

## Integrated Stories and Israel's Contested Worship Space: Exod 15.17 and Stephen's Retelling of *Heilsgeschichte* (Acts 7)

W. GIL SHIN

*School of Theology, Fuller Theological Seminary, 135 N. Oakland Ave, Pasadena,  
CA 91101, USA. Email: [wonggilshin@fuller.edu](mailto:wonggilshin@fuller.edu)*

Lukan scholarship has paid attention to the ambivalent attitude towards the temple found in Stephen's speech. However, a coherent explanation of this ambivalence is still needed from within the narrative of Stephen's retold history of Israel itself. This study points to a pattern of connection between God's salvation and Israel's worship space captured in the Song of Moses, particularly Exod 15.17, as a sub-structure of the Lukan Stephen's basic understanding of *Heilsgeschichte* within which he integrates the stories of Abraham, exodus and David. The nature of Israel's worship space revealed in this scheme elucidates Stephen's ambivalent critique of the temple.

**Keywords:** ambivalence, *Heilsgeschichte*, intertextuality, Jerusalem temple, Song of Moses, Stephen

Numerous studies have been conducted on Stephen's speech,<sup>1</sup> particularly regarding the speech's stance vis-à-vis the Jerusalem temple.<sup>2</sup> In the larger context of Lukan scholarship, this intense interest has to do with Luke's ambivalent attitude towards the temple, which is itself a thorny issue that has created a

1 For a comprehensive list, see B. Peterson, 'Stephen's Speech as a Modified Prophetic Rib Formula', *JETS* 57 (2012) 351–69, at 351–5 nn. 1–13.

2 E.g. J. Bihler, 'Der Stephanusbericht (Apg 6,8–15 und 7,54–8,2)', *BZ* 3 (1959) 252–70, at 258–9, 264–6; D. D. Sylva, 'The Meaning and Function of Acts 7:46–50', *JBL* 106 (1987) 261–75; F. D. Weinert, 'Luke, Stephen, and the Temple in Luke-Acts', *BTB* 17 (1987) 88–90; E. Larsson, 'Temple-Criticism and the Jewish Heritage: Some Reflexions on Acts 6–7', *NTS* 39 (1993) 379–95; M. Bachmann, 'Die Stephanusepisode (Apg 6,1–8,3): Ihre Bedeutung für die Lukanische Sicht des jerusalemischen Tempels und des Judentums', *The Unity of Luke-Acts* (ed. J. Verheyden; BETL 142; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1999) 645–62; D. Marguerat, 'Du Temple à la maison suivant Luc-Actes', *Quelle maison pour Dieu?* (ed. C. Focant; Paris: Cerf, 2003) 285–317, at 303–6; S. Walton, 'A Tale of Two Perspectives?', *Heaven on Earth* (ed. T. D. Alexander and S. J. Gathercole; Carlisle: Paternoster, 2004) 135–49.

tension between two models: replacement versus continuity.<sup>3</sup> Stephen's speech has been interpreted along the lines of this debate. As Lukan scholarship was long governed by the supersessionist idea, the speech was considered to signal the replacement or condemnation of the temple itself.<sup>4</sup> However, as recent studies attend to the continuing significance of a Jewish frame of reference in understanding key notions of the Lukan writings, the supersessionist approach has been seriously challenged.<sup>5</sup> Accordingly, more careful readings of the speech's stance on Judaism have been suggested,<sup>6</sup> including proposing that the speech is not against the temple per se but against a misconception of restricting God's presence to the temple, although opinions differ regarding whether calling Solomon's building a 'house' (οἶκος; Acts 7.47) should be included in this criticism<sup>7</sup> or not.<sup>8</sup>

In these discussions, efforts are made to do justice to both sides of the 'ambivalent and paradoxical situation' regarding the temple that Stephen's speech depicts.<sup>9</sup> For example, as a way to explain Stephen's negative attitude towards the temple while not renouncing the validity of its presence itself, an analogy to OT prophetic critique is adduced.<sup>10</sup> In this line, B. Peterson attempts a unified reading to alleviate 'presumed tensions of the speech' by analysing the speech from the form-critical perspective of Gunkel's OT lawsuit.<sup>11</sup> Although this approach shows the purpose of the entire speech coherently as a counter-charge, it has limitations. First, it falls short of delving into the presumed logic *within* the Lukan Stephen's framing of Israel's brief history concerning 'why [he] chose to focus on some matters to the exclusion of others',<sup>12</sup> even though this

3 For a survey of these two models, see W. G. Shin, 'The "Exodus" in Jerusalem (Luke 9:31): A Lukan Form of Israel's Restoration Hope' (PhD diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 2016) 254–65.

4 For a list of works, see Sylva, 'Meaning', 261–2 n. 4.

5 E.g. J. Jervell, *Luke and the People of God* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1972) 18, 41–74; M. Bachmann, *Jerusalem und der Tempel* (BWANT 6/9; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1980) 369–81; R. L. Brawley, *Luke-Acts and the Jews* (SBLMS 33; Atlanta: Scholars, 1987) 159; D. Ravens, *Luke and the Restoration of Israel* (JSNTSup 119; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1995) 67–71.

6 E.g. T. L. Donaldson, 'Moses Typology and the Sectarian Nature of Early Christian Anti-Judaism: A Study in Acts 7', *JSNT* 12 (1981) 27–52.

7 E.g. Ravens, *Luke and Restoration*, 67; cf. C. K. Barrett, 'Attitudes to the Temple in Acts', *Templum amicitiae* (ed. W. Horbury; JSNTSup 48; Sheffield: JSOT, 1991) 345–67, at 351–2.

8 E.g. Weinert, 'Luke, Stephen', 89–90; Walton, 'Tale', 141–2; Bachmann, 'Stephanusepisode', 546–7; cf. Sylva, 'Meaning', 263–7.

9 P. W. L. Walker, *Jesus and the Holy City: New Testament Perspectives on Jerusalem* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996) 65.

10 E.g. F. D. Weinert, 'The Meaning of the Temple in the Gospel of Luke' (PhD diss., Fordham University, 1979) 186; Bachmann, 'Stephanusepisode', 561–2; C. S. Keener, *Acts* (4 vols.; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012–15) II.1331.

11 Peterson, 'Modified Prophetic Rib', 354.

12 Keener, *Acts*, II.1335.

logic may eventually be used for the rhetorical end of the speech. Second, it tones down the possibility that the speech may well address the issue of the temple at a more fundamental level than criticising (even dooming) its contemporary worship practice, thus oversimplifying the complex notion of Israel's worship space involved therein, which implicitly relates to Jesus as the Prophet-like-Moses (Acts 7.37) and the Davidic figure (7.46; cf. Luke 1.32–3),<sup>13</sup> both in light of Israel's worship space (7.44, 46). Peterson's recent study exemplifies the current situation in that while the balanced sensitivity to ambivalence makes important headway, researchers have not reached a coherent explanation *from within the course of the Lukan Stephen's retold history of Israel itself* regarding how both aspects of the ambivalence are compatible in his conceptualisation of Israel's contested worship space.<sup>14</sup>

In order to address this problem, the current study pays special attention to how the stories of Abraham, the exodus and David are interconnected in Stephen's framing of Israel's *Heilsgeschichte*.<sup>15</sup> Stephen's retelling, given as an answer to his alleged attack against 'this holy place and the law' (Acts 6.13), includes these stories in such a way that they are all connected to 'this place' (6.14; 7.7; cf. 6.13; 7.33). This intriguing narrative structure warrants a search for correlation between how these stories are integrated and how the nature of 'this place' can be construed. More specifically, this study points to a pattern of connection between God's salvation and Israel's worship space captured in the Song of Moses (Exod 15.1–18), particularly 15.17, as a sub-structure of the Lukan Stephen's basic understanding of *Heilsgeschichte* within which he integrates the stories of Abraham, exodus and David.<sup>16</sup> The nature of Israel's

13 The harder reading (τῷ οἴκῳ Ἰακώβ, p<sup>74</sup>, s\*, B, D, H; Acts 7.46) creates an echo to Luke's earlier identification of Jesus as the one who is given 'the throne of his father David' (τὸν θρόνον Δαυὶδ τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ, Luke 1.32) and reigns over the house of Jacob (τὸν οἶκον Ἰακώβ, 1.33).

14 Larsson's research ('Temple-Criticism') does follow the internal development of Israel's *Heilsgeschichte* formulated in the speech. I will confirm his observation (following N. A. Dahl) that the stories of both David and Solomon (despite the difference between 'tent' and 'house') are a fulfilment of the promise given to Abraham (Acts 7.7b; 'Temple-Criticism', 392–3). However, his study does not do justice to the speech's ambivalent attitudes and even disregards strong evidence of temple critique in the term χειροποιήτος (Acts 7.48; cf. 7.41; 'Temple-Criticism', 394).

15 Stephen's speech identified as a redactional inclusion of 'history-sermon' (E. Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1971) 288–9) raised numerous negative questions about literary unity and redaction history (see Peterson, 'Modified Prophetic Rib', 353 n. 11). The current study is not concerned with such text-composition history but focuses on the narrative form of the retold history of Israel.

16 'Sub-structure' does not refer to a 'source' for Luke's composition/redaction. For a survey of suggestions about sources and their challenges, see C. C. Hill, *Hellenists and Hebrews: Reappraising Division within the Earliest Church* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992) 92–101. Rather, I point to Exod 15 as an 'interpretive grid' that may explain how the Lukan Stephen

worship space revealed in this scheme elucidates Stephen's ambivalent critique of the temple, which produces both positive and negative attitudes in his retelling.

### 1. 'This Place' (Acts 7.7) as a Key Internarrative Link

Stephen in Acts 7 appears as an intradiegetic narrator who relates the stories of Israel's past within the larger narrative in which Stephen is charged and defends himself. A key that links these two narrative levels is the phrase 'this place' (ὁ τόπος οὗτος, 6.13; 7.7). On the one hand, in the main narrative level, Stephen is charged with an attack 'against this holy place' (κατὰ τοῦ τόπου τοῦ ἁγίου [τούτου],<sup>17</sup> 6.13). On the other hand, Stephen recounts Israel's history of 'this place' (ἐν τῷ τόπῳ τούτῳ; 7.7; cf. 7.44, 46, 48) as his own defence, creating the intradiegetic narrative level. The coincidence of 'this place' in both cases marks an intersection between the two different levels of the narrative. This narrative intersection is a result of a clever intertextual play with the story of Abraham, in which Stephen, following the account in Gen 15, renders the exodus salvation in association with the promise of the land given to Abraham.<sup>18</sup> Stephen conflates the Genesis account (15.13–14) with Exod 3.12, as has been widely observed:<sup>19</sup> Stephen substitutes 'in this place' (ἐν τῷ τόπῳ τούτῳ, Acts 7.7) for 'on this mountain' (Exod 3.12), echoing 'this ... place' against which he is alleged to have spoken (Acts 6.13). Stephen thus sets side by side his accusers' understanding of 'this holy place' (6.13) and 'this place' (7.7) that God aims to establish as demonstrated in the history of Israel's worship space.

'This place' in this connection, then, has a trifold association. It is the place to which the exodus leads, the place of worship, and the place where Stephen's

---

puts together Israel's stories (cf. Keener, *Acts*, II.1335–6). For various suggestions of OT passages as the speech's background, see M. L. Soards, *The Speeches in Acts: Their Content, Context, and Concerns* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1994) 60–70.

<sup>17</sup> A reading without τούτου is attested by better manuscript evidence (p<sup>74</sup>, x, A, D, E). However, internal evidence may construe this word as either a deletion or an addition; see B. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994<sup>2</sup>) 298. In either case, the phrase refers to the temple. If τούτου is original, it augments the interplay between τόπου τοῦ ἁγίου τούτου (6.13) and τόπῳ τούτῳ (7.7).

<sup>18</sup> For Israel's interpretive traditions that typologically connect the exodus and the conquest based on God's promise of the land to Abraham in Gen 15, see M. Fishbane, *Text and Texture* (New York: Schocken, 1979) 122–7.

<sup>19</sup> E.g. Haenchen, *Acts*, 279; I. H. Marshall, *Acts* (TNTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980) 136; R. Pesch, *Die Apostelgeschichte* (2 vols.; EKKNT 5; Zürich: Benziger, 1986) 1.249; C. K. Barrett, *The Acts of the Apostles* (2 vols.; ICC 34; London: T&T Clark, 1994–8) 1.344–6; J. A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles* (AB 31; New York: Doubleday, 1998) 372; Keener, *Acts*, II.1359–60.

hostile audience lives (i.e. Jerusalem and the temple). This clever interplay raises the question of whether the land or Jerusalem (and the temple) where Stephen's accusers now stand is equivalent to the place of worship at which the exodus salvation aims. This can be answered positively according to the Abrahamic promise that had foreseen the practice of worship 'in this place' (Acts 7.7).<sup>20</sup> It can also be answered negatively, given the accusers' ill-conceived execution of Stephen because of 'this holy place' (6.13). These internarrative reverberations reveal the ambivalent nature of the Jerusalem temple, bearing on the very topic of the interchange of the charge against Stephen and his (implicit) counter-charge,<sup>21</sup> which he presents through a series of stories of Abraham, the exodus and David.

## 2. Exodus and the Story of Abraham

### 2.1 'This Place' of Worship (Acts 7.7) as the Goal of the Exodus

Abraham's story is connected to the exodus as early as Gen 15.13–14. What Stephen does to this tradition is to focus that connection on worship as the goal of the exodus.<sup>22</sup> We saw above that he does this first by the conflation of Gen 15.13–14 and Exod 3.12 and second by the substitution of 'in this place' for 'on this mountain' (Exod 3.12). What is behind this conflation and substitution?

Stephen's speech presents a conspicuous development with regard to 'the place' (τόπος) as it moves from the story of Abraham to that of the exodus. After the promise is given to Abraham that his posterity will worship 'in this place' (Acts 7.7), as the time to fulfil this promise draws near (7.17), Moses experiences an angelophany/theophany in the wilderness of Mount Sinai (7.30). This encounter reveals to him that 'the place' (τόπος) where he is standing is holy ground (7.33); in that holy place God's plan to rescue 'my people' is announced as promised to Abraham (7.34). With this description, exodus salvation is located between two statements of 'the place' (τόπος). Its goal is 'worship in this place (τόπος)' (7.7), and its initiation is announced in 'the place' (τόπος) that is holy (7.33).

In this interplay, the worship dimension is the background not only of God's promise to Abraham ('worship me in this place', 7.7) but also of Moses's

20 Contra H. Ganser-Kerperin, *Das Zeugnis des Tempels* (NTAbh 36; Münster: Aschendorff, 2000) 244–5. He restricts this promise (7.7) to David's σκήνωμα (v. 46) in opposition to Solomon's οἶκος (v. 47), i.e. the Jerusalem temple. However, his reading is one-sidedly influenced by the subsequent negative developments (vv. 39–43, 48–50).

21 Contra M. Dibelius, 'The Speeches in Acts and Ancient Historiography', *Studies in the Acts of the Apostles* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1956) 138–85, at 167; see J. J. Kilgallen, 'The Function of Stephen's Speech (Acts 7,2–53)', *Biblica* 70 (1989) 173–93, at 174–5 and Hill, *Hellenists and Hebrews*, 53–92.

22 N. A. Dahl, 'The Story of Abraham in Luke-Acts', *Studies in Luke-Acts* (ed. L. E. Keck and J. L. Martyn; Nashville: Abingdon, 1966) 139–58, at 145.

theophanic experience (7.30–4). In 7.33, the beginning of the exodus mission is announced in a holy space, the place the audience may know as the place to which Moses will return along with those who will experience the exodus. Some commentators see that the reference to ‘holy ground’ (7.33) as related to Stephen’s argument that God’s holy presence is limited neither to the temple (Fitzmyer, Keener) nor to the promised land (Marshall, Marguerat) in a way that the absence of the temple made with hands is attested both in the Mosaic and Christian traditions (Tyson).<sup>23</sup> It is also suggested that the spatially displaced lives of the patriarchs, including Moses, are in accord with God’s purpose (McKeever).<sup>24</sup> Although these interpretations are not impossible, I find it more important that Stephen identifies this place as the wilderness of Mount Sinai (Σινῶ, 7.30) in contrast to the traditions that identify it as Horeb (e.g. LXX Exod 3.1; MT Exod 3.1; Tg. Onq. Exod 3.1; Tg. Neof. Exod 3.1; Tg. Ps.-J. Exod 3.1).<sup>25</sup> By referring to Mount Sinai, Stephen closely associates the place of Moses’s theophany with Israel’s later encounter with God at Mount Sinai after the exodus from Egypt (Exod 19.11). Josephus’ retelling of Exod 3 demonstrates this point. He calls the place where the theophany takes place ‘Sinai’ (Σιναιῶν, *Ant.* 2.264) rather than ‘Horeb’ and adds to Moses’ theophanic experience a divine order to bring Israel to Mount Sinai after the exodus from Egypt: ‘He directed him, when he brought the Hebrews out of the land of Egypt, to come to that place (εἰς ἐκεῖνον ἐκτελέσαι τὸν τόπον), and to offer sacrifices of thanksgiving there’ (2.269). Likewise, Stephen may present the theophany to Moses in association with worship in the aftermath of the exodus, just as he connects the promise of the exodus to Abraham to the worship dimension as the goal of the exodus.

## 2.2 *The Song of Moses and the Conflation of Abraham and the Exodus*

After this announcement, however, Stephen’s retelling of history takes a negative turn that specifies the wilderness generation’s making of an idol (Acts 7.39–43) as an act of disobedience to the one whom God sent to lead the exodus (7.35–8). Emphasised in this turn of events is Israel’s act of ‘making’ (ποιέω, 7.40–1), which Stephen connects to a place of idolatrous worship (‘tent of Moloch’, 7.43) as opposed to a place of worship derived from the exodus (‘tent of witness’, 7.44). How does Stephen make sense of this negative turn of events? He points out that the gist of Israel’s misconception of worship is that they rejoice ‘in the works of their hands’ (ἐν τοῖς ἔργοις τῶν χειρῶν αὐτῶν)

23 Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 378; Keener, *Acts*, II.1399; Marshall, *Acts*, 141; Marguerat, ‘Du Temple’, 304; J. B. Tyson, *The Death of Jesus in Luke-Acts* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1986) 105–6.

24 M. C. McKeever, ‘Sacred Space and Discursive Field: The Narrative Function of the Temple in Luke-Acts’ (PhD diss., Graduate Theological Union, 1999) 242.

25 Pesch (*Apostelgeschichte*, 254) also makes this observation but does not discuss its significance.

as shown in making a calf (μοσχοποιέω) to offer a sacrifice to this idol (7.41). Given that Stephen emphatically characterises the nature of 'this place' in terms of worship as the goal of the exodus (7.7) and contrasts it with a counterfeit worship (7.43), this form of transposed aftermath of the exodus is an ironic contradiction of what the exodus should lead to.<sup>26</sup> Notably, these two emphasised aspects of the exodus – (1) worship as the goal of the exodus and (2) whose hands do the making for this worship – are shown pithily in the description of the destination of the exodus as 'the sanctuary, which your hands established' according to Exod 15.17:

εἰσαγαγὼν καταφύτευσον αὐτοὺς εἰς ὄρος κληρονομίας σου εἰς ἔτοιμον κατοικητήριόν σου ὃ κατεργάσω κύριε ἁγίασμα κύριε ὃ ἠτοίμασαν αἱ χεῖρές σου. (LXX)

In the Song of Moses, the part that addresses YHWH's contention with the Egyptians (Exod 15.1–12) is seamlessly connected to the situation in the land (15.13–18). This land as a direct destiny of the exodus has special characteristics. First, it is a sanctuary-like dwelling place for the saved. It is an abode to which those who are redeemed by God are led (v. 13) and, at the same time, a place God has made for his own abode (v. 17). It is thus holy (v. 13) and called a 'sanctuary' (שְׁתֵּיטָה/ἁγίασμα, v. 17). It is God's own abode, but the redeemed people are invited to that very place. Second, this place is something that God's own 'hands have established' (v. 17b). In broader scriptural traditions, an entity that God's own hands make is in contrast to what human hands make, with the latter, particularly in the setting of worship, turning into idols (e.g. Isa 31.7; cf. χειροποίητος in the LXX). Accordingly, God's presence is not restricted to a specific physical venue (Isa 66.1–2; cf. Acts 7.48–50; this nature is called 'apophatic').<sup>27</sup> The description of '[God's] hands' ascribes a strong apophatic nature to the destination of the exodus as a sanctuary (Exod 15.17; cf. Ps 78.54<sup>28</sup>) even though this place is a unique space for the redeemed in special relationship with God ('you brought them in and planted them on the mountain of your possession/inheritance', v. 17a).

This song, then, includes the following elements: (1) God's exclusive saving action, having to do with the apophatic nature of the consequent sanctuary-like place; (2) the immediate connection between divine salvation and the establishment of the sanctuary-like place; and (3) the complex nature of the sanctuary-like

26 See Marguerat, 'Du Temple', 304 for a similar conclusion.

27 For a distinction between the notion of apophatic and that of kataphatic, see B. C. Lane, *Landscapes of the Sacred* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002) 241.

28 In this psalm that recalls the exodus story, the sanctuary-like place (שְׁתֵּיטָה/ἁγίασμα (Ps 77 LXX)) into which God's deliverance of the people leads (v. 53) is what God's right hand has won (v. 54), which is contrasted with anger-provoking idols (v. 58).



place (i.e. a holy place where God dwells and, at the same time, a habitation for the saved that God has prepared).<sup>29</sup>

These characteristics of Israel's worship space as a result of the exodus add to a conviction that the pattern captured in Exod 15.17 may well be key to construing the intertextual play of Acts 7.7 concerning 'the place'. Taking Exod 15.17 as the underlying conceptual background of Stephen's retelling of Israel's history explains two important aspects of Acts 7: (1) the worship dimension is posited as the goal of the exodus (v. 7 // ἁγίασμα, LXX Exod 15.17); and (2) what hampers this goal is the work of human hands (vv. 41, 48; cf. v. 50 // οἱ χεῖρες σου, LXX Exod 15.17). In this light, although many commentators rightly identify the conflation of Gen 15.14 and Exod 3.12 in Acts 7.7, the observation about the conflation of the two passages should be complemented with attention to Exod 15.17 as an underlying conceptual frame for such conflation.<sup>30</sup> When Stephen retells Israel's history, this basic form of God's salvation unites the exodus story with the promise to Abraham as the beginning of the exodus salvation saga, with a particular focus on its goal of establishing Israel's worship space (Acts 7.7 // Exod 15.17) and in contrast to the way the history of the exodus may turn to idolatrous worship (Acts 7.41, 48 // Exod 15.17). This underlying structure sheds light on how the anti-idol rhetoric related to Israel's worship practice (Acts 7.39–43) coherently occurs in Stephen's framing of Israel's history, particularly with the contrasting juxtaposition of the tent of testimony in the post-exodus wilderness (7.44) vis-à-vis the tent of Moloch (7.43) in line with the rejoicing in the works of hands (ἐν τοῖς ἔργοις τῶν χειρῶν αὐτῶν, 7.41) by those who were led out of Egypt (7.40).<sup>31</sup>

29 These characteristics also appear in Ps 78. The description of a series of YHWH's feats against the Egyptians in their land (vv. 44–51) and at the sea (v. 53) is connected without interruption to YHWH's bringing Israel into his 'holy land' (v. 54), 'the mountain that his right hand had won' (v. 54). In this holy land the tribes of Israel settle their tents (v. 55), and the mountain turns out to be Zion, where he builds 'his sanctuary like the heavens' (vv. 68–9; NRSV).

30 Contra Barrett (*Acts*, 1.345) and A. Weiser, *Die Apostelgeschichte* (OTKNT 5; Würzburg: Echter, 1981) 194, who are sceptical about the purpose of the exodus as the establishment of (temple) worship in Jerusalem; for an opposite view, see Dahl ('Story of Abraham', 145) and W. D. Davies, *The Gospel and the Land: Early Christianity and Jewish Territorial Doctrine* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974) 268–70. However, even the latter interpreters do not consider the importance of Exod 15.17, whereas R. L. Déaut, *La Nuit Pascale: essai sur la signification de la Paque juive a partir du Targum d'Exode xii 42* (Rome: Institut Biblique Pontifical, 1963) 162 n. 77 points to Exod 15.17 as a background.

31 H. van de Sandt, 'Why Is Amos 5,25–27 Quoted in Acts 7,42f?', *ZNW* 82 (1991) 67–87, points to Deut 4 as a background of the quotation of Amos 5. Although this may explain some motifs related to the anti-idolatry theme (e.g. 'what he had seen', 'who spoke') in Acts 7.44, the Deuteronomy passage alone does not explain *why* the anti-idol rhetoric occurs in the broader context of the *Heilsgeschichte* from Abraham to David.



### 3. Exodus and the Story of David

That the interplay with the term τόπος (Acts 6.13, 14; 7.7) connects the exodus story to the story of Abraham under the topic of Israel's worship space raises the question of whether the exodus story is also linked to the story of David, since Stephen's retelling of David is likewise focused on his relation to the construction of worship space (7.45b-7).<sup>32</sup> This question can be examined in two parts: (1) how the topic of Israel's worship space bears on the connection between the stories of the exodus and David; and (2) how this relation helps us understand Stephen's ambivalent attitude towards the temple.

#### 3.1 *Israel's Worship Space and the Stories of the Exodus and of David*

Stephen's speech probably entails a connection between the story of David and the story of the exodus, given that the story of David in Stephen's speech is one of a series of events related to the tent (σκηνή) of Israel:

vv. 44-6 ἡ σκηνὴ τοῦ μαρτυρίου ἦν τοῖς πατέρασιν ἡμῶν ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ

καθὼς διετάξατο ὁ λαλῶν τῷ Μωϋσῇ ποιῆσαι αὐτὴν κατὰ τὸν  
τύπον ὃν ἐώρακεῖ

ἦν καὶ εἰσῆγαγον διαδεξάμενοι οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν μετὰ Ἰησοῦ ἐν  
τῇ κατασχέσει τῶν ἐθνῶν

ὧν ἐξῴσεν ὁ θεὸς ἀπὸ προσώπου τῶν πατέρων ἡμῶν ἕως τῶν  
ἡμερῶν Δαυίδ

ὃς εὗρεν χάριν ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἠτήσατο εὗρεῖν σκηνώμα  
τῷ οἴκῳ Ἰακώβ

v. 47 Σολομὼν δὲ οἰκοδόμησεν αὐτῷ οἶκον

v. 48 ἀλλ' οὐχ ὁ ὕψιστος ἐν χειροποιήτοις κατοικεῖ καθὼς ὁ προφήτης  
λέγει

(Acts 7.44-8)

32 The connection between David and Abraham has been researched e.g. by Dahl, 'Story of Abraham'; R. F. O'Toole, 'Acts 2:30 and the Davidic Covenant of Pentecost', *JBL* 102 (1983) 245-58. However, the issue of whether these two figures are also related to Luke's portrait of the exodus has not been studied in depth.

The story of David is syntactically part of a long sentence that traces the history of the tent (σκηνή). One notable part of understanding the relationship between David and the wilderness tabernacle (σκηνή) in this sentence depends on determining how to read the syntax of the phrase ἕως τῶν ἡμερῶν Δαυίδ (v. 45). Many English translations connect it to the standing of the tabernacle (σκηνή): 'it [as referring to σκηνή in v. 44] was until the days of David' (e.g. NRSV, NIV, ESV, CEB). However, the syntax does not easily support this reading. Instead, this adverbial phrase more likely modifies the proximate verb ἐξώσεν (v. 45) rather than the verb ἦν at the beginning of the sentence (v. 44). Thus: 'God drove out the nations before our ancestors until the days of David'.<sup>33</sup>

This reading is preferable not only syntactically but also in view of Stephen's indebtedness to 2 Sam 7. Acts 7.44–8 can be read in the sense that David 'found favour ... and asked to find a dwelling place (σκήνωμα)' after God finished driving out all the nations. This reading fits with the event-sequence of 2 Sam 7, in which David's intention to build a house for God is presented when the Lord has given David rest from all his surrounding enemies (v. 1).<sup>34</sup> An examination of 2 Sam 7.1–17 as a whole can throw further light on the matter. The first section of 2 Sam 7 (vv. 1–3) provides the setting of the story: David was settled in his house and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies (7.1), signifying that Israel's conflicts with the nations within Canaan had reached a significant end point. Against this background, David's intention to build a house for the ark is presented in the contrast between David's house of cedar and the tabernacle (σκηνή) in which the ark of God reposed (7.2). The second section (7.4–17) is God's speech, beginning with a question: 'Are you the one to build me a house to live in?' (7.5) – which later receives this answer: 'He [i.e. your offspring] shall build a house for my name' (7.13). In other words, the building project of the 'house' is itself not opposed, but is assigned to David's offspring.

What is stated between this question (7.5) and its answer (7.13) reveals in what situation the building of such a house for God is granted. It is an account of the days when God moved around in a tent in all places where the people of Israel went, beginning with the exodus (7.6–7). God points out that he had not requested a house in these days. However, in 7.13 God himself professes that there will

33 M. C. Parsons, *Acts* (Paideia; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008) 101 follows this reading. However, he does not comment on its significance. Barrett (*Acts*, 1.372) admits that, syntactically, ἕως τῶν ἡμερῶν Δαυίδ modifies ἐξώσεν and even mentions that the inhabitants of Canaan were not completely driven out until the time of David. But he quickly turns to a 'solution' that reads it as a reference to the tabernacle, given the subsequent reference to the building of a 'house' (vv. 46–7).

34 In the ANE conceptualisation of divine enthronement, a building project (e.g. a palace or a sanctuary) follows the completion of the subjection of the enemies of a king or a deity. For how this notion bears on 2 Sam 7 and Exod 15, see B. Halpern, *The Constitution of the Monarchy in Israel* (HSM 25; Chico, CA: Scholars, 1981) 19–24.

indeed be a 'house' for his name. The following passage shows specifically the context in which this building is allowed:

I will appoint a place (τόπος, LXX) for my people Israel and will plant (καταφυτεύω) them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly ...; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house. When ... you lie down with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring after you ..., and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. (2 Sam 7.10–13)

This passage shows that the building is granted in two important circumstances. First, the description of the circumstances suggests that the Israelites are only now truly settled in peace in the land (7.10–11); this peace is characteristic of the appointed place (τόπος; LXX 7.10). This gives an impression that the conflicts with the surrounding nations are only now over and Israel finally has 'rest'.<sup>35</sup> In this sense they are only now appointed to the place (τόπος) in which they are 'planted' (καταφυτεύω, LXX 7.10).

Importantly, this characteristic is similar to the description of God's leading of the Israelites to his own mountain in Exod 15.13–17:

[Y]ou led the people whom you redeemed; you guided them by your strength to your holy abode. The peoples heard, they trembled; pangs seized the inhabitants of Philistia. Then the chiefs of Edom were dismayed; trembling seized the leaders of Moab; all the inhabitants of Canaan melted away ... You brought them in and planted (καταφυτεύω, LXX) them on the mountain of your own possession, the place, O LORD, that you made your abode, the sanctuary, O LORD, that your hands have established.

This passage portrays God's leading the saved Israelites into the land. The resident nations tremble because of their coming and subsequently God brings them into the land and plants them (καταφυτεύω). In 2 Sam 7, enemies tormenting the Israelites will finally be quieted (v. 10) and the people of God will live in their own place in rest (v. 11). This is what is meant by God's planting them (v. 10). Given this analogous imagery, God's speech in 2 Sam 7 leaves the impression that the vision of the destination of the exodus salvation is completed only in David's time.<sup>36</sup>

35 On this 'rest' as reminiscent of the Deuteronomic vision of peace in the land as a destination of the exodus (Deut 12.10), see A. A. Anderson, *2 Samuel* (WBC 11; Dallas: Word, 1989) 116.

36 S. E. Loewenstamm, *The Evolution of the Exodus Tradition* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1992) 41–3 points to traditions in which the process of conquest was not complete until the monarchic period and the building of the Zion temple, the beginning of which is rooted in the exodus (cf. Exod 15; Ps 78; Isa 11). Because of this close connection between the construction of

Second, in 2 Sam 7, the settlement of Israel's habitation in peace coincides with God's establishing the house of David. As God will establish the peaceful habitation for the Israelites, he will also make David a 'house' (v. 11), that is, the Davidic kingdom (v. 12). So the fate of the Israelites' secure habitation is coterminous with the establishment of 'the house of David', the Davidic rule.<sup>37</sup> In this connection, God answers that David's offspring will build a house for God's name (v. 13), indicating that this series of oracles involves three 'houses': (1) God will establish the house of David; (2) David's offspring will build a house for God's name; and (3) the people of Israel will have a safe habitation. This multivalent nature of the 'house' that David is associated with is reminiscent of what we found as a characteristic of the destination of the exodus patterned after Exod 15. The destination of the exodus has a double function: as the secure abode for those who are guided to it (15.13) and as the place God has made for his dwelling (15.17).<sup>38</sup> Within this correspondence, 2 Sam 7 adds that *it is God's establishment of the Davidic rule that will complete what the exodus aims at, that is, the establishment of the house for God as well as of the people's secure habitation.*<sup>39</sup>

These two points shed light on how, in accordance with our syntactic reading of Acts 7.45, the topic of Israel's worship space bears on the connection in Stephen's speech between the story of David and the story of the exodus. In retelling the story of David with regard to Israel's worship space, Stephen probably discloses his indebtedness to a certain form of salvation scheme, a notion that the moment of the completion of the expulsion of the enemies from the land took place at the time of David and that this was followed by the building project of Israel's worship space (7.45–6). Luke may have had a deep-rooted conception that the exodus salvation is completed in the Davidic period in that God's giving rest from the enemies (Acts 7.45 // 2 Sam 7.9–11 // Exod 15.14–16) is finalised by the setting up of the worship space (Acts 7.46 // 2 Sam 7.13 // Exod 15.17) (see Table 1). This indicates that Stephen's construal of the significance of David is

---

the Davidic–Solomonic temple and Exod 15, M. Leuchter ('Eisodus as Exodus: The Song of the Sea (Exod 15) Reconsidered', *Bib* 92 (2011) 327–33) proposes that the early monarchy is the background to the textualisation process of Exod 15.

37 R. Bauckham, *Bible and Mission: Christian Witness in a Postmodern World* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003) 44.

38 This double function is also found in Ps 78. See n. 29.

39 4Q174 is important evidence of the association of Exod 15, 2 Sam 7 and Amos 9, which are all connected in its pesher. It posits a sanctuary-like place stated in Exod 15.17 (iii 3) as forecasting the promise of a secure habitation of Israel within the Davidic kingdom stated in 2 Sam 7.11–14 (iii 7–11a), which will be fulfilled by the Shoot of David who will arise in Zion to raise the fallen booth of David in the promise of Amos 9.11 (iii 11b–13).

Table 1. Pattern of the Establishment of Worship Space.

God's giving rest from the enemies	→ Setting up Israel's worship space
Acts 7.45: they dispossessed the nations that God drove out before our ancestors until the time of David	Acts 7.46: [David] found favour in the sight of God and asked to find a dwelling place for the house of Jacob
2 Sam 7.9–11: I [God] ... have cut off all your enemies from before you and violent people shall afflict no more. I will give you rest from all your enemies	(2 Sam 7.10: I [God] will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may dwell in their own place) 7.13: He shall build a house for my name
Exod 15.14–16: the nations have heard and trembled; pangs have seized the inhabitants of Philistia. The chiefs of Edom were dismayed; trembling seizes the leaders of Moab; all the inhabitants of Canaan have melted away	Exod 15.17: You will bring them in and plant them on your own mountain, the place, O LORD, which you have made for your abode, the sanctuary

integrated into the larger salvation scheme, in which the completion of the exodus is associated with David's establishment of Israel's worship space.

In short, in Stephen's retelling of history, the stories of both Abraham and David are connected to the exodus saga within a very basic conceptual structure of *Heilsgeschichte*.<sup>40</sup> (1) God's own salvation is directly paired with his leading the saved to a sanctuary-like dwelling place. (2) The resulting worship space of Israel is complex, associated as it is with the Davidic figure's rule, the establishment of non-idolatrous worship, and the secure habitation of the people of God. This suggests that Stephen understands salvation history at a deeper level shaped by this pattern which Exod 15.17 succinctly captures in Israel's scriptural traditions.<sup>41</sup> In this basic account of *Heilsgeschichte*, salvation is promised to Abraham (Acts 7.7)

40 For this reason, A. M. Schwemer's contention ('Lukas als Kenner der Septuaginta und die Rede des Stephanus (Apg 7,2–53)', *Die Septuaginta und das frühe Christentum* (ed. T. S. Cauley; WUNT 277; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011) 308–10) is only half-right. She correctly sees that building the Jerusalem sanctuary (by both David and Solomon) is the fulfilment of the Abrahamic promise, but she falls short of showing what undergirds this connection in Stephen's speech.

41 Cf. Loewenstamm, *Evolution*, 259–60; R. J. Clifford, 'In Zion and David a New Beginning: An Interpretation of Psalm 78', *Traditions in Transformation* (ed. B. Halpern *et al.*; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1981) 120–41, at 133–7.

and completed by the offspring of David (7.45–6).<sup>42</sup> The stories of Abraham and David are united in this fundamental salvation scheme.<sup>43</sup>

### 3.2 *Exodus 15 and Stephen's Attitude towards the Temple*

How, then, does the Lukan Stephen's indebtedness to this basic scheme of *Heilsgeschichte* bear on his attitude towards the temple? One popular suggestion is that when Stephen's retelling of Israel's history reaches Solomon's building of a 'house' for God (Acts 7.47), it expresses opposition to the temple itself.<sup>44</sup> While his speech is indeed a critique of his opponents' practice with regard to the temple, it demands more fine-tuned examination because Luke's position is more nuanced than such a blanket categorisation.

A favour is given to David for him to 'find a dwelling place (σκήνωμα)' (7.46), and Solomon builds a 'house' (7.47). In reading this sequence of events, there may be different assumed plots that connect the two incidences. One assumed plot is that Solomon, in contrast to David's intention to find a tent-form dwelling place (σκήνωμα), builds a house (οἶκος), thus putting an end to the days of the tabernacle (σκηνή). But the same sentence can equally be read in such a way that the entire flow is more continuous. The tabernacle (σκηνή) is built according to God's own design and brought into the land (7.45). When God finishes driving out the nations, he grants a favour to David, to find a dwelling place (σκήνωμα) for the house of Jacob (οἶκος; 7.46).<sup>45</sup> As a way for this goal to be realised, a house (οἶκος) is constructed by Solomon, although not by David. Hence, there is no break in terms of the continued positive attitude between the tabernacle (σκηνή, 7.44) and David's intended dwelling place (σκήνωμα; 7.46) because David's idea is understood in light of the 'favour in the sight of God' (7.46). There may be no serious break between David's intention to find a dwelling place (σκήνωμα) and Solomon's building a house (οἶκος, 7.47) either, if the conjunction δέ (v. 47) is more concessive than adversative, indicating that although this building project is intended by David, it is Solomon who executes

42 In this sense, David's request to find a dwelling place (σκήνωμα, Acts 7.46), realised in the form of a 'house' that Solomon builds (7.47), is the juncture at which the promise of the exodus - 'they shall come out and worship me in this place' (7.7) - reaches its zenith (pro Larsson, 'Temple-Criticism', 392–3). But Stephen's rhetorical agility shows up here as this building is the very place misconceived idolatrously by his accusers (7.48–50; contra Larsson, 'Temple-Criticism', 394).

43 O'Toole ('Acts 2:30', 257) overlooks the exodus-related matters in his construal of the relationship between Abraham and David.

44 E.g. Bihler, 'Stephanusbericht', 269–70; C. van der Waal, 'The Temple in the Gospel according to Luke', *Neot* 7 (1973) 44–59, at 52; H. W. Turner, *From Temple to Meeting House: The Phenomenology and Theology of Places of Worship* (The Hague: Mouton, 1979) 116–18; J. T. Sanders, *The Jews in Luke-Acts* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987) 34; J. B. Tyson, *Images of Judaism in Luke-Acts* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1992) 116.

45 The easier reading, τῷ θεῷ Ἰακώβ, is supported by κ<sup>2</sup>, A, C, E.

it,<sup>46</sup> rather than showing that the tent-form (σκήνωμα) is acceptable while the house-form (οἶκος) is not.<sup>47</sup>

These two different readings show that a final decision cannot be made only on the basis of syntax. In determining the meaning of Acts 7.47, more points need attention. First, how significant is it that Luke uses the word οἶκος to refer to what Solomon 'builds' (οἰκοδομέω, 7.47), but σκήνωμα for what David asks to 'find' (εὐρίσκω, 7.46)? David's intended dwelling place (σκήνωμα) is not portrayed as a break from the positive portrait of Israel's worship space, which is first represented by the tent of witness (σκηνή τοῦ μαρτυρίου) that Moses was commanded to 'make' (ποιέω, 7.44). Further, 'find a dwelling place (σκήνωμα)' may not simply refer to David's pitching of a tent for the ark of the Lord in his city (2 Sam 6.16–17) because the same expression is used in Ps 131.5 (LXX) in connection with 2 Sam 7, associated with David's initiation of building the temple,<sup>48</sup> as represented by the recalling of the establishment of the throne among the Davidic line (v. 11) and the establishment of Zion as God's eternal dwelling place (v. 13). Rather, according to my reading of Acts 7.45–6, which is sensitive to its intertextual relation to 2 Sam 7 and Exod 15, the worship space for Israel granted to David (σκήνωμα τῷ οἴκῳ Ἰακώβ) may be understood in terms of the completion of salvation that the exodus leads to, now to exist in a different mode (not a peripatetic tent but a static house) because the secure habitation of the people in the land is finally realised.

Given this background, the switch of the term to οἶκος is significant in two aspects: (1) building a 'house' is still in continuity with the Davidic promise (2 Sam 7.13), but (2) it shows a certain transition in that Israel's worship space is now presented in the form of a 'house' in the new condition of the land. In this transition, Stephen seems to be careful enough not to present the 'house' as equivalent to what the Davidic dwelling place (σκήνωμα) connotes, by using different verbs (οἰκοδομέω (7.47) as opposed to εὐρίσκω (7.46)). This may be because such 'house-building' (οἰκοδομέω) has the dangerous potential of turning inordinately into 'house-building' that the people cannot do (ποῖον οἶκον οἰκοδομήσετέ μοι, 7.49), which is ultimately equivalent to making God dwell in 'what is made by [human] hand' (7.48; cf. 7.41). Consequently, the 'house' that Solomon builds (v. 47) is an ambivalent entity. It is built in continuity with what is promised to David, but is not equivalent to it, subject as it is to the danger of an idolatrous turn. Luke's use of the term οἶκος to refer to what Solomon 'builds' (οἰκοδομέω, 7.47) vis-à-vis the term σκήνωμα for what David

46 Weinert, 'Luke, Stephen', 89–90.

47 Contra Barrett, 'Attitudes', 351–2, and Turner, *From Temple*, 92–4; a tent (σκηνή) can also be used for an idolatrous purpose (Acts 7.43). The key issue is how to understand the involvement of human hands not only in tent-building (7.40–1) but also in house-building (7.49–50).

48 Cf. 2 Chron 6.41–2; Walton, 'Tale', 139–40.



asks to 'find' (εὐρίσκω, 7.46) reflects this ambivalence towards the Solomonic temple.

The second point to consider in determining the significance of Acts 7.47 is where the adversative shift to the critique of the present condition of Israel's worship space occurs. I argue that the main adversative force is placed in ἄλλά in v. 48, which appears in the transition from Solomon's building a 'house' (v. 47) to the discussion of 'what is made by [human] hand' (v. 48). Steve Walton argues that δέ (v. 47) is consecutive and ἄλλά (v. 48) is concessive, implying that the adversative shift does not occur even at v. 48.<sup>49</sup> He argues this on the ground of his inference that being 'hand-made' (χειροποίητος) in v. 48 is not in itself a weakness, as we can assume that the tent of witness is also made by human hands (v. 44). However, this is an argument based on an abstract conjecture rather than on actual usages of this specific expression. In the LXX (Lev 26.1, 30; Jdt 8.18; Wis 14.8; Isa 2.18; 10.11; 16.12; 19.1; 21.9; 31.7; 46.6; Dan 5.4, 23; 6.28) and elsewhere in Acts (17.24) the word χειροποίητος is consistently associated with idols. Further, given Luke's use in the immediate context of the motif of human hands as having to do with idolatry (Acts 7.41), it is difficult to tone down the negative nuance found in the phrase ἐν χειροποιήτοις in v. 48.<sup>50</sup> Although Walton is correct to conclude that what Stephen is critical of is a view that confines God to a temple and not the idea that God may be encountered in a temple itself, it is still true that Luke's critique is indeed present in v. 48: the Lukan Stephen has posited the 'house' that Solomon builds (v. 47) in an ambivalent light, anticipating a possible negative development in v. 48. The danger lurking in the ambivalent 'house' that Solomon built (v. 47) indeed becomes a reality, a means of confining God (vv. 48–50), to Stephen's accusers (vv. 51–3).

Third, and more importantly, against what exactly is this adversative force predicated? Despite many English translations' use of 'houses' (e.g., 'Yet the Most High does not dwell in houses made with human hands', 7.48, NRSV), what is stated by Stephen is more specifically ἐν χειροποιήτοις 'in what are made by hands' (v. 48), showing that the adversative force in this verse is more fundamentally directed at rejoicing in the works of hands (τοῖς ἔργοις τῶν χειρῶν), which is previously stated as Stephen's explanation of the nature of making a calf (μοσχοποιέω) that perverted Israel's own worship idolatrously ('offered a sacrifice to the idol', 7.41). So this adversative force is not simply directed at a 'house' that Solomon builds (v. 47), but rather at the danger that the nature of this 'house' may be erroneously construed as a way of rejoicing in the works of hands. This is confirmed by the subsequent quotation from Isa 66.1. The key concern of this quoted passage is not the construction of a house-form sanctuary

49 Walton, 'Tale', 140.

50 This critique also applies to Larsson's judgement about this term ('Temple-Criticism', 394).

per se but how the nature of such a form is understood. Considering that the entire world is God's 'house', so to speak (heaven being his throne and earth his footstool, v. 49), what matters is, 'What kind of house (ποῖον οἶκον;) will you build for me?' (v. 49), since God's hand has made all things (v. 50). The contrast is between what human hands can make and what God's hand makes, showing that Stephen's concern in quoting this passage is how to understand the nature of the present worship space (a 'house') rather than the validity of the historical construction of 'the house' itself.<sup>51</sup>

This concern is further confirmed by Stephen's careful interaction with Ps 131 (LXX). εὐρίσκω + σκῆνωμα is a rare expression found only in Acts 7.46 and LXX Ps 131.5, and Luke is probably interacting with this psalm, as their phraseological affinity shows:<sup>52</sup>

Acts 7.46	Ps 131.5 LXX
ὁς εὗρεν χάριν ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἠτήσατο εὐρεῖν σκῆνωμα τῷ οἴκῳ Ἰακώβ	ἕως οὗ εὕρω τόπον τῷ κυρίῳ σκῆνωμα τῷ θεῷ Ἰακώβ

In addition to the phraseological correspondence, the subject matter of Ps 131 (LXX) also points to its closeness to Acts 7. In Ps 131, David's intention is described as a strong will to 'find a place of the Lord, a dwelling place (σκῆνωμα) for the God of Jacob' (v. 5). In response, God makes an oath to David (v. 11) and manifests his choice of Zion as 'my resting place forever' (ἡ κατάπαυσίς μου εἰς αἰῶνα αἰῶνος, v. 14). There are reasons to believe that Stephen in his speech may be countering a possible misconception of this strong Zion-related passage. First, if Luke indeed had this psalm in mind, the Lukan Stephen's phrasing of σκῆνωμα τῷ οἴκῳ Ἰακώβ instead of σκῆνωμα τῷ θεῷ Ἰακώβ may well be intentional. While it is natural to assume that David's building project is for God (τῷ θεῷ, Ps 131.5 LXX; Acts 7.47; cf. 2 Sam 7.13), Luke might have wanted to put forward the significance of this dwelling place (σκῆνωμα) in terms of its purpose for the people of Israel as well (τῷ οἴκῳ Ἰακώβ,<sup>53</sup> Acts 7.46), emphasising its nature as worship space for Israel. Second, Luke sharply counters the notion that a certain physical place itself becomes God's permanent resting place (ἡ κατάπαυσίς μου, Ps 131.14 LXX). Although the psalm points to Zion, according to Stephen this should not be understood as equivalent to the physical temple per se because there is no place in which God dwells as his resting place (τίς τόπος τῆς καταπαύσεως

51 In this regard, Walker is correct (*Holy City*, 66).

52 Barrett, *Acts*, I.372; Keener, *Acts*, II.1414; R. I. Pervo, *Acts* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009) 191.

53 I thus take the harder reading as original. Schwemer ('Kenner', 319–20) further suggests that this reading avoids in the context a notion of 'housing God' in a physical place.

μου; Acts 7.49), as Stephen emphasises by adducing the exactly matching words from Isaiah (πόιος τόπος τῆς καταπαύσεώς μου; 66.1 LXX // Acts 7.49).<sup>54</sup>

So what Stephen does in retelling the story of David and Solomon is to deal with the misconceived nature of the τόπος of Israel's worship, as insinuated earlier (ἐν τῷ τόπῳ, 7.7). David's story in this context dramatically augments the disparity between what this τόπος is supposed to be, conforming to the promise to Abraham, as a completion of the exodus salvation ('worship in this place', Acts 7.7) to be undertaken by the offspring of David (7.45–6; cf. Luke 1.32–5),<sup>55</sup> and what it currently is, as (mis)conceived by Stephen's accusers under the heading of 'this holy place' (6.13), where they live, ironically, in continuity with the historical promise to Abraham and David (7.4). Stephen's retelling of this history thus highlights the ironic ambivalence of 'this place' (6.13; 7.7) by showing, on the one hand, the construction of the temple in continuity with the long-held promise of Israel's worship space following the exodus, and, on the other, the idolatrous (mis)conception of the place in continuity with the long-repeated corruption of Israel's worship practice since the exodus. This intriguing critique of the temple, which has resulted in two opposing views in Lukan scholarship on Stephen's attitude towards the temple, is teased out more coherently in light of the basic form of *Heilsgeschichte* of the exodus and the consequential worship space as captured in Exod 15.17 since this form locates the temple positively within this basic history *and* elucidates pungently the (apophatic) nature of Israel's worship space that the temple should not contradict.

#### 4. Conclusion

Stephen's retelling of Israel's history integrates the stories of Abraham, the exodus and David in connection to 'this place' (Acts 7.7) as Israel's worship space. Underlying this connection is a fundamental notion that the saga of the exodus is placed within a unified form of salvation history that begins with God's promise to Abraham and is completed by the building of worship space by the Davidic figure. This basic form of *Heilsgeschichte* is structured in accordance with a pattern captured by the Song of Moses (particularly, Exod 15.17). According to this pattern, God's salvation is portrayed with the immediate connection to a sanctuary-like place, which is also a habitation for the saved that God has prepared (i.e. Israel's worship space). Because of God's exclusive saving action, the consequent sanctuary-like place is vested with an apophatic nature. This pattern explains how

54 Cf. J. N. Rhodes, 'Tabernacle and Temple', *Contemporary Studies in Acts* (ed. T. E. Phillips; Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2009) 197–37, at 123–4.

55 It is notable that the birth of this Davidic figure (Luke 1.32) is enabled by the overshadowing (ἐπισκιάζω, 1.35) of the power of the Most High, just as the cloud associated with the glory of God overshadowed (ἐπισκιάζω, Exod 40.35) the tabernacle built subsequent to the exodus.

the Lukan Stephen was able to portray the temple in ambivalent terms in his integration of the stories of Abraham, the exodus and David. The temple, *within* this *Heilsgeschichte*, indeed represents a status of the completion of the exodus saga by the offspring of David. However, this space can turn idolatrous when the people rejoice in the works of human hands, as Stephen's accusers now do, against the apophatic nature that the exodus is intended to lead to. Stephen cleverly develops both these points around the ambivalent characterisation of 'this place' (6.13; 7.7). Additionally, this study provides constructive suggestions on how the harder reading ('for the house of Jacob') in Acts 7.46 may fit and how common English translations of Acts 7.45 ('it was there until the time of David') need to be reconsidered.