

## The Improper Temple Offering of Ananias and Sapphira

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**In Acts 1–7, the Holy Spirit functions as the restored temple presence of the Lord that will restore the kingdom to Israel via the *Ekklesia*. The Holy Spirit acts through the *Ekklesia* as one would expect the Lord’s temple presence to act. When Barnabas, Ananias, and Sapphira bring their offerings to the temple, they place them at the feet of the leadership of the new religio-fiscal center of restored Israel. As proof that the Lord’s presence has indwelled this eschatological temple community, an improper act can, and does in this case, result in immediate death.**

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The story of Ananias and Sapphira has a long history of confounding exegesis and complicating theologies. On the surface, Acts 5.1–12 is a story about two members of Peter’s congregation who lie about their charity and are struck dead for their greed and deceit. Most categorize this episode as a cautionary tale,<sup>1</sup> punitive miracle,<sup>2</sup>

1 E.g. C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, vol. 1 (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1994), 262; Ernst Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles* (trans. B. Noble, G. Shinn, and H. Anderson; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1971) 24.

2 E.g. G. Theissen, ‘Urchristlicher Liebeskommunismus: Zum “Sitz im Leben” des Topos ἅπαντα κοινὰ in Apg 2,44 und 4,32’, *Texts and Documents: Biblical Texts in their Textual and Situational Contexts: Essays in Honor of Lars Hartman* (ed. T. Fornberg and D. Hellholm; Oslo: Scandinavian University, 1995) 689–712; R. I. Pervo, *Acts: A Commentary* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009) 130–5; D. R. McCabe calls the story an example of ‘severe punitive retribution’ (‘How to Kill Things with Words: Ananias and Sapphira Under the Apostolic-Prophetic Speech-Act of Divine Judgment’ [PhD diss., University of Edinburgh, 2008] 262). McCabe’s dissertation is the most recent book-length treatment of this pericope. Explaining the story in terms of a ‘prophetic speech-act’, McCabe argues that God kills the couple through the voice of Peter to preserve the ‘divine economy’ and ‘internal unity’ of the group portrayed by Luke–Acts. Thus the story is meant to provoke ‘a reverent fear of the God who protected the sanctity of this messianic community’ (260).

and/or excommunication.<sup>3</sup> But many tinge their commentary with lament, perplexed by the lack of apparent cohesion with the world of Luke–Acts.<sup>4</sup> Joseph Fitzmyer asks, ‘What sort of church does Luke envisage here, the purity of which has to be preserved by the removal of sinners by death?’<sup>5</sup> He ultimately concludes that this is something akin to ‘original sin’ in the life of the *Ekklesia*.<sup>6</sup>

Brian J. Capper’s work on this text has made the most compelling strides toward a solution. By drawing parallels to fiscal and novice practices at Qumran (*Yahad*<sup>7</sup>), he argues that Peter’s seemingly awkward statement in Acts 5.4 supposes a two-level process of membership in the *Ekklesia*. According to Capper, this story assumes that Ananias had previously been a novice to the community as indicated by Peter’s question: ‘While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control?’ Perhaps, then, the couple had previously been at a novice stage of membership where full participation in the common wealth would not have been expected.<sup>8</sup>

Most recently, J. Albert Harrill has pointed to oath/perjury themes in Greco-Roman comedies to illustrate ‘a fundamental paradox in ancient culture’, that more often than not, deities do not strike perjurers dead (even when they blatantly flout their self-cursing oath to the deity). Harrill argues that the story of Ananias and Sapphira assumes that the two had taken oaths. Thus oath-taking/self-cursing

3 E.g. M. Weinfeld, *The Organizational Pattern and the Penal Code of the Qumran Sect* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986); H. Havelaar, ‘Hellenistic Parallels to Acts 5.1–11 and the Problem of Conflicting Interpretations’, *JSNT* 67 (1997) 63–82. Havelaar concludes that Acts 5.1–11 is a ‘stylized excommunication’ whereby the two blaspheme the Holy Spirit.

4 A. Weiser argued that the episode was pre-Lukan. Acts 5.1, 2b, and 8 represent a story about an early follower who was struck dead. The reason for this death was not known to Luke, but the evangelist fashioned the story after the Barnabas episode immediately prior to Acts 5 as a negative example of discipleship (*Die Apostelgeschichte: Kapitel 1–12* [Ökumenischer Taschenbuchkommentar zum Neuen Testament 5/1; Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1982] 140). Barrett follows this line (*Acts*, 261–4). I am much less confident of reconstructing vv. 1, 2b, and 8 as representative of pre-Lukan tradition.

5 J. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles* (AB 31; New York: Doubleday, 1998) 31. He wonders why Peter does not give the two a chance to repent as Jesus advises in Luke 17.3–4.

6 Cf. J. D. G. Dunn, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Narrative Commentaries; Valley Forge: Trinity Press International, 1996) 64; Daniel Marguerat, *The First Christian Historian: Writing ‘Acts of the Apostles’* (trans. K. McKinney et al.; SNTSMS 121; Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2002) 172–8; D. G. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009) 209.

7 To avoid overgeneralization and misrepresentation of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the group that collected/authored these texts, I will refer to this community as the ‘*Yahad*’ throughout.

8 B. J. Capper, ‘The Interpretation of Acts 5:4’, *JSNT* 119 (1983) 117–31; cf. the earlier suggestion of E. Trocmé, *Le ‘Livre des Acts’ et l’histoire* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1957) 196–8. He described a multilayered membership in Peter’s following. As such ‘le cercle restreint’ that required communal wealth was voluntary inasmuch as Ananias and Sapphira could have enjoyed a comfortable autonomy of wealth on the second tier of membership.

culture 'supplies the missing piece of the story's puzzle'.<sup>9</sup> Acts 5.1-11 is set against such comedies to illustrate that the deity of this narrative leaves no place for ambiguity, impiety, or atheism within the *Ekklesia*. While compelling in several respects, Harrill's parallels with Greco-Roman comedy provide possible contrasts, but no precedents: Zeus, Jupiter, Venus, and Mercury *fail* to strike perjurers dead in these stories. Furthermore, crucial to Capper's thesis, Acts 5 assumes that Ananias and Sapphira were *not* obligated to contribute to the community of wealth at the previous novice stage. Capper's observation is most helpful, 'The hypothesis of a special vow falls squarely foul [of Peter's] assertion that *the proceeds were Ananias' own after the sale...* [Ananias] would be under no obligation to hand in the proceeds and fulfill his vow.'<sup>10</sup> But according to Harrill, 'Peter clearly expects to receive all of their proceeds'.<sup>11</sup> Harrill does not address whether his thesis complements or competes with Capper's thesis.

While Capper's thesis has done well to draw out the many parallels between this story and *Yahad* membership<sup>12</sup> and Harrill has done well to juxtapose this story with Greco-Roman comedy, the story's function within the eschatological program of Acts 1-7 requires further attention. Fitzmyer's salient question remains ultimately unanswered: *In the narrative context of Luke-Acts, why does the offense of Ananias and Sapphira warrant immediate death?*

I will answer by arguing that this story serves to establish the *Ekklesia* as the mediator of the Lord's presence within the Jerusalem temple. Just as it was believed that improper actions could result in instant death in proximity to the Shekinah<sup>13</sup> within the sanctuary, the 'offering' of Ananias and Sapphira was improper in proximity to the Holy Spirit at Solomon's Portico (*viz.* the Court of the Gentiles). I will argue that this story served as apologetic proof that the presence of the Lord had extended beyond the Holy of Holies to the Court of the Gentiles wherein the *Ekklesia* had become the spiritual, social, and religio-fiscal leadership of restored Israel. In this way, the severity of the divine response can be more fully appreciated when the temple setting of the story is emphasized.

9 J. Albert Harrill, 'Divine Judgment against Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5.1-11): A Stock Scene of Perjury and Death', *JBL* 130 (2011) 351-69.

10 Capper, 'Interpretation', 119 (emphasis original).

11 Harrill, 'Divine Judgment', 366.

12 I agree, however, with Havelaar that Capper's treatment 'makes no attempt to explain the story in its entirety' ('Hellenistic Parallels', 77). For a more recent nuance to Capper's thesis comparing the *Yahad's* (possible) understanding of usufruct, see D. Hamidovic, 'La remarque énigmatique d'Ac 5,4 dans la légende d'Ananias et Sapphira', *Biblica* 86/3 (2005) 407-15.

13 By Shekinah, I mean the Lord's presence as rested on or near the Ark of the Covenant and especially associated with the Holy of Holies. Of course this moniker, made more popular in later Jewish texts, derives from the description of the Lord coming 'to dwell' [שכן] physically among Moses et al. in the vicinity of Sinai; e.g. Exod 24.16; 25.8; 29.45; 40.34-35.

### 1. The Architecture of Acts 1–7

The apologetic that undergirds Acts 1–7 is that the presence of the Lord has been manifested in Jerusalem.<sup>14</sup> The importance of Jerusalem for the overarching narrative structure of Acts 1–7 cannot be overstated; it is the spiritual epicenter of Acts.<sup>15</sup> There is no small effort to demonstrate that the eschatological hopes for a restored Israel had begun in Jerusalem. Only once this has been established in Jerusalem (1.4) was the *Ekklesia* able to expand ‘to the remotest part of the earth’ (1.8).

In this section, I will argue that the first seven chapters of Acts aim to prove that the Lord is present within the Jerusalem temple, as mediated by the *Ekklesia*. From this spiritual epicenter, the Lord’s presence has extended beyond the Holy of Holies to the Portico of Solomon and eventually to the Gentiles at large.

Scholarship is divided on whether Acts presents a restored Jerusalem temple<sup>16</sup> or a replacement community-temple.<sup>17</sup> The present thesis does not hinge on defending one of these options—from both perspectives, one might argue that Ananias and Sapphira commit an offense in proximity to the Lord’s temple presence. That said, the most natural reading of Acts is that a Jerusalem-foundation is laid in Acts 1–7. Jerusalem, and especially the restored Jerusalem temple, remains the foundation for eschatological realization elsewhere.<sup>18</sup> The fact that the Lord’s

14 Commentators generally consider the end of ch. 7 (perhaps including 8.1–3) a turning point in the narrative. Not only is the scope of the *Ekklesia* widened from Jerusalem to a larger area in ch. 8, but the central protagonists shift from Peter’s community to Paul and his companions (e.g. Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 121; Johnson, *Acts*, 10). Others point to ch. 8 as a possible turning point (e.g. R. N. Longnecker, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Acts* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995] 27–30). While I view Paul’s entry point as the key shift, much in my thesis would not change if the lines are drawn otherwise.

15 Cf. H.-J. Klauck, ‘Die heilige Stadt. Jerusalem bei Philo und Lukas’, *Gemeinde—Amt— Sakrament; Neutestamentliche Perspektiven* (Würzburg: Echter, 1989) 101–29.

16 E.g. J. B. Chance, *Jerusalem, the Temple, and the New Age in Luke-Acts* (Macon: Mercer University, 1988) esp. 19–43; J. M. Dawsey, ‘Confrontation in the Temple: Luke 19:45–20:47’, *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 11 (1984) 153–65; F. D. Weinert, ‘The Meaning of the Temple in Luke-Acts’, *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 11 (1981) 85–9.

17 E.g. G. K. Beale *The Temple and the Church’s Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God* (New Studies in Biblical Theology 17; Downers Grove: Apollos/InterVarsity, 2004) esp. 201–44; J. Elliot, ‘Temple Versus Household in Luke-Acts: A Contrast in Social Institutions’, *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models of Interpretation* (ed. J. H. Neyrey; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1991) 211–40; S. Walton, ‘A Tale of Two Perspectives? The Place of the Temple in Acts’, *Heaven on Earth: The Temple in Biblical Theology* (ed. T. D. Alexander and S. Gathercole; Carlisle: Paternoster, 2004) 135–49.

18 Contra Michael Bachmann who argued that Luke’s vision of the Jerusalem temple carried very little Christian significance but reflected a distinctly Jewish symbolic value (*Jerusalem und der Tempel: Die geographisch-theologischen Elemente in der lukanischen Sicht des jüdischen Kultzentrums* [BWANT 9; Stuttgart/Berlin/Köln/Mainz: Kohlhammer, 1980] 380).

temple presence has been demonstrated in Jerusalem allows an extension of this presence beyond the Jerusalem temple mediated by the *Ekklesia*.<sup>19</sup>

The narrative role of the temple, of course, begins in the Third Gospel. By and large, the Third Gospel's portrait of the Jerusalem temple is positive and Acts mirrors this.<sup>20</sup> But Acts also builds from the plot of the Third Gospel and thus the chief antagonists are the leaders of Jerusalem. Against the positive relief of the temple, the Jerusalem Temple Establishment (JTE) is painted quite darkly.<sup>21</sup> The Jerusalem leadership (or lack thereof) is indicted in Luke as Jesus laments:

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, just as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not have it! 'Behold, your house is left to you desolate; and I say to you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say [ἕως ἧξει ὅτε εἴπητε<sup>22</sup>] "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" (Luke 13.34-35; cf. Ps 118.26)

Apparently the tradition has inherited some version of the prophetic claim that the divine presence had forsaken the Jerusalem temple.<sup>23</sup> Here Jesus looks for

19 In this way, the *Ekklesia* is indeed portrayed as a spiritual temple movement—a Holy of Holies for the Holy Spirit—but this identity is an extension of the eschatological form and function of the Jerusalem temple, not an ultimate replacement. To be clear, one does not have to accept my 'both/and' solution to this scholarly divide to accept that the Holy Spirit functions as the Lord's temple presence or that Ananias and Sapphira act improperly in proximity to this holy presence.

20 This story begins with the righteous priest Zacharias meeting an 'angel of the Lord' at the altar of incense (1.11) and ends with the witnesses of the risen and ascended Jesus praising God in the temple (24.53). The prophetess Anna confirms that Jesus' birth is directly related to the 'redemption of Jerusalem' while in the temple (2.36-38). We are given our first clues of Jesus' extraordinary character in juxtaposition to the teachers in the temple (2.41-50). This foreshadows Jesus' career as a teacher in the temple (21.37) and helps to establish his authority to indict the JTE when their 'time of visitation' arrives (19.44).

21 Historically speaking, 'The chief priests were the traditional Jewish aristocracy, who had supreme control of national affairs from their base in Jerusalem' (S. Mason, 'Chief Priests, Sadducees, Pharisees and Sadducees', *The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting*, vol. 4 [ed. Richard Bauckham; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995] 175). In Luke-Acts, 'the chief priests, Sadducees, and Sanhedrin are largely interrelated' (142). I would add that Luke's portrait of 'the scribes' clearly fits under this heading when located in Jerusalem (e.g. Luke 20.19).

22 Manuscripts vary suggesting the possibility of an aorist subjunctive. Fitzmyer renders this alternative as '...until it will come when you will say' (*Luke X-XXIV*, 1037). Even so, we can draw a clear association between eschatological time and the utterance of Ps 118 without building an argument of contingency or cause-and-effect here.

23 Cf. e.g. Ezek 8-10; 40-48; Lev 26.10-11; 4Q541; 4Q266f1.3. On the varied and complicated Jewish belief that the temple had been forsaken, see A. Le Donne, *The Historiographical Jesus: Memory, Typology, and the Son of David* (Waco: Baylor University, 2009) 248-56. In sum, there were multiple ways that Second Temple Jews envisioned the restoration of Israel, but almost all of them included the Lord's temple presence resting within the temple.

the ingathering of Israel, but laments that this is necessarily linked with the time of blessing described in Psalm 118. According to Luke, this blessing will (or must) come from the lips of Jerusalem's inhabitants (presumably, in recognition of Jesus). Jesus' reference to the prophets killed by these inhabitants follows the rejection motif of Ps 118.22, which seems to have been a very popular proof-text for nascent Christianity.<sup>24</sup> Here the Lukan Jesus echoes and then directly quotes Psalm 118 to offer a prophetic indictment of the JTE. Psalm 118 is used again in Luke 20.17-18 as the Lukan Jesus vilifies the JTE. As a result, 'The scribes and the chief priests tried to lay hands on him that very hour' because they understood that Jesus had spoken against them (20.19). Clearly, Psalm 118 functions as a bludgeon against the JTE in Luke's narrative.

Notice also that Psalm 118 exploits at least two architectural metaphors: a rejected *cornerstone* (v. 22) and the *house* of the Lord (v. 26). Both metaphors are utilized by nascent Christianity toward cultic ends (more on this below). Indeed the psalm climaxes with a blessing heard from the temple. This cultic-architectural metaphor is important for the Lukan Jesus who laments that the 'house' [οἶκος] of Jerusalem 'has been abandoned' [ἀφίεται]. It is quite clear, then, that Jesus' lament toward Jerusalem is particularly directed toward the temple.<sup>25</sup>

I contend that Acts 2-5 provides an answer to this lament as the Lord's presence returns to Jerusalem. Moreover, I will demonstrate that the Holy Spirit functions in Acts 1-7 as the Lord's temple presence.

The question posed to Jesus in Acts 1.6 drives the narrative of the next seven chapters (and beyond): 'Lord, is it at this time you are restoring the kingdom to

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We might find a parallel to the perspective of Luke-Acts in Josephus who also held the temple in absolute reverence but believed that the temple had been forsaken during his lifetime (*JW* 5.362-419; esp. 5.402-412); indeed Mason calls his *Jewish War* a 'Temple-centered history' ('Chief Priests', 159); Betsy Halpern-Amaru argues that Josephus' post-temple perspective eventually reframes his large-scale history to downplay the importance of the 'land' for Jewish identity ('Land Theology in Josephus' *Jewish Antiquities*, *JQR* 71 [1980] 201-29). In these ways, Josephus and Luke-Acts are similar; they differ, however, on who is to blame for this desolation. Josephus blames the violence of the commoners, whereas Luke-Acts blames the JTE.

<sup>24</sup> Matt 21.42; Mark 12.10, 11; Luke 20.17; Acts 4.11; Eph 2.20; 1 Pet 2.7.

<sup>25</sup> Robert L. Brawley rightly observes that Jerusalem and the temple are interchangeable entities in Luke-Acts (*Luke-Acts and the Jews: Conflict, Apology, and Conciliation* [SBLMS 33; Atlanta: Scholars, 1987] 127-30). This view is akin to that of Bachmann, *Tempel*, 13-66, 169-70. Bachmann's close association between the temple and the Holy City is a departure from H. Conzelmann. Conzelmann held the two entities as symbolically distinct (*The Theology of Saint Luke* (trans. G. Buswell; London: Faber & Faber, 1960] 73-9).

Israel?’<sup>26</sup> This question is framed by the summative statement that the Third Gospel provided ‘many convincing proofs’ of Jesus’ resurrection. Moreover, this risen Jesus spent his last days on earth preaching about the kingdom of God (Acts 1.3). The reader thus learns from this introduction that the narrator is keenly interested in framing the concept of ‘kingdom’ for the reader and providing ‘proofs’ of its eschatological coming.<sup>27</sup> Jesus’ answer to this question does not speak to its timing (the reader will soon be aware of its imminence in Acts 2<sup>28</sup>); rather, his answer points to the Holy Spirit: ‘you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you’ (1.8).<sup>29</sup> Luke Timothy Johnson comments,

The question of the disciples concerning the restoration of the kingdom to Israel (1.6) follows naturally on Jesus’ discourse concerning ‘the kingdom of God’ (1.3)... The ‘kingdom for Israel’ will mean for Luke, therefore, the restoration of Israel *as a people of God*. For him, this means its reception of the Holy Spirit, its recognition of the apostles as leaders of the people, and its enjoyment of...spiritual friendship and harmony (Acts 2.41-47; 4.32-37).<sup>30</sup>

26 This question presupposes the opinion that Israel’s ‘kingdom’ needed restoring. Moreover, the question hopes that Israel’s fundamental deficit will be addressed in the immediate future.

27 Pervo describes this aspect of Acts as ‘narrative of religious propaganda’ (Acts, 58); cf. discussion in L. C. A. Alexander, *Acts in its Ancient Literary Context: A Classicist Looks at the Acts of the Apostles* (JSNTSup 298; London: T&T Clark, 2006) 183-206.

28 The representative Diaspora Jews returning to Jerusalem (Acts 2.5) are probably meant to fulfil the promise that in the last days the stolen children of Israel will be returned to Jerusalem (cf. Isa 49.22; 60.4). Indeed added to the Acts 2 quotation of Joel, we see an allusion to Isa 57.19 (Acts 2.39): ‘For the promise is to you and to your children and to all that are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to himself’. It is also likely that the 120 followers (Acts 1.15) and the demand for a restored 12 apostles (1.26) are meant to symbolize the restored 12 tribes. Cf. A. W. Zwiep, *Judas and the Choice of Matthias* (WUNT 2/187; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004) 173-4. The symbolism of the twelve apostles ‘performs a function similar to that of the city of Jerusalem’ (H.-J. Klauck, *Magic and Paganism in Early Christianity: The World of the Acts of the Apostles* [trans. Brian McNeil; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003] 7). In this view, both the circle of twelve and Jerusalem provide an essential continuity between the origins of Jesus’ following and the extension of the ‘family of God’; McCabe draws attention to Luke 22.30 when he writes, ‘Jesus identifies the twelve disciples as those who will sit on the thrones to judge the twelve tribes of Israel’ (‘Words’, 190).

29 Clare Rothschild has argued that in Luke-Acts, such predictions ‘offered audiences the opportunity to both recollect what they knew about an event before it was narrated, as well as anticipate this upcoming version of the events’. She argues that ‘prediction provides anticipation of events that are unveiled in subsequent parts of the narrative, as a way of anticipating, even preempting skeptical reactions to these events’ frequently high degree of implausibility’ (*Luke-Acts and the Rhetoric of History: An Investigation of Early Christian Historiography* [WUNT 2/175; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004] 144-5).

30 L. T. Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles* (SP 5; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1992) 29 (emphasis original).

Johnson identifies Acts' vision for 'restored Israel' as (1) the reception of the Holy Spirit, (2) the installment of Jerusalem's leadership,<sup>31</sup> and (3) a community of common wealth and worship.<sup>32</sup> While Johnson does not extend these observations about 'restored Israel' to the role of the temple in Acts 1–7, these proofs of the kingdom (among others) create a constellation of related concerns for a Jewish sect that portrayed itself as eschatological temple worshippers. Upon receiving the Lord's presence in Acts 2, Peter's sect provides proof of the Lord's eschatological presence by demonstrating fiscal centrality, social harmony, and temple worship. Acts 2.43-46 summarizes,

<sup>43</sup>Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles. <sup>44</sup>And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common; <sup>45</sup>and they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need. <sup>46</sup>*Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart...* (italics added for emphasis)

In these ways, this eschatological sect is defined in opposition to the negative portrait of the JTE in Luke–Acts.<sup>33</sup> In a perfect world, the Jerusalem temple was meant to function as the fiscal, social, and religious center of Israel.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, and

31 Cf. D. Marguerat's assessment that the overarching subject of Acts 2–5 is the unfolding of the Spirit-filled community's interactions with the JTE ('La mort d'Ananias et Sapphira [Ac 5.1-11] dans la stratégie narrative de Luc', *NTS* 39 [1993] 209-26, esp. 211-17).

32 Klauck suggests that Acts 2.44-45; 4.37-38, and 5.1-2 are intended to give us an idealized picture of general practice ('Gütergemeinschaft in der klassischen Antike, in Qumran und im Neuen Testament', *RevQ* 11 [1982-83] 47-79, here 69-73, 79). He points out that images of social utopia were not unique to Jewish sects in classical antiquity. G. E. Sterling concludes that the summary statements function as identity-shaping passages for emerging Christianity ('Athletes of Virtue: An Analysis of the Summaries in Acts [2:41-47; 4:32-35; 5:12-16]', *JBL* 113 [1994] 679-96).

33 Indeed, the JTE is 'jealous' (Acts 5.17) of ecclesial leadership. It is clear that the *leaders* among the JTE are the antagonists. We are told that many priests became 'obedient to the faith' (Acts 6.7). Moreover, it is clear that the high/chief priests (e.g. Acts 7.55) are targeted by the narrative. The odd designation ὁ στρατηγὸς τοῦ ἱεροῦ (4.1; 5.24; cf. Luke 22.4, 52) further emphasizes that the *leadership* of the temple is in view.

34 It is well known that the temple functioned *not only* as the center of religious life and the administrating power matrix in this context, but that this power matrix included fiscal centrality (H. Moxnes, *The Economy of the Kingdom: Social Conflict and Economic Relations in Luke's Gospel* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988] 71). Of course, the praxis of this ideology was a matter of debate and (perhaps) sometimes violence in Second Temple Judaism. For example, when the rebels of the 'commoners' decided to rise up against the JTE, they not only killed two chief priests and set fire to the high priest's house, they also burned down the public archives where the records of debt were kept (*JW* 2.427). For a succinct, recent treatment on the relevant historical backdrop, see R. H. Finger, *Of Widows and Meals: Communal Meals in the Book of Acts* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007) esp. pp. 109-24.



most importantly, the temple was meant to house the Lord's presence. But in Acts, every effort is made to prove that the *Ekklesia* is the authoritative representative of the fiscal, social, and religious center of Israel. This is why the reader is told repeatedly that Peter et al. worshipped in the temple (2.46), prayed at the temple (3.1), healed at the temple gates (3.7), preached in the temple (3.12-26), and accepted offerings in the temple (4.32-5.12).<sup>35</sup>

This is also a major impetus for the group's placement in Jerusalem (perhaps the primary impetus; cf. Acts 1.4). Upon this foundation, Acts 2 does not just depict the Lord's empowering presence among a group of faithful followers;<sup>36</sup> it depicts the Lord's eschatological return to Jerusalem and subsequent ascent to his temple (as present within the *Ekklesia*).<sup>37</sup> With this in mind, it should come as no surprise to find that the Holy Spirit functions in this narrative as one might expect the Lord's Shekinah-presence to function within the Holy of Holies.

In Acts 1-7, the Holy Spirit fulfills the prophecy of Joel which promises that the Lord will return to 'the midst of Israel' (Joel 2.27).<sup>38</sup> Accordingly, the Lord will provide an abundance of food and wine (e.g. Joel 2.18, 24-26). The Lord will then 'restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem', and gather Diaspora Jews from every corner of exile (Joel 3.1-2). This is all done so that Israel 'will know

35 In the course of ten verses (3.1-10), the word ἱερόν is used six times and this episode climaxes as a man who had formerly been marginalized from temple worship enters the temple to worship with Peter and John. It is possible that the man's position at the gate, and entry to temple worship through the gates, echoes Ps 118.19-22.

36 Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles* (trans. J. Limburg, A. T. Kraabel, and D. H. Juel; Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988) 38; Cassidy, *Society*, 22-3; Haenchen, *Acts*, 237; Pervo, *Acts*, 317.

37 Klauck reminds us that the Feast of Weeks took on 'a new content [after 70 CE], as recollection of the making of the covenant on Sinai' (*Magic*, 8). He cautiously suggests that the narrator of Acts was familiar with this significance. In further support, he demonstrates that Philo's account of the Sinai episode shows great affinity to Luke's account of Pentecost in Acts 2. Indeed, according to Philo 'the flame transformed itself into articulate sounds that were familiar to the hearers' (*On the Ten Commandments*, 46). Beale (*Temple*, 205-15) writes that 'the background of the Joel 2 quotation in Acts 2 confirms a dual blessing-cursing theme. Consequently, Isaiah's linking of "tongues of fire" to God's theophanic presence in a Temple points even further to the same link in Acts 2' (214-15). Drawing from several contemporary Jewish texts, Beale suggests that the coming of the tongues of fire recalls theophanic temple imagery, e.g. the targumic interpolation of Joel 4.16-18 which inserts the phrase 'sanctuary of the Lord' (215). He appeals to Isa 30.27-30 which depicts God descending from heaven, 'his tongue like a consuming fire'. Many of Beale's parallels are ultimately peripheral, but more convincingly, he points to 1 *Enoch's* vision of a Holy of Holies built of crystals and 'tongues of fire' (14.15; 71.5). He concludes that Acts 2 is a portrait of the long-awaited temple of heaven descending to earth. While he might overstate his case, he does well to draw out the importance of the temple for the self-identification of the *Ekklesia* in Acts.

38 Many scholars theorize that Joel 2.27 represents the end of an independent oracle. If so, the last verses of the final form of Joel (3.20-21) mirror the key emphasis of this oracle: *the Lord is present*; see discussion in J. Barton, *Joel and Obadiah: A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001) 4-14.

that I am the Lord your God, dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain' (Joel 3.17; cf. 2.32). Joel concludes with the statement that 'the Lord dwells in Zion' (3.21).<sup>39</sup> In sum, the force of Joel's short prophecy is divine judgment,<sup>40</sup> the restoration of Israel, and the return of the Lord's presence upon the temple mount.<sup>41</sup> According to Acts 1–7, this is accomplished in the giving of the Holy Spirit; the Holy Spirit is to be identified with the Lord's temple presence.

That the Holy Spirit of Acts 4.32–5.12 functions much like one would expect the Lord's presence to function within the tabernacle/temple is central to the present thesis. But before expressing the importance of this for the story of Ananias and Sapphira, further evidence might help to calcify this association. To this end, the telos of this Jerusalem-centered section of Acts (chs. 1–7) warrants attention.

Once the narrative has offered proof that the Lord has indwelt the Jerusalem temple (as mediated by the *Ekklesia*), it moves beyond the temple precincts to demonstrate that the Holy Spirit is not ultimately limited by any earthly boundaries. Before his martyrdom in Acts 7, Stephen gives a speech to the high priest and thus also to the audience of the narrative.<sup>42</sup> This speech is meant to answer the accusation that Jesus claimed to destroy the temple (Acts 6.14).<sup>43</sup> Thus it is by way of this topic that Stephen is indicted. Stephen summarizes the story of Israel and concludes (i.e. meets the eschatological present) with Isa 66.1-2: 'Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house will you build for me, says the Lord, or what is the place of my rest?' (Acts 7.45). This climactic appeal to Isaiah (not so subtly) claims that the presence of

39 In addition to the extended quote of Joel 3.1-5 LXX, Acts 1–7 demonstrates at least a dozen other allusions or echoes of Joel. On the heavy influence of Joel on this section and perhaps the most sophisticated treatment of the use of scripture in Acts 2, see R. L. Brawley, *Text to Text Pours Forth Speech: Voices of Scripture in Luke-Acts* (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1995) 75-90, esp. 87-90. If one is not convinced that the telos of Joel is in view in Acts 2, I would point out that the nearness of the Lord's presence is also a key element of Ps 16.8-11, also quoted in the immediate context (Acts 2.25-28).

40 Of course, Joel's vision of *who* is judged differs from the vision of Acts 1–7. However, as we will see below, divine judgment is also important for Acts.

41 Hans Walter Wolff summarizes that Joel envisions Jerusalem as 'the inviolable "sanctuary" (v. 17b). Yahweh's tabernacled on Zion will bring protection for the whole city area (vv. 16-17, 20-21)—and, v. 18 adds, a fountain of fertile life for the surrounding regions... [T]he Temple designates the source of new life which, according to Ezek 47, it represents as Yahweh's Tabernacle' (*Joel and Amos* [Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977] 85); cf. Barton, *Joel and Obadiah*, 14; Barton confirms that Wolff's treatment is still among the best in circulation (1).

42 Johnson helpfully observes, 'Ancient historians used the speeches of their characters to communicate to the reader the wider implications and the deeper meaning of the events being described' (*Acts*, 53).

43 As is frequently noted, Stephen's trial thus mirrors the trial of Jesus in several ways. E.g. G. W. Trompf argued that Stephen's trial and death were a reenactment of Jesus' (*The Idea of Historical Recurrence in Western Thought* [Berkeley: University of California, 1979] 124-5); cf. also Clare Rothschild, *Luke-Acts and the Rhetoric of History*, 111-14.

the Lord can be *and is now* experienced beyond the jurisdiction of the JTE.<sup>44</sup> To the point, the ‘Glory of God’<sup>45</sup> is revealed to Stephen in direct juxtaposition to the high priest (Acts 7.55). The irony is thick here. One would expect the high priest exclusively to be privy to the ‘Glory of God’. Rather the high priest condemns the man to whom the Glory is revealed and thereby reveals himself as opposed to God.

Extending the theophanic episode of Acts 2, Stephen speaks with wisdom and Spirit (6.10), and ‘his face was like the face of an angel’ (6.15). This is (perhaps typologically) reminiscent of the shining face of Moses after his theophanic episode on Sinai (Exod 34.29-35).<sup>46</sup> Indeed, Moses features prominently in his speech (7.17-43). At the conclusion of his speech, Stephen, ‘full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the Glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God’ (7.55). Thus the Holy Spirit guides Stephen’s theophany revealing the Glory of God as experienced on earth. As heaven and earth occupy a mediated space in this context, Stephen acts as a temple mediator in juxtaposition to the established temple mediators in Jerusalem.

In this context, we are told that the JTE ‘always resist[s] the Holy Spirit’ (7.51); conversely Stephen is ‘full of the Holy Spirit’ (7.55). It is the Holy Spirit manifested in the *Ekklesia* and absent from the JTE that reveals who represents Israel’s eschatological leadership in Acts 1–7.<sup>47</sup> Moreover, the ‘God of Glory’ revealed to Abraham (Acts 7.2), mediated through Moses (Acts 7.38) and present within the first tabernacle<sup>48</sup> vindicates the *Ekklesia* over and against the JTE.<sup>49</sup> Here we witness a shift in the narrative from the proof of the Lord’s presence in the temple, to proof that the Lord’s presence is bigger than the temple.<sup>50</sup> The citation of Isaiah 66 provides the necessary exclamation point. But, of equal importance for the present thesis, Acts 7 clearly appeals to the tabernacle presence mediated

44 Cf. the related thesis of G. E. Sterling, ‘Opening the Scriptures: The Legitimation of the Jewish Diaspora and Early Christian Mission’, *Jesus and the Heritage of Israel* (ed. D. P. Moessner; Harrisburg: Trinity, 1999) 199-225. Sterling argues that Stephen’s speech is a way to legitimize this community outside of the borders of Israel and the temple precincts (esp. 213-14).

45 In light of the many appeals to the LXX in Luke–Acts, δόξα is evocative of the Lord’s temple presence. כבוד is commonly translated by the LXX as δόξα in such cultic contexts. Considering the prominence of Moses within Stephen’s speech, cf. esp. Exod 40.34-35.

46 In the Acts 7.38 interpretation, Moses was in the presence of an angel.

47 Robert F. O’Toole, ‘You Did Not Lie to Us (Human Beings) but to God (Acts 5.4c)’, *Biblica* 76 (1995): 182-209, esp. 190-1.

48 Cf. Exod 24.16; 25.8; 29.45.

49 It is also noteworthy that the second occurrence of ἐκκλησία refers to Moses’ ‘congregation in the wilderness’ (ἐκκλησία ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ, 7.38). This supports the narrator’s effort to connect Peter’s congregation to that of Moses (i.e. restored Israel) in Stephen’s speech. The first occurrence of this word, of course, is in 5.11; cf. Harrill, ‘Divine Judgment’, 351.

50 I reiterate that it is not necessary to see this extension of the temple-community as a necessary replacement of the Jerusalem temple. Indeed, this is why Paul can return to the Jerusalem temple to worship in 21.26.

by Moses to his *Ekklesia* as a precedent for Stephen's experience of the Glory of God via the Holy Spirit.

Finally, looking back to Peter's encounter with the JTE, Peter is questioned by Annas, Caiaphas, et al. (Acts 4.5-12), 'By what power or by what name do you do these things?' Peter's answer to this question appeals to the cultic-architectural metaphor of Psalm 118. Jesus is the name by which the man was healed,<sup>51</sup> Jesus who 'is the stone which was rejected by you, the builders, but which became the chief cornerstone' (Acts 4.11; cf. Ps 118.22). The force of this metaphor points to Jesus as the foundation of the *Ekklesia* and one that undergirds the eschatological temple-community in Jerusalem (those who venerate the name of Jesus in the Jerusalem temple).

In this section, I began by highlighting Jesus' lament that the Jerusalem temple had been abandoned (Luke 13.34-35). In doing so, the Lukan Jesus draws upon the cultic-architectural metaphor of Psalm 118 (*vis-à-vis* the temple leadership<sup>52</sup>). Linked here is the hope that the ingathering of Israel will be realized at a future time associated with the utterance of this blessing. The Jerusalem inhabitants will bless 'the one who comes in the name of the Lord' (presumably Jesus). Acts 4.10-11 is the answer to Luke 13.34-35.<sup>53</sup>

Luke 13.34-35; cf. Ps 118.26	Acts 4.10-11; cf. Ps 118.22
<p>O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those sent to her!<sup>54</sup> How often I wanted to gather your children together, just as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not have it! Behold, your house is left to you desolate; and I say to you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"</p>	<p>...let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead— by this name this man stands here before you in good health. He is 'the stone which was rejected by you, the builders, but which became the chief cornerstone'.</p>

51 This builds on the Acts 2.21-38 interpretation of the Lord's name in Joel 2.32 (esp. Acts 2.38), but also echoes Ps 118.26: 'Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord...'

52 Cf. Jesus' quotation of this following the parable of the vine-growers in Luke 20.17.

53 This also helps us frame the use of Ps 118 in Luke 20.17-18. Cf. G. E. Sterling's succinct observation of 'glances back' in Acts. Concerning Acts 4.11 he argues, 'The author expects the reader of Acts to have read Luke' (*Historiography and Self-Definition: Josephos, Luke-Acts and Apologetic Historiography* [NovTSup; Leiden: Brill, 1992] 336 n. 121).

54 It is possible that there is a word play at work in the phrase 'καὶ λιθοβολοῦσα τοὺς ἀπεσταλμένους πρὸς αὐτήν'. My thanks to Loren Stuckenbruck for this observation via personal correspondence. It is interesting that the verb λιθοβολοῦσα relates to λίθος especially considering that ἀπεσταλμένους might carry apostolic connotations. In any case, the narrative of Luke has precedent for employing 'stones' as a metaphor to refer to people (e.g. Luke 3.8; 19.40).

In Acts 4.11, the reader learns that the identity of Jesus and the *Ekklesia* built around him is expressed as a cultic-architectural structure. As Peter makes this claim before the high priestly family, within the context of a temple-located healing, one must seriously consider the possibility that the *Ekklesia* is being portrayed as a spiritual temple movement,<sup>55</sup> but one that is based at the Jerusalem temple. Perhaps, then, this portrait of the *Ekklesia* is that of a spiritual temple-community whose form and function extends the Lord's temple presence.

It is crucial to recognize that Psalm 118 provides the primary architectural metaphor in the NT when arguing that the *Ekklesia* is a spiritual temple. Indeed, 1 Peter 2.6-7 quotes Ps 118.22 to employ the same architectural metaphor with explicitly cultic claims.<sup>56</sup> The author of Ephesians (2.19-22) explicitly uses this architectural metaphor and quotes Ps 118.22.<sup>57</sup> Compare also Paul's architectural metaphors in 1 and 2 Corinthians concerning the collective identity of the Body of Christ as a 'temple for the Holy Spirit'.<sup>58</sup> It is also important to note that in all of the

55 The parallels between the *Yahad* and the community depicted in Acts have become well known (and perhaps overdrawn at times) in NT scholarship. What is noncontroversial is the fact that the *Yahad* self-identified with temple terminology. The *Yahad* is 'a holy house for Israel, and a foundation, a Holy of Holies (קודש קודשים) for Aaron; witnesses of truth, for justice, and favorably chosen' (1QS 8.4-6). Moreover, 1QS 3-4 is clearly interested in defining insiders of their Holy-of-Holies-sect in relationship to the 'spirit of holiness' (רוח קודש, 1QS 4.21). A. L. A. Hogeterp is correct to see a relationship between the *Yahad's* self-identification as a temple and their notion of 'his spirit' (*Paul and God's Temple* [BTS 2; Leuven: Peeters, 2006] 106).

It is commonly thought that the *Yahad* considered their community a replacement for the temple and/or that prayer in their community replaced sacrifice. While I will not rule out this possibility, the *Yahad's* enactment of the temple was not necessarily a rejection of the literal temple precincts or the act of literal sacrifice. Their laments and polemics toward the JTE stem from a hope for a pure temple and priesthood. The 'true' priests of the *Yahad* ritually purified themselves (including prayer) not to supersede an outmoded concept. This was done in eschatological preparation for an anointed priest who would restore purity alongside an anointed king. Cf. D. Dimant, '4QFlorilegium and the idea of the Community as Temple', *Hellenica et Judaica: Hommage à Valentin Nikiprowetzky* (ed. A. Caquot, M. Hadas-Lebel, and J. Riaud; Leuven: Peeters, 1986) 165-89; cf. the more recent treatment of J. Klawans, *Purity, Sacrifice, and the Temple: Symbolism and Supersessionism in the Study of Ancient Judaism* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2006) 145-74.

56 'You also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ... The stone which the builders rejected, this became the very cornerstone' (1 Pet 2.4, 7).

57 Cf. Exod 29.45; Lev 26.12; Jer 31.1; Ezek 37.27.

58 In 1 Cor 6.19: 'Or do you not know that your body is a temple (τὸ σῶμα ὑμῶν ναός) of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify (δοξάσατε) God in your body'. Cf. 1 Cor 3.16-17: 'Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God (ναός θεοῦ ἐστε καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ θεοῦ) dwells in you? If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are'; cf. also 2 Cor 6.16. A fuller treatment would have to explore the Fourth Evangelist's move to use cultic-architectural

places where the *Ekklesia* is called a temple, the words 'Shekinah' or 'Presence' are never employed. In Pauline, Deutero-Pauline, Petrine, Johannine, and (here) Lukan nomenclature, the temple presence of the Lord is always called 'the Holy Spirit' or 'the Spirit' or 'Glory'. As this cultic-architectural metaphor is employed in Acts 4.11, we should expect the temple presence of the Lord to be called 'Holy Spirit'.<sup>59</sup> This is not to say that all of these NT witnesses have a uniform conception, but the similar usage of Psalm 118 suggests overlapping theologies.

In Acts 1-7, the Holy Spirit is the restored temple presence of the Lord that restores the kingdom to Israel.

In this section I have highlighted: (1) the Third Evangelist's notion that the restoration of the kingdom to Israel was directly connected with the Lord's presence indwelling Jerusalem; (2) the explicit use of Joel's promises to this effect; (3) the repeated emphasis on ecclesial temple worship and communion; (4) the agenda to define the *Ekklesia* in direct contrast to the JTE; (5) the agenda to identify the (leaders of the) *Ekklesia* with Moses typology; (6) the use of Isa 66.1-2 to define the eschatological present; (7) the association between the Holy Spirit and the 'Glory of God' in Stephen's speech; and (8) the cultic-architectural metaphor supplied by Psalm 118. All considered, there is a strong possibility that the portrait of the nascent *Ekklesia* in Acts 1-7 puts them forth as the eschatological mediators of the Lord's temple presence.

## 2. Barnabas, Ananias, and Sapphira in the Temple

From Acts 2.43, when we first learn of the community of common wealth, to Acts 5.12, the Jerusalem temple is the repeated (though not continuous) setting. Acts 3.11 and 5.12 specify that the *Ekklesia* meets at Solomon's Portico. Given (1) that the summary immediately before the examples of Barnabas, Ananias, and Sapphira explicates a temple meeting place, (2) that Acts 5.12 confirms a locale in Solomon's Portico, and (3) that no other location is specified between

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language as a metaphor for Jesus' body (John 2.19-22); cf. J. Klawans who writes that 'both Paul's [Temple] metaphors and Jesus' eucharistic words and deeds find a likely context in the multifarious and well-attested ancient Jewish efforts to channel the Temple's sanctity into various other rituals activities, such as prayer and eating' (*Purity*, 244).

<sup>59</sup> The author/editors(s) of the Community Rule seem to have been influenced by the cultic designation 'spirit of holiness' as well. The author of the *Damascus Document* believed that the usurpers in the Jerusalem temple 'polluted the sanctuary' (מטמאים הם את המקדש) (CD 5.6). Noteworthy for the present thesis is that these culprits are accused of corrupting 'their holy spirit' (רוח קדשיהם). On the relationship between CD and 1QS see S. S. Metso, 'The Relationship between the Damascus Document and the Community Rule', *The Damascus Document: A Centennial of Discovery* (ed. J. M. Baumgarten, E. G. Chazon, and A. Pinnick; STDJ 34; Leiden: Brill, 2000). Metso argues for a direct relationship rather than mere influence.

these explicit references, every indication is that Acts 4.32–5.12 takes place in the temple.

Acts 2.46 tells us that the congregation shares property and that they worship in the temple daily. These elements are undoubtedly linked. *The Ekklesia enacts legitimate temple worship and this is demonstrated through legitimate religio-fiscal ethics.*<sup>60</sup> This reacts against the JTE's use of wealth at the expense of the poor.<sup>61</sup> Peter's new temple-community has become the religio-fiscal mediator of Israel in a way that aligns with the Third Gospel's wealth ethic.<sup>62</sup>

As discussed, the identity of the *Ekklesia* is defined in juxtaposition to the JTE. In this context, Barnabas is introduced as a Diaspora Levite who has brought a gift to the temple (4.36). We are likely meant to see him as a Levitical representative who embodies proper service within the temple—that he is not a member of the Jerusalem elite is clear (thus his status as Levite might serve a similar literary purpose as that of the anonymous priests who join Peter in Acts 6.7<sup>63</sup>). In isolation, the mention of his lineage is uninteresting. No doubt, many Diaspora Jews claimed Levi as their ancestor. This simply increases the probability that the narrator provides this (otherwise immaterial) detail to underscore the cultic dimension of offerings given within the temple precincts. It is possible that this act is to be read as ceremonial due to the repeated emphasis on gifts placed at the feet of particular authorities.<sup>64</sup> Furthermore, the reader is told that this Levite 'brought' (φέρω) this offering and placed it at Peter's feet. In the LXX, φέρω is most commonly used in cultic settings and often refers to bringing sacrifice to an altar (cf. the use of φέρω in the episode wherein sacrifices are brought to Zeus in Acts 14.13).<sup>65</sup> While not a common word in Luke–Acts, it is also used in the

60 Harrill ('Divine Judgment', 362–4) offers a helpful summary on the theme of money/possessions in Luke–Acts; cf. L. T. Johnson, *The Literary Function of Possessions in Luke–Acts* (SBLDS; Missoula, MT: Society of Biblical Literature, 1977) esp. 209–11; on the relationship between Luke and Acts on this theme see Moxnes, *Economy*, 161.

61 Moxnes, *Economy*, 120; cf. especially Jesus' teaching on the use of money as he stands near the temple treasury (Luke 20.46–21.6).

62 Moxnes argues that this section 'sums up a pattern of the system of "moral economy" that prevailed in the Gospel' (*Economy*, 160). He argues that the remainder of Acts is less guided by this ethic; C. M. Hays argues for a consistent economic vision throughout both Luke and Acts, although manifested in various ways (*Luke's Wealth Ethics: A Study in their Coherence and Character* [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010] 269).

63 Fitzmyer points out that Levites were often employed for 'lowlier services in the Jerusalem Temple' (*Acts*, 321).

64 Cf. Johnson, *Acts*, 91.

65 E.g. Gen 4.3–4; 32.3–24; Lev 5.6–18. In Leviticus, the root is used nineteen times, eighteen of these in the context of sacrifice. See especially Deut 12.11: 'Then it shall come about that the place in which the Lord your God will choose for his name to dwell, there you shall bring (οἴσεσθε) all that I command you: your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes and the contribution of your hand, and all your choice votive offerings which you will vow to the Lord'.

previous summary (4.34) and in the Ananias episodes (5.2), which are all set within the temple.

Both the physical placement and narrative context of this section make it highly likely that the deference of Barnabas to Peter serves to elevate and legitimize Peter as a leader of eschatological Israel within the temple.<sup>66</sup> The fact that the vocabulary used in this context is connotative of cultic offering is then also suggestive.

That this episode is meant to have been understood as a commentary on proper temple worship becomes even more apparent with the deaths of Ananias and Sapphira.<sup>67</sup> In order to cast the most helpful light on this episode, we must briefly acquaint ourselves with the particular dangers associated with the Lord's temple presence in the Hebrew Bible.

While violence related to the divine is complex and varied in the Hebrew Bible, instant death by the hand of God is quite rare. When these two criteria are employed—(1) instantly, and (2) directly killed by God—such violence happens exclusively in proximity to the Lord's Shekinah presence: Nadab and Abihu (Lev 10.1-2); the sons of Korah (Num 16.31-35); and Uzzah (2 Sam 6.6-7).<sup>68</sup> Such shocking episodes served as proof that the Lord had not forsaken his earthly sanctuary altogether.<sup>69</sup> While repugnant to modern sensibilities, severe punishments for careless acts within the sanctuary were seen as better alternatives to a forsaken sanctuary.<sup>70</sup>

66 Dunn's reading comes closest to this as he observes that Barnabas is designated as a Levite to contrast him with the 'hostile priests of 4.1' (*Acts*, 60). B. J. Malina and J. J. Pilch are representative of most commentators on this point. They observe that Barnabas is a Levite, which connects him to the priestly family, but offer no suggestion as to why this detail is included in the narrative (*Social Science Commentary on the Book of Acts* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008] 48).

67 Dunn writes that 'the episode marks out the new church as evincing that aura of holiness which particularly in its beginnings marked out the tabernacles and Temple with its Holy of Holies' (*Acts*, 63).

68 There is some debate over whether the punishment of 'cutting off' in the Pentateuch might imply divine execution. Most of the time, the punishment implies execution or excommunication by the community. But Lev 20.2-5 provides the rare example of 'cutting off' wherein this stipulation is made: if offenders escape capital punishment by the community, they will be executed by the Lord himself. Apropos of the present thesis, the offense in question (offering children to Molech) is said to 'defile my sanctuary' (v. 3). So again, this instance of divine execution is related to the sanctuary. See discussion in G. J. Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979) 285-6. In any case, the text does not specify the time-frame of the death (so too with Onan; Gen 38.10). My thanks to Leonard Greenspoon, Joel Lohr, and Mark Mangano for their insights.

69 Lev 26.31 becomes instructive of accidental priestly impropriety during the 'sin or guilt offering' (מטרתו... את אשמו, 4Q266f1.1.3) and results in the Lord forsaking the temple to the ends of heaven to avoid smelling the sacrificial odors: אלהה לי אל קצי [ה]שמים ולו אריה בריה ניהוהכם ובמקום אחר (f1.1.4); interesting for the present thesis, the lines that follow appeal to Joel 2 for repentance.

70 There is also evidence of this logic in post-70 CE contexts. One section from the Mishnah advocates the execution of an unclean priest. *Sanh.* 9.6 instructs that the unclean priest should be taken outside by the young priests 'and they should bash open his brain with



When Ananias brings his improper offering to the temple, he is questioned and accused by Peter and then struck dead instantly.<sup>71</sup> This is exactly what one might expect of an improper offering in the sanctuary. Perhaps this is why Codez Bezae et al. place this episode not at Solomon's Portico, but 'εν τῷ ἱερῷ' (5.12).<sup>72</sup> However the agenda to demonstrate the presence of God's Holy Spirit at Solomon's Portico fits well with Luke's election ethic: *The Lord's presence has extended from the Holy of Holies to include those on the periphery, including those who congregate in the Court of the Gentiles.*

That it is a religio-fiscal offering also reinforces the religio-fiscal program of Luke-Acts.<sup>73</sup> But the key message of Acts 4.32-5.12 is that, without a doubt, the Lord's presence resides within his temple. This is why Peter accuses Ananias of lying 'to God' (5.4) and why he accuses Sapphira of putting 'the Spirit of the Lord to the test' (5.9).<sup>74</sup> This leads to the response of the witnesses: '...and great fear came over all who heard of it' (5.5; cf. 5.11).<sup>75</sup> It is the Lord's temple presence that legitimates Peter's congregation as the 'true' leadership within

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clubs' (ומפציעין את מוחו בגזירין). Such violence is draconian and meant to be so. When measured against the possibility of a departed Shekinah, however, the summary execution of an errant priest was seen as a less severe option. Striking for the present thesis is what directly follows this passage. *Sanh.* 9.6 provides two options for dealing with non-priests who perform a cultic function in the temple: (1) Rabbi Aqiba says that the non-priest should be executed 'by strangling' (בַּחֲנֹק). (2) The sages say that the non-priest should be executed 'by the hands of Heaven' (בְּיַד שָׁמַיִת). Notice that the second option presupposes that the Lord is present and can enact violent recompense for the actions that might have otherwise resulted in the violent removal of the temple.

71 It is an interesting coincidence that Ananias shares his name with the High Priest. Paul predicts Ananias will be struck down by God in Acts 23.2. It is possible, although *only* possible, that this affinity is intentional.

72 Cf. Pervo who points to the D-texts generally (*Acts*, 135 n. 95).

73 Apparently the *Yahad* spoke of their prayers for justice as sacrificial offerings (1QS 9.5). In later Jewish texts, almsgiving sometimes took on the significance of atoning sacrifices. Although rabbinic witness must be dealt with cautiously when making claims about first-century texts, some might find the following texts interesting: *'Abot R. Nat.* 4.5 [20a]. Also *Tem* 1.6i-k *'Abot* 4.11; *t. Pe'ah* 4.21; *b. Bat.* 9-10a; *Sukkah* 49b.

74 Here ἐψεύσω τῷ θεῷ and περιόσαι τὸ πνεῦμα κυρίου function interchangeably and are mutually informative.

75 The twice mentioned response of fear is suggestive of theophanic experience. This response seems to have varying results for the internal (or implied) audience of Acts, but 5.14 expresses a positive response as the *Ekklesia* grows rapidly. A similar, but not identical, response is given after Herod Agrippa is executed by an angel of the Lord in Acts 12.23-24. After this theophanic episode, 'the word of the Lord continued to grow and to be multiplied' (12.24). Interestingly, Agrippa's death is caused by a lack of deference to 'the glory (τὴν δόξαν) of God'. However, because of the mediating angel who executes Herod, this passage must remain on the periphery of the present thesis.

the temple.<sup>76</sup> Such improper actions in such close proximity to the Lord's temple presence can be devastating.<sup>77</sup>

Acts 1–7 provides an eschatological vision for how corporate worship should work in the temple as mediated and embodied by the *Ekklesia*. This includes a reformed religio-fiscal ethic within the temple.<sup>78</sup> The corporate identity of the *Ekklesia* is hinged on an eschatologically established temple. It is not just that the Lord is potently present in the community of apostles, but that this community functions as a Holy of Holies within the Jerusalem temple and subsequently, an

76 This connection provides an interesting parallel with 1QS. Opposite to the 'Spirit of Truth' in 1QS 3–4 was a 'Spirit of Falsehood' who deceived those outside the community. The *Yahad* valued the purity of their temple-community very highly (perhaps this was their chief concern) and it was for this reason that incorporating new members was a very deliberate process. The reason for this deliberation with respect to fiscal incorporation was Exod 23.7. The *Yahad* could not be fiscally yoked to fraud because they had to be far 'from every false word' (1QS 5.15). This perspective might shed light on the false words of Ananias and Sapphira as directed by Satan. Peter tells Ananias that he has lied (not to men but) to God. He tells Sapphira that she (like her husband) has tested the Holy Spirit. Jörg Frey has argued that 1QS 3.13–4.25 was part of a composition that pre-dated the sectarian writings, but perhaps influenced the ideology represented by 1QS ('Different Patterns of Dualistic Thought in the Qumran Library: Reflections on their Background and History', *Legal Texts and Legal Issues: Proceedings of the Second Meeting of the International Organization for Qumran Studies* [ed. M. J. Bernstein, F. G. Martinez, and J. Kampen; STDJ 23; Leiden: Brill, 2007] 275–335, esp. 285–313). If Frey is correct, perhaps the role played by the 'spirit of holiness' as the means for eschatological (not present) purification mentioned in column 4 was a factor that led the compiler(s) of the *Community Rule* to incorporate the content preserved in 3.13–4.25.

77 The fact that Peter emphasizes that these offenses were not committed against men is reminiscent of 1 Sam 2.25. After their temple misconduct is detailed, Eli attempts to reason with his sons, saying, 'If one man sins against another, God will mediate for him; but if a man sins against the Lord, who can intercede for him?' Eli's advice has an interesting affinity to Luke 12.10: 'everyone who speaks a word against the son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him'.

78 Luke–Acts gives us two portraits of religio-fiscal management based on the temple, both involving widows. The first portrait sets the wealthy and the poor in contrast. The wealthy JTE (Jesus actually uses the term 'robbers') mismanages the temple treasury to such an extent that widows are forced to destitution by giving 'all they have'. Jesus laments this in Luke 21.4. The second involves Peter's congregation. Peter's management of the community pot ensures the care of the poor. Widows are not forced to destitution but can petition the religio-fiscal leaders for help (Acts 6.1 [Cassidy, *Society*, 27]). When Sapphira enters the picture, she does not know that she has become a widow herself (Acts 5.7). In contrast to the widow who gave everything she had, Sapphira has become a widow precisely because she (like her husband) has *not given all that she had*. The Third Gospel is quite fond of ironic role reversals, and especially so between the rich and poor (e.g. Luke 1.52–53; 6.20, 24; 16.19–31). When juxtaposed, these two widows provide another example. Jesus is an advocate for the widow who gives everything and is thus exploited by the system (Luke 21); the Holy Spirit strikes down the widow who exploits the system by refusing to give everything (Acts 5).

extension of this beyond the Jerusalem temple. As proof that this new temple-community is legitimate, the Lord's temple presence demonstrates itself by rejecting an improper offering. As expected within this paradigm, Ananias and Sapphira die instantly.