֵי יְהוָה (Amos 9.12). In its relatively frequent use in the OT the idiom expresses ownership, and is used especially of YHWH’ ownership of the ark, the Temple, the city of Jerusalem, and the people of Israel. Israel is the people “over whom the name of YHWH has been invoked” (Deut. 28.10; 2 Chron. 7.14; Jer. 14.9; Dan. 9.19; cf. Isa. 43.7), whereas the Gentiles are “those over whom your name has not been invoked” (Isa. 63.19). As an expression of God’s election of Israel as his own people, the phrase is equivalent to the covenant term ניטאנ (Exod. 19.5; Deut. 7.6; 14.2; 26.18; Ps. 135.4; Mal. 3.17). In post-biblical Jewish literature it seems to have become more common than the latter as an expression of Israel’s covenant status (Sir. 36.17; 2 Macc. 8.15; Bar. 2.15; PsSol 9.9; LAB 28.4; 49.7; 4 Ezra 4.15; 10.22; cf. 2 Bar. 21.21). Its use in Amos 9.12 with reference to “all the nations” is very striking, even in the MT, where its original meaning no doubt referred to the to become proselytes. But it is not at all clear that the evidence he examines really supports this conclusion.

In view of the connection with the eschatological Temple in the interpretation of Amos 9.11–12 in Acts 15.16–18, it is remarkable how often reference to Israel as the people “over whom the name of YHWH has been invoked” is connected explicitly (2 Chron. 7.14; Isa. 63.19 [cf. 18]; Dan 9.19 [cf. 17]; Sir. 36.17 [cf. 18–19]; 4 Ezra 10.22) or implicitly (Jer. 14.9) with the Temple.

The significance of Amos 9.12, especially in the LXX, is very close to Zech. 2.11 (Heb. 2.15): “Many nations shall join themselves [LXX: καταφεύγονται, “flee for refuge”] to YHWH on that day, and shall be my [LXX: his] people.” But whereas this verse might more readily be understood to mean that the Gentiles will join the people of God as proselytes, Amos 9.12 says that the nations qua Gentile nations belong to YHWH. It is not implied that they become Jews, but that precisely as “all the nations” they are included in the covenant relationship. It is doubtful whether any other OT text could have been used to make this point so clearly. By not paying sufficient attention to these words of the text, commentators have consistently missed the very precise relevance of Amos 9.12 to the debate at the Council of Jerusalem.\(^\text{41}\)

The decisiveness of Amos 9.12 for the issue under discussion in Acts 15 may have been even greater if the OT expression ἐπικάλεται τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου ἐπὶ τῶν ἐπικαλέσθη τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ ἐπικαλέσθη τῷ ἐπικαλεῖσθαι τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ ἐπικαλεῖσθαι τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ ἐπικαλεῖσθαι τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλᾷ ὄνομα τῷ καλᾷ ὄνομα τῷ καλᾷ ὄνομα τῷ καλᾷ ὄνομα τῷ καλᾷ ὄνομα τῷ καλalyzeren. But the expression ἐπικάλεται τῷ καλῷ ὄνομα τῷ καλλίστῳ ὄνομα τῷ καλλίστῳ ὄνομα τῷ καλλίστῳ ὄνομα τῷ καλλίστῃ ὄνομα τῷ καλλίστῃ ὄνομα τῷ καλλίστῃ ὄνομα τῷ καλλίστῃ ὄνομα τῷ καλλίστῃ ὄνομα τῷ καλλίστῃ ὄνομα τῷ καλλίστῃ ὄνομα τῷ καλλίστῃ ὄνομα τῷ καλλίστῃ ὄ

\(\text{41}\) Cf., e.g., Lüdemann, Early Christianity, p. 168: “[The quotation] does not wholly fit the context of the question whether Gentile Christians are to observe the law of Moses.”
certainly is later in Hermas, *Sim.* 8.6.4 (which refers back to *Sim.* 8.1.1, where the expression is different, but probably, like *Sim.* 9.14.3, echoes Isa. 43.7), the only occurrence of the expression in early Christian literature outside the NT. In that case we may compare the use of the expression ἐπικαλεῖται τὸ δῶμα κυρίου, whose Christian usage derived especially from Joel 2.32 (Heb. 3.5; Acts 2.21; Rom. 10.6) and was used with reference to baptism (Acts 22.16; cf. 2.21; Rom. 10.13) as well as more generally (Acts 9.14, 21; 1 Cor. 1.2). This is a quite different expression from the one we are considering and should certainly not be confused with it, but in both cases an OT phrase referring to the name of YHWH is interpreted as a reference to the name of the Lord Jesus invoked in Christian baptism.

If Jas. 2.7 is evidence that, in the early Jerusalem church, the phrase ἐπικαλεῖται τὸ δῶμα κυρίου ἐπὶ τινα was already used for Christian baptism into the eschatologically renewed people of God, independently of Amos 9.12 and the question of the admission of Gentiles to the church, then the argument would be all the more cogent that its use in Amos 9.12 indicates the incorporation of the Gentiles into the eschatological people of God with no requirements for admission other than baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus.

**The Introduction in Acts 15.14b**

There is no doubt that the final clause of verse 14 (ἐλαβεῖν ἐξ ἔθνων λαόν τοῦ ἄνωτον αὐτοῦ) is intended to connect Peter’s account of the conversion of the first Gentile Christians with the quotation that follows and in doing so to provide an anticipatory paraphrase of the main point of the quotation. From this point of view it confirms our conclusion that the key words of the quotation are πάντα τὰ ἔθνη ἐφ’ οὐς ἐπικάλεσαν τὸ δῶμα μου ἐπ’ αὐτοῦ. However, it is also possible that, as frequently in the Qumran pesharim, these words of interpretation of the quotation themselves echo other passages of Scripture. Most plausible is an allusion to those passages of the Torah (Exod. 19.5; 23.22 [LXX]; Deut. 7.6; 14.2; 26.18–19) which refer to Israel as God’s special possession (לעיו, λαός περιουσίος), whom he chose from among the nations to be a people for himself (for example Deut. 14.2 LXX: εξελέξατο μας γενέσθαι σε λαόν αὐτῷ περιουσίων ἐπὶ πάντων τῶν ἔθνων).

This is more probable in that Rev. 5.9–10 uses the language of Exod. 19.5–6 to refer, not to Israel as one people selected from all the peoples, but to the church as composed of members drawn from all the nations. If Acts 15.14b alludes to these pentateuchal statements about the covenant people, then it substitutes λαὸν τοῦ ὄνοματι αὐτοῦ for λαὸν αὐτῷ περιουσίων, as an equivalent phrase which points forward to the key phrase from Amos which appears in the quotation in 15.17. This is probably sufficient explanation of the introduction of a reference to God’s name in 15.14b. But it is possible that λαὸν τοῦ ὄνοματι αὐτοῦ already contains an allusion to the idea of the

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42 By “early Christian literature,” I mean the literature covered by W. Bauer, W. F. Arndt, and F. W. Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 2nd ed., ed. F. W. Danker (Chicago, 1979); a list is on p. xxii. See also 1 Clem. 64.1 (παίστος γοργά προσκαλουμένος τοῦ μεγάλου κράτους καὶ δύναμιν δῶμα αὐτοῦ), where the perfect passive ἐπικαλοῦμαι, the resemblance to Isa. 45.7, and the immediately preceding phrase εἰς λαόν περιουσίαν (cf. Exod. 19.5, etc.) all suggest that the words are an echo of Isa. 45.7 and mean: “to every soul that has been called by his glorious and holy name,” rather than: “to every soul that has called upon his glorious and holy name.” In that case, as in Hermas, *Sim.* 8.1.1, 9.14.3, a simpler Greek expression is used as equivalent to the one we are considering (see also, for the description of the name in 1 Clem. 64.1, 2 Mac. 8.15).

eschatological Temple as the eschatological people of God, which, as we have seen, is presupposed in the use of Amos 9.11 in Acts 15.16. While the phrase λαβὼν τῷ ὄνοματι αὐτοῦ never appears in the OT, the phrase οἴκος τῷ ὄνοματι αὐτοῦ is frequent, with reference to the Temple, and in particular occurs in 2 Sam. 7.13, which, messianically interpreted, could be understood as a reference to the eschatological Temple (the σκηνὴν Δαυίδ of Amos 9.11).

**The Relationship to the Apostolic Decree**

According to Acts 15.19–20, the scriptural quotation in verses 16–18 is the basis on which James proposes that the Gentile Christians should not be required to keep the Law of Moses as a whole, but should observe just four prohibitions.48 These are the terms of the Apostolic Decree (15.28–29). What is not apparent in the text of Acts is the reason for imposing the four prohibitions. While the quotation in 15.16–18 provides the scriptural basis for not imposing the Law as a whole on Gentile Christians, it does not obviously provide a basis for the specific provisions of the Apostolic Decree. On the other hand, it has been widely recognized that the terms of the Apostolic Decree are based on Leviticus 17–1849 and therefore have an exegetical basis which is not explained in Acts. This recognition will provide us with a starting-point for uncovering the connection, underlying the text of Acts, between Acts 15.16–18 and the terms of the Decree.

In Leviticus 17–18 MT there are five occurrences of the full phrase “the alien who sojourns in your/their midst” (Lev. 17.10, 12, 13; 18.26: מזרע הגר נתיבות אחרים; Lev. 17.8: מזרע אחר כלאים; the LXX adds a sixth in Lev. 17.3). Two of these (17.10, 12) repeat the same prohibition. The four

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50 The order is different in Acts 15.40.
51 The objection of S. G. Wilson, *Lake and the Law*, SNTSMS 50 (Cambridge, 1983), p. 87, that “the specific issue of eating ἑβδομαδικά, while not unrelated to Leviticus 17, scarcely catches the flavour of the passage” misses the point that the Apostolic Decree, like all Jewish interpretation of the Torah, is concerned not to read the Law like a modern historical critic but to apply it to contemporary circumstances.
52 Philo, *Spec. Leg.* 4.122: meat from which the blood has not been drained is meat killed by “strangling and choking” (δυσκόπευσι καὶ σπανιόγονεσι); and cf. Josh 8.5; 21.14; m. Hull. t. 2. Wilson, *Lake*, pp. 88–92, finds quite unnecessary difficulty with πυκνὸν in relation to Lev. 17, because he entirely misses the relevance of Lev. 17.15. In fact, having cited Haenchen, who correctly derives the two prohibitions against blood and things strangled from Lev. 17.10–14, Wilson then quotes, as the terms used in Lev. 17.10–14, the terms which are actually used in Lev. 17.15 (Lake, p. 88). See also Sanders, *The Jews*, p. 115, for criticism of Wilson; and E. P. Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief 63 BCE–66 CE* (London, 1992), pp. 216, 300, n. 11.
53 This is confirmed by Clem. *Herm.* 7.8; 8.19, which (in an expansion of the prohibitions of the Apostolic Decree) add to “things strangled” the two categories of meat prohibited in Lev. 17.15.
"alien who sojourns in your midst." The general term πορεύεται covers all these.\(^{54}\)

Thus the four prohibitions in the Apostolic Decree constitute a precise reference to the laws in Leviticus 17–18 which are said to be binding on “the alien who sojourns in your midst.” But it remains to be seen why these laws should have been selected as uniquely binding on Gentile Christians. The prohibitions in the Apostolic Decree should not be related to the later rabbinic concept of the seven Noahic commandments which are binding on all descendants of Noah (including the גֵּר תֹּדע, the resident alien), since although these overlap with the prohibitions in the Apostolic Decree, they are not based specifically on Leviticus 17–18.\(^{55}\) There is, in fact, no known Jewish parallel to the selection of precisely these four commandments from the Law of Moses as those which are binding on Gentiles or a category of Gentiles.\(^{56}\) Moreover, there are other Mosaic laws, most notably the Sabbath commandment (Exod. 20.10; Deut. 5.14), which are specifically said to apply to resident aliens,\(^{57}\) so that even were the equation of Gentile Christians with resident aliens explicable, it would still be necessary to explain the selection of the four laws in Leviticus 17–18.\(^{58}\) Finally, the pragmatic desire to facilitate table fellowship between Jewish and Gentile Christians cannot itself explain the selection of precisely these four laws.\(^{59}\) The reason for the selection must be sought in specifically Jewish Christian exegesis of Scripture.

Because the connection between the scriptural quotation in Acts 15.16–18 and the Apostolic Decree has usually been thought to be either very general or completely artificial, the exegetical basis of the Apostolic Decree has been overlooked. Amos 9.12 establishes that Gentiles may belong to the eschatological people of God precisely as Gentiles, without becoming Jews. While this exempts them from the Law of Moses as a whole, it does not necessarily mean that none of the specifically Mosaic laws applies to them. Guidance as to which Mosaic laws apply to Gentile Christians is to be found in two other prophecies about the conversion of the Gentiles. One of the prophecies about the Gentiles who join the eschatological people of God which has contributed to the conflat ed quotation in Acts 15.16–18 says that they are to be “in the midst of my people” (Jer. 12.16: LXX ἐν μέσῳ τοῦ λαοῦ μου, rendering מַעְלָה). Similar phraseology occurs in another prophecy which is not one of those conflated in Acts 15.16–18 but is so closely related to them as to be an obvious resource for any Jewish Christian exegete pursuing this theme: Zech. 2.11 (Heb. 2.15). This verse follows YHWH’s promise to Zion to “come and dwell in your midst” (2.10/14), a reference to the eschatological Temple comparable with Amos 9.11 (Acts 15.16). Zech. 2.11 then parallels Amos 9.12 (Acts 15.17). There are differences between the LXX and MT of Zech. 2.11a/15a:

MT: Many nations shall join themselves (הָרֹחֲמָה) to YHWH in that day, and shall be my people; and I will dwell in your midst (הָרֹחֲמָה)

LXX: Many nations shall flee for refuge (καταφυξοῦντο)\(^{60}\) to the Lord in that day, and shall be his people, and they shall dwell in your midst (καταφυξοῦσαν ἐν μέσῳ σου).

\(^{54}\) It is often supposed that the connection with Lev. 18.26 requires πορεύεται in the Apostolic Decree to mean marriage within the prohibited degrees (e.g. R. F. Martin, New Testament Foundations, vol. ii [Exeter, 1987], p. 113; J. A. Fitzmyer, To Advance the Gospel [New York, 1981], p. 88), but this is not the case. Lev. 18.26 refers to all the “abominations” of 18.6–23, which (with the exception of verse 21) are all sexual, but by no means all forms of incest. Thus πορεύεται in the Apostolic Decree can be allowed its ordinary general meaning, rather than the implausible specialized meaning of relationships within the prohibited degrees (cf. G. Zuntz, Opera Sylva (Manchester, 1972), p. 288; the evidence discussed by Fitzmyer, To Advance, pp. 95–97 does not really show that πορεύεσθαι without further explanation could be understood to mean marriage within the prohibited degrees).

\(^{55}\) For the contrast, see Townsend, “The Date,” p. 50.

\(^{56}\) T. Callan, “The Background of the Apostolic Decree (Acts 15.20, 29; 21.25),” CBQ 55 (1993), 844–897, who would like to see some such background for the Decree, shows by his review of the relevant Jewish sources that no parallel exists in the evidence.

\(^{57}\) See the list ibid., p. 286.

\(^{58}\) Wilson, Luke, p. 86, makes this a reason for denying the dependence of the Apostolic Decree on Leviticus 17–18.

\(^{59}\) Wilson, Luke, pp. 74–75; Sanders, The Jews, p. 120.

\(^{60}\) καταφυξοῦν translates the niphil of מַעְלָה also in LXX Jer. 27.5 (=Heb. 50.5); cf. also LXX Isa. 54.15; and Jsa 15.7 (alluding to Zech. 2.11/15).
The LXX presupposes a text which had (or deliberately reads the text as) נבש instead of הבש. This form of the text provides a clue to the legal status of the converted Gentiles. As those who dwell "in the midst" (הובא) of Israel, these Gentiles are specifically mentioned in the Torah.

The point is not that Jer. 12.16 and Zech. 2.11/15 give these Gentiles the status of the resident aliens to whom the Torah refers by means of a variety of expressions. It is rather that, using the principle of gezērā šāwō, these Gentiles are those to whom the Torah refers in a verbally corresponding way. As we have noticed, the laws in Leviticus 17–18 on which the Apostolic Decree is based all apply to "the alien who sojourns in your/midst (הובא)." The use of הבא, as in Jer. 12.16 and Zech. 2.11/15, is the principle of selection, and so other laws, such as the Sabbath commandment (Exod. 20.10; Deut. 5.14) or the laws of Lev. 24.16–22, which are said to be binding on resident aliens but do not describe them with a phrase including הבא, are not considered relevant to Gentile Christians. Besides the laws in Leviticus 17–18, the only laws in the Torah which the alien resident "in the midst" (הובא) of Israel is obliged to obey are Lev. 16.29; Num. 15.14–16, 29; 19.10, but all these refer specifically to the Temple cult. We can well imagine that Jewish Christian exegeses who understood the eschatological Temple to which Gentile Christians are admitted to be the Christian community would not apply these laws literally to Gentile converts. Thus exegesis of Jer. 12.16 and Zech. 2.11/15 can explain, as no other attempted explanation of the Apostolic Decree can, why the Apostolic Decree contains precisely the four prohibitions it does contain.

It should be noted that this exegesis, with its precise use of gezērā šāwō, depends on the Hebrew text of both Zechariah and the Torah. There is no verbal correspondence in the LXX between the texts of Jer. 12.16 and Zech. 2.11/15, on one hand, and those of Lev. 17.8, 10, 12, 13; 18.26, on the other; nor does the LXX distinguish verbally between the resident alien of those verses and the resident alien in the Sabbath commandment (Exod. 20.10; Deut. 5.14). But in any case, it could not be the LXX text that provided the basis for the Apostolic Decree. The LXX calls the resident alien in those chapters, as elsewhere in the Torah, "the proselyte (προσήλυτος) who sojourns among you." But the point of the Apostolic Decree is precisely that Gentile Christians are not required to become proselytes, who would be obliged to keep the whole Law. Only by disregarding the LXX's interpretation could the laws of Leviticus 17–18 be understood to apply to Gentile Christians not otherwise obliged to keep the Law.

Our conclusion that the prohibitions in the Apostolic Decree are based not simply on Leviticus 17–18, but on the exegetical link between Jer. 12.16; Zech. 2.11/15 and Leviticus 17–18, is of considerable significance. Not only does it explain the Decree itself more satisfactorily than other explanations. It also shows that a logical sequence of thought connects the use of the conflated quotation in Acts 15.16–18 with the terms of the Apostolic Decree. Acts 15.16–18 establishes that Gentiles do not have to become Jews in order to belong to the eschatological people of God, and so authorizes James' decision announced in Acts 15.19. The proviso in Acts 15.20 is not an arbitrary qualification of this decision, but itself follows, with exegetical logic, from Acts 15.16–18. If Gentile Christians are the Gentiles to whom the prophecies conflated in Acts 15.16–18 refer, then they are also the Gentiles of Jer. 12.16; Zech. 2.11/15, and therefore the part of the Law of Moses which applies to them is Leviticus 17–18. Just as the conversion of the Gentiles has been made known by God in prophecy from long ago (Acts 15.17b–18 = Isa. 45.21), so the laws which apply

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61 For similar textual variants involving a change of person, probably the result of deliberate exegetical alteration of the text, in the Qumran pesharim, see Brooke, "The Biblical Texts," pp. 8–9.
62 This is the use of gezērā šāwō which Brewer, Techniques, p. 18, distinguishes as Gezerah Shavah II. In this case, as often in the rabbis, it is used to clarify a legal issue.
63 As we have already noticed, even within Leviticus 17–18, the law of Lev. 17.15 is not echoed in the Apostolic Decree, since it applies to the "sojourner" (نبي), not to "the alien who sojourns in your midst."
64 Wilson, Luke, p. 86, sees this as a reason why the Apostolic Decree cannot be based on Leviticus 17–18. That it could be based on the Hebrew text of these chapters seems not to occur to him.
to them are not novel inventions, but have been read out in the
syagogues in every city from ancient times (Acts 15.21). Only as a summary from which the exegetical argument has
been omitted does the sequence of thought in Acts 15.19–21
make sense, but as such a summary – and given the presup-
positions of ancient Jewish exegesis – it makes excellent sense.

THE SOURCE OF JAMES’ SPEECH

The preceding discussion has established:

(1) The scriptural quotation in Acts 15.16–18 embodies
skilled exegetical work, adapting the text, conflating passages
which are verbally and thematically related, and probably
referring to the Hebrew Bible as well as using the LXX.

(2) The quotation is precisely designed to be relevant to the
debate at the Jerusalem Council, in that it shows that Gentile
Christians do not have to become Jews in order to join
the eschatological people of God and to have access to God in the
Temple of the messianic age. Its unmistakable reference to
Jesus the Davidic Messiah (Acts 15.16 = Amos 9.11) makes its
relevance to the Christian community undeniable, while its use
of terminology designating the covenant people of God with
reference to the Gentile nations precisely as Gentiles makes it
uniquely decisive for the issue in debate.

(3) Between the quotation in Acts 15.16–18 and James’
decision announced in 15.19–20, i.e. the terms of the Apostolic
Decree, there is a very close connection, which strongly sug-
gests that they belong originally together, although the con-
nexion is by means of exegetical argument not explicit in the
text of Acts.

(4) This exegetical argument, which alone accounts satisfac-
torily for the terms of the Apostolic Decree, presupposes the
Hebrew text of the Old Testament, not the LXX.

65 The phrase ἐν γενόσι τῷ ἄρχῳ (Acts 15.21) may well be an allusion to Isa. 41.4
(LXX: ὑπὸ γενόσι τῷ ἄρχῳ), whose context (Isa. 41.1–5) has obvious affinities with
Isa. 45.20–25, to which Acts 15.18 alludes. It also forms, at the end of James’ speech,
an inclusio with ὅπερ ἐγένοσι τῷ ἄρχῳ at the beginning of Peter’s speech (15.7). For an
argument which finds an allusion to Deutero-Isaianic prophecy in Acts 15.7, see
Zunt, Öppula, pp. 295–333.

(5) Once the exegetical basis of the Apostolic Decree is
recognized, it can be seen to represent a resolution of the
problem of Gentile Christians and the Law which reflects and
meets precisely the concerns of Jewish Christians who wish to
uphold the authority of the Law of Moses. Prophecies of the
conversion of the Gentiles to God in the messianic age show
that, while these Gentiles are not obliged to become Jews and
to observe the Law as a whole, the Law itself envisages them
and legislates for them. To require of Gentile Christians obedi-
ence only to the four commandments which the Law itself
imposes on them is not to set aside the authority of the Law but
to uphold it.66 “The law of Moses continues to be valid for Jews
as Jews and for Gentiles as Gentiles.”67

These conclusions do not necessarily warrant the further
conclusion that Luke’s account of James’ speech is an accurate
historical report. The speech could be an example of Luke’s
skill in composing speeches specifically appropriate to the
speaker and the occasion, and the skilled exegetical work both
behind the text and explicit in the text could be Luke’s own.68
Moreover, there are two reasons for thinking that James’
speech as it stands is a Lucan composition:

(1) The whole account of the speeches at the Council (Acts
15.7–21) is a carefully composed unit. The two speeches of
Peter and James present two complementary forms of argu-
ment: from experience of God’s action and from Scripture.

66 It is often argued that the provisions of the Apostolic Decree were intended to make
possible table fellowship between Christian Jews and Christian Gentiles (e.g. Eiler,
Community, pp. 98–99; N. Taylor, Paul, Antioch and Jerusalem, JSNTSS 66 [Shef-
field, 1992], pp. 140–144). There are serious problems with this view as usually
presented (Sanders, The Jews, p. 190). In the light of Gal. 2.12, it is likely that the
Decree was expected to solve the problem of table fellowship. However, it did so not
by means of an ad hoc and rather arbitrary compromise, but by insisting that Gentile
Christians keep those laws which the Torah obliges them to keep. These are
conditions for table fellowship, not between Jews and Gentiles in general, but
between Jews and Gentiles in the new situation of the eschatological people of God
which includes both.


68 The scriptural quotations and exegesis in the speeches of Acts are often attributed
pp. 248–257, holds Luke entirely responsible for Stephen’s speech, with its elabor-
ate exegesis.
They frame the report of Barnabas and Paul (15.12). They are linked by James’ opening reference to Peter’s (15.14a) and by the inclusio between the beginning of Peter’s speech (15.7: ὁ θεός ἡμῶν ἄρχων) and the end of James’ speech (15.21: καὶ γενεῶν ἄρχων).

(2) Acts 15.19–20 is a paraphrase of the words of the Decree itself (15.28–29). That the latter are more original and the former Luke’s paraphrase is strongly suggested by the fact that the order of the four prohibitions in 15.29 corresponds exactly to the order of Leviticus 17–18, whereas in 15.20 it does not. However, if James’ speech is Luke’s composition, it by no means follows that he did not use a source in composing it. The freedom of ancient historians in composing speeches did not mean that they did not attempt to represent as well as possible, using whatever sources were available to them, the substance of what would have been said on a given occasion. Luke may not have had precisely a report of what James said at the Council among his sources, but in composing the speech he could have used good evidence of the arguments deployed by the Jerusalem church in propounding the Apostolic Decree.

The following points, not all of equal weight, add up to a good case for supposing that James’ speech is not Luke’s free invention:

(1) The opening words of the quotation (Acts 15.16: μετὰ τοῦτο) are not from Amos 9.11 but result from a deliberate conflation with Hos. 3.5, which supplies only these two words of the quotation. If the conflated quotation was composed by Luke for its context in Acts 15.13–21, it is very difficult to understand why it should have been deliberately made to begin in this way (contrast Acts 2.17, where the opening words μετὰ τοῦτο in the text of Joel 2.28 LXX are replaced by εν ταῖς ἑσθένταις ἡμέραις). It is therefore more probable that Luke derived the quotation from a context in which it followed reference to God’s turning away from Israel in judgment.

(2) Neither the connection between the quotation in Acts 15.16–18 and the four prohibitions in the Apostolic Decree nor the derivation of the latter from Leviticus 17–18 is apparent in James’ speech as it stands. The latter point is actually obscured by the order of the four prohibitions in 15.20, as compared with the order in 15.29. It seems clear that Luke himself was not interested in the exegetical basis for the prohibitions in the Apostolic Decree. Indeed, he may have regarded them as a temporary compromise, no longer observed in all the churches he knew at the time of writing, and so would not have wished to highlight their scriptural basis. In any case, he seems to have abbreviated a source in which the quotation in Acts 15.16–18 and the terms of the Apostolic Decree were connected by exegetical argument.

(3) The terms of the Apostolic Decree are widely regarded, for good reasons, as not Luke’s invention. But if, as I have argued, the terms of the Apostolic Decree were formulated on the basis of an exegetical argument connected with the quotation in Acts 15.16–18, then Luke must have drawn this quotation, along with the terms of the Apostolic Decree, from a source.

(4) The idea of the Christian community as the eschatological Temple, which I have argued is important to the use of

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71 Richard, who thinks Luke composed the quotation, can only say that μετὰ τοῦτο is “a favourite expression of this author” (“The Divine Purpose,” p. 280, n. 96). It occurs 9 times in Luke–Acts (Luke 5.27; 10.1; 12.4; 17.8; 18.4; Acts 7.7 [echoing Gen. 15.14]; 15.20; 15.16; 18.1) (cf. 7 times in John, once in Hebrews, once in Peter, 9 times in Revelation, 105 times in LXX). But in all other occurrences in Luke–Acts it occurs, as one would expect, within a sequence of actions.

72 Perhaps Amos 5.25–26, which can easily be connected with Amos 9.11–12 by gezera mid, preceded it. Note that Luke’s quotation of these verses in Acts 7.42–43 is introduced by ἐν τούτῳ ἐν τῷ ἔκτῳ, cf. 15.16: μετὰ τοῦτο ἐνεσθήκαμεν. There are close links between the whole of Acts 7.42–50 and Acts 15.16–19 (see Richard, “Divine Purpose,” p. 272), which may indicate that Luke used the same source in both cases. The relationship between these two passages of Acts deserves fuller discussion, which space unfortunately precludes here.


Amos 9.11–12 in Acts 15.16–17, is never explicit in Luke’s writings, even if it is sometimes implicit.75

Finally, in addition to the reasons already given at the beginning of this section for finding Acts 15.16–18 and its connection with the Apostolic Decree highly appropriate to the situation described in Acts 15, there are further respects in which the source I am postulating for James’ speech coheres well with what we know of the Jerusalem church under the leadership of James and his circle:

(1) The kind of skilled exegesis, resembling that of the Qumran pesharim, which is evident in 15.16–18 and which can be inferred as the basis for the prohibitions in the Apostolic Decree, is characteristic of early Palestinian Jewish Christianity, including the circle of the Lord’s brothers.76

(2) From Gal. 2.9 we know that the interpretation of the eschatological Temple as the Christian community was important in the Jerusalem church under James’ leadership (see above).

(3) If the letter of James derives, as I believe it does, from the early Jerusalem church, then it is evidence that the Old Testament covenant expression designating Israel as those “over whom the name of the Lord has been invoked” was used of the Christian community as the eschatologically renewed Israel (Jas. 2.7). This would give special point to the selection of a text applying this expression to the Gentiles (Acts 15.17) (see above).

In attempting more closely to define Luke’s source, we must note first that it was written in Greek. The significance of the use of the LXX in Acts 15.16–18 has been very frequently misunderstood77 and needs careful statement. The argument of James’ speech presupposes exegetical work on the Hebrew text of the Bible (especially as the basis for the four prohibitions), but also quotes a conflated quotation which must have been com-

76 Bauckham, Jude and the Relatives, chap. 4.
77 Dupont, The Salvation of the Gentiles, p. 139, is typical of many who think that this reflects “the ‘Hellenistic’ stage of the apostolic preaching rather than its primitive Aramaic stage.”

posed in Greek, making use of the LXX. As we have seen, there is not the slightest difficulty in attributing the latter to a Jewish Christian exegete who read both the Hebrew Bible and the LXX. He could have composed this conflated quotation in Hebrew, but in fact he composed it in Greek. There is also no difficulty at all in supposing that the Jerusalem church under James’ leadership composed religious literature in Greek.78 The church itself must still have included “Hellenists” (i.e. Jews who spoke only Greek)79 as well as “Hebrews” (i.e. Jews who spoke both Aramaic and Greek) (Acts 6.1), and must have been in constant contact with Greek-speaking Jews from the Diaspora visiting Jerusalem. If Luke correctly represents James as addressing an assembly of the whole Jerusalem church (Acts 15.12, 22), which would include non-Aramaic-speakers, then it is certainly not impossible that James spoke in Greek. But Luke’s source was less likely a report of James’ speech than a document written for those Christians in the Diaspora, Jewish and Gentile, for whom the Apostolic Decree was primarily intended. Such a document would have to be written in Greek.

I have already observed that the order of the four prohibitions in 15.29 (followed also in 21.25) is more original than that in 15.20. It follows that 15.28–29a is closer to Luke’s source, while 15.19–20 is Luke’s paraphrase of the same source. Luke has certainly rewritten the letter from the Jerusalem church leaders to the churches of Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia (15.23–29).80 It is possible that an original, longer form of this letter was Luke’s source and that his knowledge of the Jerusalem Council derived primarily from it. He used material from it to compose James’ speech (15.13–21), omitted altogether the exegetical basis for the four prohibitions, and rewrote the letter itself, reproducing the terms of the Decree.

78 For examples of Jewish Greek literature composed in Palestine, see M. Hengel, The Pre-Christian Paul, trans. J. Bowden (London, 1991), pp. 60–61. For the use of Greek for religious purposes by Palestinian Jewish Christians whose mother tongue was Aramaic, see Bauckham, Jude and the Relatives, pp. 283–284.
79 E.g. Musson of Cyprus (Acts 21.16).
80 For the linguistic evidence for this, see A. Harnack, Luke the Physician, trans. J. R. Wilkinson (London, 1907), 218–223. But there is no reason to doubt that 15.28–29a is close to the source.
(15.28–29a) but omitting the exegetical argument. Alternatively, perhaps Luke knew some other document circulated by the Jerusalem church after the Council, perhaps composed by Judas Barsabas and Silas (15.22,27,32), which he used to compose both James’ speech and the letter. We cannot be sure, but the probability that the substance of James’ speech derives from a source close to James himself is high.

CHAPTER 8

Kerygmatic summaries in the speeches of Acts

Richard Bauckham

INTRODUCTION

In 1919 Martin Dibelius drew attention to a basic pattern common to the evangelistic sermons in Acts 2.14–36; 3.12–26; 10.34–43; 13.16–41, i.e. those sermons preached by Peter and Paul to audiences either of Jews or of Gentiles who already worshiped the God of Israel. The scheme common to these speeches consists of three elements: (1) the kerygma, i.e. a very short narrative of what God has done in the history of Jesus; (2) scriptural proofs demonstrating that these events fulfilled prophecy; (3) an exhortation to repentance and faith. Although Dibelius assumed that these speeches were Lucan compositions, he thought the lack of variation in Luke’s composition of them shows that he must have been constrained by a preaching pattern of some antiquity.¹

Dibelius rather exaggerated the lack of variation in these speeches. The three elements by no means always occur in straightforward simple sequence. Often they are interwoven to some degree. Moreover, not only do the introductions to the sermons vary according to the occasion,² but so do the three elements themselves. In Peter’s sermon to Cornelius, for example, the theme of fulfillment of prophecy occurs (10.43a), but it is not developed by quotations of Scripture as instances

² As Dibelius points out in Tradition, pp. 16–17.
HISTORY LITERATURE, AND SOCIETY IN THE BOOK OF ACTS

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