

## ‘Public Theology’ in Luke-Acts: The Witness of the Gospel to Powers and Authorities

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This study surveys the numerous and diverse powers and authorities to which the gospel is addressed in Luke-Acts, including major Jewish institutions and officials, Herodian rulers, Roman military officers, Greco-Roman officials, diverse officials, and pagan cults and supernatural powers. Well over half the references to authorities in Luke-Acts occur nowhere else in the New Testament. The frequent and diverse references to powers defend Christianity in a preliminary and obvious way from charges of political sedition. In a broader and more important way, however, they redefine power itself according to the standard of the gospel.

**Keywords:** New Testament, Luke, Acts, powers and authorities

The Third Evangelist is rightly acknowledged to advocate the cause of the marginal and outcast, as exemplified by Samaritans, lepers, women, slaves, the poor and dispossessed in various forms. The same cause is advocated in the Book of Acts particularly in the Gentile mission of the church. Less widely acknowledged is the thoroughgoing attention in Luke-Acts to the powers and authorities that shaped the world in which Christianity made its debut. The purpose of the Lukan gospel is thus not only ‘to seek and save the lost’ (Luke 19.10), but at the same time to demonstrate its claim on the authorities responsible for the various orders of life. This latter aspect is the subject of this study. Luke’s ‘public theology’ is not advanced to denigrate the Third Evangelist’s consideration of the marginal and outcast, but to complement it with an emphasis on the universal significance of the gospel, which even more than Caesar’s authority must be taken into ‘all the world’ (Luke 2.1, *πάσαν τὴν οἰκουμένην*).

The Third Gospel proper begins with a formal introduction that has no equal in any other gospel, canonical or apocryphal.<sup>1</sup> Luke 3.1–2 frames the ministries of

<sup>1</sup> *Mart. Pol.* 21 bears a stylistic resemblance to Luke 3.1–2, both of which date events by providing names and titles of rulers, followed by the greater authority of divine providence. *Mart. Pol.* narrates Polycarp’s martyrdom by means of allusions, reminiscences and parallels to Jesus’

John the Baptist and Jesus with reference to the major potentates of the day – a Roman emperor, a Roman governor of Palestine, three Roman tetrarchs of Palestine and two Jewish high priests in Jerusalem. Luke anticipates this list of luminaries by dedicating the Gospel to a patrician dignitary ('most noble Theophilus', Luke 1.3), referencing 'Herod the king' (Luke 1.5) and commencing the infancy narrative with an angelic appearance to Zechariah at the penultimate holy site in Israel, the Altar of Incense (Luke 1.11). Decrees of Roman emperors and enrolments of Syrian governors follow shortly (Luke 2.1–2). All this in only the first two chapters. The Third Gospel portrays Christian beginnings in the context of dominant institutions and leaders of the day.

Attention to authorities continues in Acts, demonstrating that the appearance of the gospel before authorities is not accidental but typical, a fulfilment of Jesus' eschatological discourse that disciples 'will be brought before kings and governors on account of my name' (Luke 21.12). The witness of the gospel to authorities is thus divinely ordained. When instructed to lay hands on Saul, arch-persecutor of Christians, a sceptical Ananias is assured by God that Saul is 'my chosen instrument to bear my name before Gentiles and kings of the people of Israel' (Acts 9.15). The same divine intention is divulged no fewer than five times to Paul himself; he must 'speak and not be silent' before temporal authorities (Acts 18.9; 26.16–18), and ultimately before Caesar in Rome (Acts 19.21; 23.11; 27.24).

This study surveys the numerous and diverse hegemonic categories to which the gospel is addressed in Luke-Acts, including major Jewish institutions and officials, Herodian rulers, Roman military officers, Greco-Roman officials, diverse officials, and pagan cults and supernatural powers. Luke-Acts is rich in references to authorities, well over half of which occur nowhere else in the NT. The frequent and diverse confrontations between gospel and powers serve the purpose of defending Christianity from charges of sedition, on the one hand, and on the other of redefining power itself according to the standard of the gospel.

## 1. Jewish Institutions and Officials

### 1.1 *Temple*

As the religious, political and financial centre of Israel, the Jerusalem temple plays a cardinal role in Luke-Acts. The sanctuary (*ναός*) is mentioned twice in Luke (never in Acts) as a framing device for the Gospel narrative. The narrative commences in the sanctuary as Zechariah serves at the Altar of Incense (Luke 1.9, 11, 21, 22), and at its end the centurion confesses that Jesus is God's

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passion, and its author characterises his role as narrator similar to the way Luke characterises his role as evangelist.

righteous servant when the temple curtain is rent at Jesus' death (Luke 23.45–7). The saving drama is divinely announced and fulfilled in the temple sanctuary.

The composite temple complex (ἱερόν) plays a more important role in Luke-Acts. The current of Jesus' ministry flows inexorably towards the temple in the Third Gospel, and in Acts the mission of the early church flows outwards from the temple to the Gentile world. The temple does not disappear from Acts, however, but remains an important element in the metanarrative, for Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, returns to the temple no fewer than five times to bear witness to the gospel (Acts 9.26; 11.27–30; 15.2; 18.22; 21.15–17).

The ἱερόν plays a pronounced role at the beginnings and endings of both Luke and Acts. Simeon and Anna recognise the messianic mission of Jesus when he is presented in the temple as an infant (Luke 2.25–38), and the twelve-year old Jesus identifies the temple as the place of his Father's business (Luke 2.49). Repeated reminders that Jesus must go to Jerusalem (Luke 9.51, 53; 13.22, 33; 17.11, 18.31; 19.11) are in reality 'temple predictions' where Jesus teaches (Luke 21.37, 38; 22.53) and testifies before high priests, temple guards and elders (Luke 22.52). From the outset of Acts the temple is the locus of the prayers and healings of the early church (Acts 3.1–10), of its public testimony to the faith (Acts 3.11–4.31; 5.12–42), and of its common life (Luke 24.53; Acts 2.46). The temple also remains the point of orientation during the Gentile expansion of the church. James, leader of the Jerusalem Christian community, instructs Paul to make a public demonstration in the temple of his allegiance to Torah, circumcision and Jewish customs (Acts 21.18–26). The plan miscarries, resulting in the arrest and imprisonment of Paul, but Luke records Paul reassuring the Roman prefects Felix (Acts 24.12, 18) and Festus (Acts 25.8) and King Herod Agrippa II (Acts 26.21) that he had not profaned the temple. The temple thus plays alpha- and omega-roles in both Luke and Acts: it figures prominently in the infancy narratives of the Gospel (Luke 1–2) and in the nascent life of the church in Jerusalem (Acts 1–7), and equally prominently in the passion of Jesus in the Gospel (Luke 19–22) and in the 'passion' of Paul in Acts (Acts 21–6).

## 1.2 Sanhedrin

Luke mentions three additional institutions related to the temple, the most important of which is the Sanhedrin, the ruling assembly of seventy-one elders, scribes and high priests.<sup>2</sup> Seventeen references to the Sanhedrin appear in Luke-Acts, fifteen as συνέδριον (Luke, 1x; Acts, 14x), and two as πρεσβυτέριον (Luke 22.66; Acts 22.5), which appears to be synonymous with συνέδριον.<sup>3</sup> All references occur in trial scenes of Jesus or early Christians, in which the

2 See E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ*, 3 vols. (rev. and ed. G. Vermes, F. Millar, M. Black; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1973–87) II.199–226.

3 G. Bornkamm, πρέσβυς κτλ, *TWNT* VI.654.

Sanhedrin hears, but opposes, essential evangelical testimony. Jesus is questioned by the Sanhedrin whether he is Messiah (Luke 22.67), Peter and John confess that they must obey God rather than humans and preach the gospel (Acts 4.18–20; similarly 5.12–42), Stephen recounts the history of Israel as witness to the gospel (Acts 6.8–7.60), and in a half-dozen instances Paul is hailed before the Sanhedrin to defend his faith. Jesus and Stephen render supreme witness as martyrs.

Luke also mentions two aristocratic satellite bodies of the Sanhedrin, the ‘high priestly family’ (ἀρχιερατικός, Acts 4.6) and the ‘council of elders’ (γερουσία, Acts 5.21). Peter, ‘filled with the Holy Spirit’ (Acts 4.8), declares to the named patriarchs of the high priestly family – Annas (high priest, 6–15), Caiaphas (high priest, 18–36), John (high priest, 36–7) and Alexander (person and date unknown) – “Let it be known to you ... there is salvation in no one other [than Jesus of Nazareth], for there is no other name under heaven given among humanity by which we must be saved” (Acts 4.10–12). The γερουσία, similarly, refers to a council of Jerusalem noblemen whose existence extended at least as far back as the Persian period.<sup>4</sup> Mention of the γερουσία in conjunction with the Sanhedrin signifies that the apostles bear witness to the gospel before the most venerable authorities in Judaism.

### 1.3 *Synagogue*

Of greater importance for the witness of the early church is the synagogue, the defining religious, social and educational institution of Judaism. The fifteen references to synagogues in the Third Gospel are nearly double the number of references in the other Synoptics (Matt, 9x; Mark, 8x), and the thirty-four combined references in Luke-Acts constitute nearly two thirds of the total references to synagogues in the NT. Jesus teaches frequently in synagogues in Galilee and Judea (Luke 4.15, 44; 6.6; 13.10), especially in Nazareth (Luke 4.16, 20, 28) and Capernaum (Luke 4.33, 38; 7.5). In the synagogue of Nazareth he delivers the inaugural sermon of his ministry (Luke 4.16–30), declaring, with reference to Isa 61.1, ‘Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your ears’ (Luke 4.21). A synagogue is thus the venue of the announcement of Jesus’ anointing by the Spirit and messianic mission. The missions of the Twelve (Luke 9.1–6) and Seventy(-two) (Luke 10.1–12) are ostensibly directed to synagogues as well.<sup>5</sup>

Christian witness in synagogues is even more strongly attested in Acts. The requirement of ten Jewish males to constitute a synagogue normally assumes a

4 1 Macc 12.6; 13.36; 14.20, 28; 2 Macc 1.10; 4.44; 11.27; Jdt 4.8; 11.14; 15.8. For a discussion of γερουσία (including references in Josephus), see Schürer, *History of the Jewish People*, II.202–4.

5 Synagogues are not mentioned in either mission of the disciples, but both missions occur in Palestinian regions, and the admonition in both for disciples to shake the dust from their feet in protest against villages that reject their witness (Luke 9.5; 10.11) – i.e. treat them as Gentile outsiders – makes sense only if the villages are Jewish.

municipality, hence the progress of Christianity in Luke-Acts is a record of *urban* progress.<sup>6</sup> The itinerary of apostolic witness 'in Jerusalem and all of Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth' (Acts 1.8) commences in synagogues. Christian mission radiates outwards from Jerusalem (Acts 24.12), beginning in synagogues of Libertines, Cyrenes, Alexandrians, Cilicians and Asians (Acts 6.9),<sup>7</sup> followed by synagogues in ever-widening circles of cities: Damascus (Acts 9.20), Cyprus (Acts 13.5), Antioch of Pisidia (Acts 13.14, 43), Iconium (Acts 14.1), Ephesus (Acts 18.19, 26; 19.8), Thessalonica (Acts 17.1), Berea (Acts 17.10), Athens (Acts 17.17), Corinth (Acts 18.4, 7) and Rome (28.17). Paul testifies to the synagogue as the point of entry of the gospel into the Jewish world in Acts 26.7 with the word δωδεκάφυλος ('twelve tribes'), a rare word that occurs nowhere else in the Greek Bible.<sup>8</sup>

Despite its priority, the synagogue typically rejects the Christian witness. Of the twenty-five-odd synagogues referenced in Luke-Acts, only two are receptive of the gospel,<sup>9</sup> whereas nearly two thirds are negative or hostile.<sup>10</sup> The priority of the synagogue is not thereby revoked, however.<sup>11</sup> Luke-Acts repeats in narrative form the earlier testimony of Paul in Romans, 'Did God reject his people? Absolutely not ... With reference to the gospel, they are enemies of God for your sake, but with reference to election, they are beloved for the sake of their ancestors' (Rom 11.1, 28).

#### 1.4 Jewish Officials

A score of Jewish offices, officials and authorities are recorded in Luke-Acts. Among the most important, and most nuanced, are the Pharisees. The influence of Pharisees in the Gospels vastly exceeds their numerical size (some 6,000 persons, according to Josephus, *Ant.* 17.42) and the influence of other Jewish parties. Sadducees (20.27) and Zealots (6.15) are named only once each in the

6 Of the 160 occurrences of πόλις, 'city', in the NT, half occur in Luke-Acts. On the role of cities in Luke-Acts, see H. M. Conn, 'Lucan Perspectives on the City', *Missiology* 13.4 (1984) 409–28.

7 It is unclear whether Luke intends five synagogues (apparently Schürer, *History of the Jewish People*, II.76), or, on the basis of the replication of the article, two synagogues (G. Schille, *Die Apostelgeschichte* (THKNT 5; Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1989) 174–75), or one multi-ethnic synagogue (H. Conzelmann, *Die Apostelgeschichte* (HNT 7; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1963) 45; F. F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984) 156). The reference to 'various people arising from the synagogue' (τινες τῶν ἐκ τῆς συναγωγῆς) may favour one synagogue.

8 Jesus alludes to δωδεκάφυλος paraphrastically in the Passion Narrative, however: 'You shall sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes (τὰς δώδεκα φυλάς) of Israel' (Luke 22.30).

9 Luke 4.33; 8.41.

10 Luke 4.16; 6.6; 11.43; 12.11; 13.10; 20.46; 21.12; Acts 6.9; 9.20; 13.14, 43; 14.1; 17.1, 10; 18.4, 7; 19.8. The remaining references to synagogues (roughly one third of the total) contain no reference to the gospel (Luke 4.15, 44; 7.5; Acts 13.5; 15.21; 17.17; 18.19, 26; 24.12).

11 See R. L. Brawley, *Luke-Acts and the Jews: Conflict, Apology, and Conciliation* (SBLMS 33; Atlanta: Scholars, 1987), 155–60.

Third Gospel, Essenes and Herodians not at all. Pharisees, on the other hand, are identified twenty-five times in the Third Gospel as the chief Jewish party with which Jesus interacts. They are frequently antagonistic to Jesus (Luke 5.21, 30; 6.2, 7; 11.53; 15.2; 19.39), and he to them (Luke 11.38–43; 12.1; 14.3–6). Luke as evangelist also expresses antagonism to Pharisees (Luke 7.30; 16.14). There are important exceptions, however. Pharisees invite Jesus to meals – a considerable honour in Judaism – and he accepts (Luke 11.37; 14.1). They warn Jesus of Antipas's antagonism (Luke 13.31) and inquire of Jesus about the kingdom of God (Luke 17.20). The arrest, trial and crucifixion of Jesus are spearheaded by scribes and high priests (19.47; 20.19; 22.2), Sanhedrin (20.1; 22.46), and civil authorities (19.47; 20.20; 22.4; 23.13–14), but not by Pharisees, who drop out of the narrative of the Third Gospel at 19.39. In Acts, these same authorities – again without Pharisees – are the chief antagonists of the apostolic community and early church gathered in Jerusalem.<sup>12</sup> None of the eight references to Pharisees in Acts is explicitly negative, and several are positive. Pharisees appear as Christian believers (Acts 15.5), Gamaliel, a Pharisee, advocates on behalf of the apostles (Acts 5.34), and Paul's Pharisaic credentials are thrice mentioned in his Christian defences (23.6, 9; 26.5). The final references to Paul the Pharisee are particularly suggestive, for two stories in the Third Gospel – Simon the Pharisee (7.36–50) and the elder brother in the parable of the Loving Father (15.11–32) – leave the fates of key Pharisees open-ended. Luke may have intended their stories to be completed in the description of the conversion of Paul, the final Pharisee mentioned in Acts 26.5.

### 1.5 Sadducees

In contrast to Pharisees, Sadducees are named only infrequently and negatively in Luke-Acts. The only explicit reference to Sadducees in the Third Gospel is their attempt to entrap Jesus on the issue of resurrection (Luke 20.27–38). The interrogation of Jesus after his arrest by the high priest, who was a Sadducee (Acts 5.17; Josephus, *Ant.* 20.199), is his only other engagement with Sadducees. The five references to Sadducees in Acts profile them as equally antagonistic to the Christian movement. They oppose the disciples (Acts 4.1), contend with Pharisees for power in the Sanhedrin (Acts 23.6, 7) and deny the resurrection (Acts 23.8).

### 1.6 High Priest

Consideration of Sadducees must also include the high priest (ἀρχιερεύς), however, who, as noted above, was a Sadducee and its leading representative. Thirty-eight references to the high priest make him the most frequently mentioned Jewish official in Luke-Acts. Testimonies of Jesus and the early church

<sup>12</sup> High priests: Acts 4.1, 6, 23; 5.17, 21, 24, 27; 7.1. Elders: Acts 4.5, 8, 23; 6.12. Scribes: Acts 4.5; 6.12. Rulers: Acts 3.17; 4.5, 8, 26.

occur more frequently before this highest-ranking Jewish official than before any other authority. Initial references to the high priest in Luke (3.1) and Acts (4.1) provide names of the high priests at the time of the narrative, and are thus simply informational. All remaining references in Luke-Acts portray high priests in adversarial postures to Christianity.<sup>13</sup> Their opposition is vehement (Luke 23.10) and inevitably violent, for they seize Jesus (Luke 20.19; 22.52, 54), imprison believers (Acts 9.1, 14, 21) and plot to kill both Jesus (Luke 19.47; 24.20) and Paul (Acts 23.14). The final description of the high priest, 'with authority and full power' (μετ' ἐξουσίας καὶ ἐπιτροπῆς, Acts 26.12), endows him with plenipotentiary power in Judaism.

### 1.7 *Auxiliaries of the High Priest: Temple Guard, Servants, Adjutants, Attorneys*

The high priest commanded an organisational pyramid that was endowed with religious, political, financial and military powers. Second in command to the high priest was the στρατηγός, 'temple guard', an office that appears in the NT only in Luke-Acts (ten times) and denotes the chief of temple security operations. The στρατηγός stood at the right hand of the high priest in the temple and at the head of the officiating line of priests (*m. Yoma* 3.9; 4.1). His assistants (ὑπηρέται) are twice mentioned in Acts with reference to the imprisonment (δεσμοτήριον) of the apostles, suggesting their employment in the temple penal system (Acts 5.21–6). Other assistants or adjutants of the temple guard appear as στρατηγῶν (pl., Luke 22.4, 52). The leading echelon of the high priest also included ῥήτορες, public speakers and orators who advocated the cause of the Sanhedrin or its chief officer before public entities. In Acts 24.1–9 the ῥήτωρ Tertullus represents the high priest as prosecuting attorney in the case against the Apostle Paul before the Roman governor Felix. The high priest, temple guard, assistants and attorneys always appear in opposition to the Christian cause in Luke-Acts.

### 1.8 *Priests*

A lesser office and one less frequently mentioned than high priest, the office of priest (ἱερεὺς, ἱερεὺς) is portrayed more positively in Luke-Acts in relation to Christianity. All but two references are to the office rather than to particular priests (Luke 5.14; 6.4; 10.31; 17.14; Acts 4.1; 6.7).<sup>14</sup> Only once are priests set in antagonism to the gospel (Acts 4.1). Otherwise, Jesus directs the cured to receive from priests official sanction of healing (Luke 5.14; 17.14), and the privilege of priests to eat sacred bread on the temple altar is acknowledged (Luke 6.4).

13 Even Paul's quotation of Exod 22.27, 'You shall not speak evil of the ruler of your people', appears in a context in which the high priest opposes Christianity.

14 The reference to the priest (ἱερεὺς) of Zeus in Acts 14.13 is discussed below in 6.5, 'Pagan Deities'.

Priests are accorded both honour and authority as arbiters of the temple cult. The first, most celebrated and only named priest is Zechariah, father of John the Baptist, who throughout Luke 1 is a protagonist of the gospel narrative. The two-part story of the gospel thus begins with the agency of a priest, and the final mention of priests in Acts reports 'a multitude (ὄχλος) of priests who were obedient to the faith' (Acts 6.7).<sup>15</sup>

### 1.9 Synagogue Leaders

Synagogue leaders are mentioned roughly as often and positively as are priests in Luke-Acts. Whether called ἀρχισυνάγωγος (Luke 8.49; 13.14; Acts 13.15 (pl.); 18.3, 13), or ἄρχων τῆς συναγωγῆς (Luke 8.41), synagogue leaders appear six times in the double work, only once in an adversarial role (Luke 13.14). In Pisidian Antioch they invite Paul to expound the Scripture (Acts 13.15). All remaining leaders, remarkably, are *named* – Jairus, whose daughter is raised from the dead by Jesus (Luke 8.40–56), Crispus, who in Corinth 'believed in the Lord along with his whole household' (Acts 18.8) and Sosthenes, also in Corinth, who is publicly beaten on account of the faith before Gallio (Acts 18.12–17).

### 1.10 Scribes

The scribe combined in one office the functions of Torah professor, teacher, moralist and civil lawyer, and as such scribes appear as formidable Jewish authorities in the Gospels.<sup>16</sup> Scribes issued binding decisions on Torah interpretation, and only they (apart from high priests and members of the patrician families) could enter the Sanhedrin.<sup>17</sup> Their prestige reached legendary proportions, surpassing on occasion that of the high priest (*b. Yoma* 71b). Scribes are more frequently referenced than the high priest in the Third Gospel (γραμματεὺς, 14x; νομικός, 6x; νομοδιδάσκαλος, 1x), though less frequently in Acts (γραμματεὺς, 3x; νομοδιδάσκαλος, 1x), thus attesting that Jesus and the early church repeatedly bore evangelical witness before the chief custodians of Israel's law. Luke refers to scribes variously but without material difference as

15 κ\* reads 'crowd of Jews (τῶν Ἰουδαίων)', but its weaker textual attestation and the more difficult reading 'crowd of priests (τῶν ἱερέων)' (ϣ<sup>74</sup> A B C D) favours the latter reading. See B. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994<sup>2</sup>) 296.

16 The only non-Jewish use of γραμματεὺς in Luke-Acts, the CEO of the city government of Ephesus (Acts 19.35), is discussed below in 4.4, 'Diverse Political Offices'.

17 On scribes, see G. F. Moore, *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era* (New York: Schocken, 1971) 37–47; E. P. Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief, 63 BC–66 AD* (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1992) 170–89; G. Baumbach, γραμματεὺς, *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* (3 vols., Eng. trans.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990) 1.259–60; J. Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975) 233–45; Schürer, *History of the Jewish People*, II.322–30, who describes scribes as 'the undisputed spiritual leaders of the people' (p. 324).



γραμματεῖς (most frequently), νομικοί or νομοδιδάσκαλοι. All but four of the twenty-six references in Luke-Acts set scribes in adversarial roles to Christianity. They are usually paired with other parties and professions, including Pharisees (8x: Luke 5.17, 21, 30; 6.7; 7.30; 11.53; 14.3; 15.2), high priests (5x: Luke 19.47; 20.19; 22.2, 66; 23.10), elders and high priests (5x: Luke 9.22; 20.1; Acts 4.5; 5.34; 6.12). In seven instances scribes are mentioned alone (Luke 10.25; 11.45, 46, 52; 20.39, 46; Acts 23.9). From beginning to end of the Gospel, scribes typically 'accuse', 'murmur against', 'contest', 'reject', 'vehemently oppose' and 'plot to kill' Jesus.

The antagonism of scribes generally mirrors that of high priests, although in four instances they sympathise with Christianity. 'Some of the scribes (γραμματεῖς) commend Jesus, saying 'Teacher, you have spoken well' (Luke 20.39), and 'scribes (γραμματεῖς) of the Pharisees' advocate Paul's case against the Sadducees (Acts 23.9). Gamaliel (Acts 5.34-40), 'a teacher of the law (νομοδιδάσκαλος) honoured by all the people', procures a judgement of clemency for Peter and John before the Sanhedrin. Equally positively, Joseph of Arimathea, 'a council member (βουλευτής), a good and just man, did not consent to the council' in its condemnation of Jesus (Luke 23.50-4).<sup>18</sup>

### 1.11 *Rulers, Elders, Leaders*

Three further Jewish offices - 'rulers' (ἄρχοντες), 'elders' (πρεσβύτεροι) and 'leaders' (πρώτοι) - are allied to the Sanhedrin and usually share its opposition to Jesus and early Christians.<sup>19</sup> Each office occasionally appears with reference to Jewish elites apart from the Sanhedrin, again usually in opposition to the gospel. A ruler of the Pharisees is antagonistic to Jesus (Luke 14.1-6), and Jewish rulers in Iconium seek to stone Paul (Acts 14.5). In other instances the antagonism is mitigated. A ruler who approaches Jesus to inquire of eternal life is not hostile (though also not faithful, Luke 18.18-23), and 'leaders of the Jews' (τῶν Ἰουδαίων πρώτοι) in Rome are divided in their judgement of Paul (Acts 28.17-28). On one occasion Jewish rulers (πρεσβύτεροι τῶν Ἰουδαίων) are amicable, advocating the cause of a Roman centurion before Jesus (Luke 7.1-10).

### 1.12 *Tax Collectors*

A discussion of Jewish officials cannot neglect consideration of the dishonourable but powerful tax collectors. Jews who collaborated with the hated Roman tax system sacrificed the esteem of their fellow Jews yet gained extensive power over them. Jesus, not surprisingly, encountered tax collectors, but quite

18 Joseph is not called a 'scribe', but βουλευτής distinguishes him as a member of the Sanhedrin, and thus necessarily a scribe.

19 ἄρχοντες, Luke 23.13, 35; 24.20; Acts 3.17; 4.5, 8, 26; 13.27; 23.5; πρεσβύτεροι, Luke 9.22; 20.1; 22.52; Acts 4.5, 8, 23; 6.12; 23.14; 24.1; 25.15; πρώτοι, Luke 19.47; Acts 25.2.

surprisingly, he treated them with a charity that (apart from John the Baptist) was unknown in Judaism. Tax collectors figure more prominently in Luke-Acts than elsewhere in the NT (Matt. 8x; Mark 3x; nowhere else). Twelve references in the Third Gospel depict a half-dozen different encounters with tax collectors, all of which are positive. Tax collectors are baptised by John (Luke 3.12) and called to become disciples of Jesus (Luke 5.27–32), and a ‘chief tax collector’ (ἀρχιτελώνης) is called ‘a son of Abraham’ (Luke 19.1–10). A tax collector is more virtuous than a Pharisee in a parable of Jesus (Luke 18.9–14). Tax collectors gather to Jesus (Luke 15.1), he befriends them (Luke 7.34), and they ‘glorify God’ (Luke 7.29). Luke indicates the prominence of two tax collectors by giving their names – Levi and Zacchaeus. At no point does the scandal of the gospel come to more profound expression than in Jesus’ relationship with tax collectors, in which he both advocates the despised and challenges the powerful.

### 1.13 *Summary*

The foregoing review yields two basic observations relevant to Jewish authorities. First, signature overtures in Luke-Acts are orchestrated in Jewish institutions, including the annunciation to Zechariah in the temple, Jesus’ inaugural sermon and commencement of Christian missionary outreach in synagogues, Jesus’ final testimony before the Sanhedrin, and the inaugural proclamation of the gospel by the apostolic community in the temple. Luke-Acts depicts the gospel as the fulfilment of the divine promises to Israel, and hence Israel is necessarily its primary addressee. Second, Jewish officials and offices that stand in closer proximity to Jesus and early Christians (i.e. synagogue leaders, priests, and to a certain extent Pharisees) are, in general, portrayed more positively in Luke-Acts than are officials less proximate to Jesus and early Christians (Sanhedrin, high priests and scribes). Although many of these latter and usually higher authorities oppose the gospel, their antagonism does not annul the divine purposes for which their institutions as a whole are elected. Tax collectors, who combine the clashing realities of Jewish ethnicity, Roman authority, and ritual and social reprobation, are ironically the single category of authorities unequivocally befriended by Jesus.

## 2. Herodian Dynasty

### 2.1 *Herod the Great*

Five extravagant Herodians ruled Palestine from the death of Julius Caesar until the end of the first Christian century, forging an unlikely alloy of Jewish princes and Roman officials who were influential in the Empire’s *Ostpolitik*. The most (in)famous was the first, Herod the Great, whose ubiquitous architectural remains – his praetorium in Caesarea Maritima is mentioned in Acts 23.35, for example – are still evident today. Apart from the story of the visit of

the Magi (Matt 2), however, Herod appears again in the NT only in a passing reference in Luke 1.5 ('in the days of Herod, king of Judaea'). The king who sought to immortalise his name in grandeur is ironically mentioned in the NT only for the sake of the gospel he despised.

## 2.2 *Herod Antipas*

Far more significant from Luke's perspective was Antipas, born of Malthace, evidently the fourth of Herod's ten wives.<sup>20</sup> Outside Luke-Acts, Antipas is mentioned in the NT only with reference to the death of John the Baptist (Matt 14 and Mark 6). In Luke-Acts, however, he succeeds to the role of a minor character on par with Pilate, both of whom are mentioned thirteen times in the Gospel and twice in Acts. Pilate figures only in the Passion Narrative, however, whereas Antipas appears throughout the Third Gospel, including the introductory hall of fame (Luke 3.1) and the imprisonment (Luke 3.19) and murder (Luke 9.7-9) of John the Baptist. Pharisees also warn Jesus of Antipas's intention to kill him (Luke 13.31), and only Luke includes an appearance of Jesus before the 'authority' (ἐξουσία) of Antipas in the Passion Narrative (Luke 23.7-15). That authority impressed itself on the early Christian community, which in Acts remembers Jesus' trial by Antipas *before* his more famous trial by Pilate (Acts 4.27). Remarkably, names of other disciples otherwise unknown in the NT emerge from the orbit of Antipas – Joanna, wife of Chuza, 'Herod's steward' (ἐπιτρόπου Ἡρώδου, Luke 8.3), and Manaen, a Christian in Antioch, a 'member of the court of Herod the Tetrarch' (Acts 13.1). No authority in Luke-Acts has closer and more varied access to the gospel than Antipas, who is the beneficiary of primary Christian testimony from John and Jesus, and of secondary testimony from the apostolic cohort and early Christian community in Antioch.

## 2.3 *Agrippa I*

A third Herodian, mentioned five times only by Luke, is Herod Agrippa I (10 BCE–44 CE), grandson of Herod the Great. Agrippa's rampage against the church in Acts 12 – his imprisonment of Peter, murder of James (son of Zebedee) and fatal vanity in Caesarea – reflects in miniature the twin polarities of decadence and religious scrupulousness that typified his life.<sup>21</sup> Luke leaves no record of Christian testimony to Agrippa I, but two narrative clues intimate

20 Josephus, *J. W.* 1.562–3; *Ant.* 17.19–22. Luke does not refer to Antipas and Agrippa I by those names, however, but only as 'Herod'.

21 On Agrippa's unbridled indulgence coupled with religious devotion, see Schürer, *History of the Jewish People*, 1.442–54. On the possibility that Agrippa's iron hand against Christians was part of a larger reaction to the chaotic aftermath of Caligula's reign in 41 CE, see C. A. Evans, *From Jesus to the Church: The First Christian Generation* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2014) 103–5.

the enduring purpose of God in his rule: more angelic advocacy of the apostolic faith is recorded in Acts 12 than in any other chapter in Acts, and Luke concludes that 'the word of God increased and multiplied' (Acts 12.24).

#### 2.4 *Agrippa II and Bernice*

The final Herodians are the sibling prince and princess, Agrippa II and Bernice, children of Agrippa I and great grandchildren of Herod the Great. Agrippa II is referred to twice as often as Agrippa I and, by contrast, always positively. The royal pair wish to hear Paul (Acts 25.22), and his testimony before them (always referred to as 'King Agrippa' in Acts 25–6) appears as his farewell speech. The pageantry (μετὰ πολλῆς φαντασίας, Acts 25.23) of the royal entourage of Agrippa II and Bernice includes tribunes (see 3.1 below) and 'prominent men of the city' (κατ' ἐξοχὴν τῆς πόλεως, Acts 25.23). This last designation of notoriety occurs nowhere else in the NT. In making his defence Paul raises his hand in deference, 'I consider myself fortunate to be able to make my defence before you today, King Agrippa' (Acts 26.1–2). Eight of ten occurrences of 'defence' (ἀπολογία) in the NT are in Luke-Acts, signalling the importance of public defence of the faith. Paul's defence includes a third and final recounting of his conversion experience (Acts 26.3–18) and a summary benediction in vv. 22–3 that recalls Jesus' parting benediction to the apostles before his ascension (Luke 24.25–6, 46–7). Paul exhorts, 'Do you believe the prophets, King Agrippa? I know that you believe' (Acts 26.27). However we understand Agrippa's response (ὁ δὲ Ἀγρίππας πρὸς τὸν Παῦλον· ἐν ὀλίγῳ με πείθεις Χριστιανὸν ποιῆσαι, Acts 26.28),<sup>22</sup> the last Herodian hears the kerygma from the lips of Paul and exonerates him of criminal offense (Acts 26.31–2).

The damnation of Agrippa I (Acts 12) and commendation of Agrippa II and Bernice (Acts 25–6) lead some to conclude that Herodian princes are judged either positively or negatively according to their treatment of Christianity.<sup>23</sup> This fails to account for Antipas, who, despite his contumacy in the face of manifold evangelical witness, receives a measured assessment in Luke's narrative. The Lukan accent falls on Christian witness itself rather than on the response to it. Paul testifies before Agrippa II and Bernice, 'I consider myself fortunate to be able to make my defence before you today, King Agrippa' (Acts 26.1–2), thus fulfilling Jesus' prediction that the gospel must be presented before 'kings and governors on account of my name' (Luke 21.12).

22 Does Agrippa patronise Paul, 'With this meagre testimony will you persuade me to become a Christian', or does he concede, 'A little more of this and you'll persuade me to become a Christian'?

23 So R. F. O'Toole, S.J., 'Luke's Position on Politics and Society in Luke-Acts', *Political Issues in Luke-Acts* (ed. R. J. Cassidy and P. J. Scharper; Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1983) 5.

### 3. Roman Military Authorities

#### 3.1 Tribune

The senior military officer in Luke-Acts is the tribune (χιλίαρχος, Acts 21-4), commander-in-chief of the Roman cohort stationed in Jerusalem. Luke's twenty references to the tribune in connection with Paul's arrest in Jerusalem make him a minor – and positive – character in Acts. He rescues Paul from imminent death at the hands of a violent crowd (Acts 21.31-9), permits him to make a defence, then must rescue the Apostle a second time when his testimony provokes the crowd to greater furore (Acts 21.40-22.21). Once remanded to the παρεμβολή (fortress of Antonia?, Acts 22.24), Paul's Roman citizenship exempts him from flogging and initiates an amicable relationship with the tribune (Acts 22.22-9). The tribune conducts Paul into the Sanhedrin, but must rescue him yet again from the wrath of the Sadducees (Acts 22.30-23.11). Learning of a plot on Paul's life, the tribune remands Paul to the custody of Felix, governor in Caesarea (Acts 23.12-35). Luke artfully divulges the tribune's name for the first time in the letter introducing Paul to Felix – Claudius Lysias (Acts 23.26), now a protagonist in the narrative. The importance of the tribune in the trial of Paul is signalled by the deference of Felix, 'Whenever Lysias the tribune comes down, I will make a final decision' (Acts 24.22).<sup>24</sup>

#### 3.2 Centurion

Second to a tribune in the Roman chain of command was a centurion. Luke refers to the office some sixteen times, always positively, and only as ἑκατοντάρχης, 'commander of a hundred soldiers', a term used elsewhere in the NT only by Matt (4x: 8.5, 8, 13; 27.54). The first centurion in Luke 7.1-10 is a civic benefactor whose faith astounds Jesus. 'Not even in Israel have I found such faith', he exclaims. Another centurion unexpectedly calls Jesus 'righteous' at the crucifixion (Luke 23.47). In Acts, Cornelius, one of only two named centurions in the NT, is further identified by the name of his cohort (Italian) and described as 'devout', 'God-fearing', 'benevolent' (Acts 10.2) and 'righteous' (Acts 10.22). Cornelius's conversion is recounted not once but twice, and in greater detail than in any single episode in Acts. The conversion of Cornelius occurs midway through Acts as the bridge narrative to the Gentile mission, and at the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15) it functions as the decisive event in favour of the Gentile mission.<sup>25</sup>

Less celebrated centurions also advocate the rights and sometimes merits of Christians. They assist Lysias in the rescue of Paul in the temple (Acts 21.32),

<sup>24</sup> A final reference to 'tribunes' in the entourage of Agrippa II and Bernice (Acts 25.23) is apparently the only reference to the office in Acts that does not include Claudius Lysias.

<sup>25</sup> See E. Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1971) 355-63.

and twice intercede with him on Paul's behalf (Acts 22.25–6; 23.17). They conduct Paul to Felix (Acts 23.23) and vouchsafe for his humane treatment (Acts 24.23). The final and only other named centurion in the NT is Julius,<sup>26</sup> whose advocacy of Paul on the voyage to Rome cannot be overestimated (Acts 27). Paul is fortuitously conducted to Σεβαστός by a cohort referred to as Σεβαστή (Acts 27.1). Julius supports Paul by prohibiting sailors from abandoning ship (Acts 27.31–2) and killing prisoners – Paul included – before scuttling the ship (Acts 27.43). To be sure, readers are informed of the divine promise that Paul must appear before Caesar in Rome (Acts 27.24), but human responsibility for the fulfilment of the promise falls largely to Julius. The repeated and uniformly favourable profiles of centurions and tribunes contribute to the largely favourable view of Roman rule in Luke-Acts.<sup>27</sup>

### 3.3 *Soldiers*

At the bottom rung of the military ladder, soldiers (στρατιῶται) occur some fifteen times in Luke-Acts, largely as silhouettes of their superiors. They are occasionally mentioned neutrally without reference to Christianity (e.g. Luke 7.8; Acts 28.16). Other references are negative – their mockery at Jesus' crucifixion (Luke 23.36), for example, or soldiers of Agrippa I who guard Peter (Acts 12.4, 6, 18). As might be expected, however, when commanded by centurions, soldiers are generally reported positively (Acts 10.7; 21.32, 35; 23.23, 31; 27.31–2, 42).

## 4. Greco-Roman Authorities

### 4.1 *Caesar*

The supreme Greco-Roman authority is the Roman emperor, Caesar. Of the thirty-four references to Caesar in the NT, twenty one – nearly two thirds – appear in Luke-Acts. Most occurrences in the Gospel refer to the office itself (e.g. ἡγεμονία, Luke 3.1) or paying taxes to Caesar (Luke 20.22, 24, 25; 23.2). All references in Acts either attest that Christians are not enemies of Caesar (Acts 17.7; 25.8) or relate to Paul's trial before Caesar (Acts 25.10, 11, 12, 21, 25; 26.32; 27.24; 28.19). Two of these references, remarkably, are to Caesar as σεβαστός (Acts 25.21, 25). Σεβαστός is a rendition of Latin *augustus* that originated in association with gods and temples, connoting 'holiness', 'reverence',

<sup>26</sup> Assuming the occurrence of ἑκατοντάρχης in Acts 28.16 to be a later textual addition.

<sup>27</sup> Most positively, A. Harnack, *The Mission and Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries* (trans. J. Moffatt; New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1961) 260: 'the Roman empire ... is the new sphere marked out for the new religion'. More measured, O'Toole, 'Luke's Position on Politics and Society', 6–8: 'According to Luke, the Christians have quite amicable relations with the Romans'; and W. A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003<sup>2</sup>) 189: 'There is no hint anywhere that Roman imperialism is a cause of the evil state of the present age.'

'majesty.' The title 'Augustus Caesar' was first used – and used widely – by Octavian,<sup>28</sup> but was employed sparingly by emperors thereafter until the end of the first century. Acts was probably written when lofty titles like *σεβαστός* (Acts 25.21, 25) and *κύριος* (Acts 25.26) still functioned as epithets of honour, before the reign of Domitian (81–96 CE) and his successors when such epithets were inflated with divine connotations and vigorously employed in the imperial cult.<sup>29</sup>

In addition to the imperial office, Luke includes the names of three particular emperors. Caesar Augustus (27 BCE–CE 14) is mentioned in relation to the birth of Jesus (Luke 2.1), Tiberius Caesar (14–37 CE) heads the hall of fame in the introduction to the ministries of John and Jesus (Luke 3.1), and Claudius (41–54 CE) appears with reference to a famine (Acts 11.28) and the expulsion of Jews from Rome (Acts 18.2, probably in 49 CE). The frequency of references to a *named* Caesar differs from the remainder of the NT, where the office appears rarely and no Caesar is named. In the angelic assurance, 'Do not fear, Paul, for you must appear before Caesar' (Acts 27.24), Luke informs readers of the divine will that Paul appear before the supreme authority of the Roman world.

#### 4.2 Governor

A lesser but more important authority from a NT perspective is that of the governor. Luke again references both the office and its occupants. The proper title of governor in senatorial provinces was 'proconsul' (*ἀνθύπατος*), a title attending Sergius Paulus in Cyprus (Acts 13.7, 8, 12), Gallio in Corinth (Acts 18.12) and an unnamed governor in Asia (Acts 19.38). Although Gallio was an otherwise important proconsul, Luke notes only that he refused to hear Paul's case. 'Sergius Paulus', whose name (spelled with two 'll's) appears in a Latin inscription in Antioch of Pisidia, may have determined Paul's missionary itinerary into the Pisidian–Galatian interior by introducing Paul to officials in Antioch, where his family held large estates.<sup>30</sup>

28 The Roman Senate crowned Octavian 'August Caesar' in 27 BCE (W. Foerster, *Σεβαστός*, *TWNT* VII.174).

29 On the evolution of the imperial cult, especially in the West, see R. MacMullen and E. N. Lane, *Paganism and Christianity, 100–425 CE: A Sourcebook* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992) 74–6. Despite Luke's lofty acknowledgement of Caesar's temporal authority, a categorical difference remains between him and Jesus Christ, for, as Peter confesses to Cornelius, 'This [Jesus] is Lord of all' (Acts 10.36). See C. K. Rowe, 'Luke-Acts and the Imperial Cult: A Way Through the Conundrum?', *JSNT* 27.3 (2005) 279–300.

30 The haste with which Paul passes through Perge (Acts 13.13), a more prominent city than Pisidian Antioch, may support this conjecture. On the influence of Sergius Paulus in determining Paul's itinerary, see S. Mitchell and M. Waelkens, *Pisidian Antioch: The Site and its Monuments* (London: Duckworth/Classical Press of Wales, 1998) 12; M. Wilson, 'The Route of Paul's First Journey to Pisidian Antioch', *NTS* 55 (2009) 482; M. Wilson, *Biblical Turkey: A Guide to the Jewish and Christian Sites of Asia Minor* (Istanbul: Ege Yayinlari, 2010) 116.

The preferred title for a governor of imperial provinces was ‘ruler’ (ἡγεμών), appearing in Luke-Acts once of the office (Luke 21.12), otherwise always of named governors of Syria and Judea – Quirinius (Luke 2.2), Pontius Pilate (Luke 3.1; 20.20), Felix (Acts 23.24, 26, 33; 24.1, 10), Festus (Acts 26.30). The most frequently mentioned governor is Pilate, appearing in the initial hall of fame (Luke 3.1), later with reference to slaying Galilean worshipers in Jerusalem (Luke 13.1), and a dozen times in the Passion Narrative (Luke 23; similarly Acts 3.13; 4.27; 13.28). Pilate’s successors also play important roles in Acts. Antonius Felix, governor from 52 to 60 CE, is mentioned eight times by name (Acts 23.24, 26; 24.3, 22, 24, 25, 27; 25.14), and another five as ‘ruler’ (ἡγεμών, Acts 23.24, 26, 33; 24.1, 10). Biographers roughly contemporary with Felix depict him as severe and ruthless, including his devices in inducing Drusilla, sister of Agrippa II and Bernice, to marry him (Josephus, *Ant.* 20.141–3). Tacitus is grimmer yet: ‘Practising every kind of cruelty and lust, [Felix] wielded the power of a king with all the instincts of a slave’ (*Hist.* 5.9). Luke’s profile of Felix, by contrast, is not uncomplimentary, noting specifically his summons of an imprisoned Paul to tutor him in righteousness, self-control and final judgement of the Christian faith (Acts 23.24–6). To be sure, Felix is feckless in adjudicating Paul’s case, persuaded neither by Paul’s gospel nor by the charges of Jewish leaders against him. His successor Festus (60–2 CE), more honourable but unable to reverse the harm done by Felix,<sup>31</sup> is mentioned no fewer than fifteen times by name in Acts 24–6, frequently in tandem with Agrippa II. Unpersuaded by accusations that Paul is an enemy of Torah, temple and Caesar (Acts 25.7–8), Festus, in the company of Agrippa II and Bernice, hears Paul’s final defence of the gospel (Acts 25.23–26.29) and judges him innocent (Acts 26.30–2).

#### 4.3 *Tetrarch*

Lower both in rank and prestige than the governor was the τετραάρχης, ‘tetrarch’, literally ‘ruler of a fourth part’. The title derived from Philip of Macedon’s division of Thessaly into four administrative districts, but in the Roman political economy the office amounted to little more than a subject prince. Luke alone employs the verb form, τετρααρχεῖν, ‘to rule as a tetrarch’, once each of Antipas, Philip and Lysanias (Luke 3.1). The most notable occupant of this office in the NT is Herod Antipas (Luke 3.19; 9.7; Acts 13.10), discussed above at 2.2.

#### 4.4 *Diverse Political Offices*

Six additional political offices are referred to in Luke-Acts. Most frequent is κράτιστος, ‘most noble (or excellent)’, used of Theophilus in the preface of the

31 Schürer, *History of the Jewish People*, 1.466.



Gospel (Luke 1.3, and by implication Acts 1.1), and of Felix (Acts 23.26; 24.2) and Festus (Acts 26.25). A Greek rendering of Latin *vir egregius*, κρότιστος was an honorific address for persons of rank, status (and probably wealth), irrespective of political office or rank.<sup>32</sup> Why Luke calls Theophilus κρότιστος is uncertain, although the distinction may derive from the practice of dedicating books to patrons who paid for their publication.

Three further epithets surface in the description of the dramatic riot in Ephesus. The first is γραμματεὺς (Acts 19.35), the only instance in Luke-Acts when the title refers not to a Jewish scribe but to 'a high city official in Ephesus'<sup>33</sup> who spares Paul's life by mollifying the riotous crowd in the theatre. The γραμματεὺς admonishes the crowd that there are proper authorities, 'standing courts' (ἀγοραῖοι ἄγονται),<sup>34</sup> to consider the complaints of Demetrius and the silversmiths. 'Standing courts' is the second of the political offices named. Third and most distinctive is Ἀσιάρχης. Luke describes Asiarchs as 'friends of Paul who sent word to him not to deliver himself into the theatre' (Acts 19.31). Ramsay thought that Asiarchs were custodians of the imperial cult, '[h]igh priests of Asia, who were heads of the political-religious organization'.<sup>35</sup> The reference to 'Philip the Asiarch' summoned to set lions on Polycarp, 'the father of the Christians, the destroyer of our gods' (*Mart. Pol.* 12.2), could support this view. Modern scholars render the term more broadly, 'delegates of the provincial assembly of Asia'.<sup>36</sup> Whatever their precise function, the renown and influence of Asiarchs were extensive.<sup>37</sup> In the dangerous uproar in Ephesus, the 'high city official', the 'standing courts' and the 'Asiarchs' are present to advocate Paul's case.

A fifth term, 'benefactor' (εὐεργετής), is an epithet of the (self-promoting) civic philanthropist so ubiquitously preserved in extant Greek inscriptions in modern Turkey. No model of discipleship is as bluntly repulsed in Luke-Acts as is εὐεργετής: 'You are not to be like that!', declares Jesus (Luke 22.25–6). In the only other use of the word in the NT in Acts 10.38 (although as verb rather than as noun in Luke 22.25), Luke declares *Jesus* to be the divine benefactor. Sixth and finally, in Thessalonica zealous Jews stoked public opinion against Jason, a Christian convert, by 'dragging him and several fellow Christians

32 A. Weiser, κρότιστος, *EDNT* II.315.

33 BDAG, 206.

34 BDAG, 14–15: 'the courts are in session'.

35 W. Ramsay, *St. Paul the Traveller and the Roman Citizen* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1908<sup>10</sup>) 134, 281.

36 *EDNT* I.172; BDAG, 142.

37 In 2007 I discovered an inscription on the east pillar of the theatre of Miletus dedicated to 'M. ANTΩΝΙΟΝ ΑΠΟΛΛΟΔΩΡΟΝ ΤΟΝ ΑΣΙΑΡΧΗΝ', and in 2014 a second dedication to an 'Asiarch' in a monumental inscription on the decumanus of Perge, far removed from Roman Asia.

before the politarchs' (Acts 17.6, 8). Politarch (πολιτάρχης) was the highest political office in Macedonian cities, five or six of whom formed the city council in Thessalonica.<sup>38</sup> Of the six foregoing authorities, four advocate the Christian cause and two oppose it. Despite opposition, however, the Christian mission is exonerated of guilt and shown to prosper.

### 5. Civil Authorities

A wide variety of civil authorities are interspersed in Luke-Acts. In Acts 8.26–40 Philip provides a Christian interpretation of Isa 53.7 for a perplexed Ethiopian eunuch. His ensuing conversion and baptism demonstrate the power of the gospel in the life of a 'high official of the queen of Ethiopia, her chief treasurer' (Acts 8.26). The preaching of Paul in Philippi converts Lydia, a prominent businesswoman dealing 'in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira who was a worshiper of God' (Acts 16.14). She and her household are baptised, becoming the first Christian converts in Europe. Publius, a tribal 'chief (πρωτος) of the island' of Malta (Acts 28.7), provides ample provisions for the shipwrecked travellers following Paul's healing of both his ailing father and the infirm island inhabitants. Likewise, 'a large group of devout Greeks and not a few leading women (γυναικῶν τε τῶν πρώτων οὐκ ὀλίγαι)' are persuaded to join Paul and Silas in Thessalonica (Acts 17.4).

Civic leaders can, of course, be turned against the gospel, as in Pisidian Antioch, where Jews incite women of high standing and 'city leaders' (οἱ πρωτοὶ τῆς πόλεως) against Paul and Barnabas, driving them from the region (Acts 13.50). More dramatically, Paul and Silas are dragged through a gauntlet of a half-dozen municipal offices in Acts 16, in which rough justice is remarkably transformed into public advocacy. Following the exorcism of a slave girl with a spirit of divination, the apostles are apprehended by the 'magistrates' (ἄρχοντες, Acts 16.19), also called στρατηγοί (Acts 16.20). Στρατηγοί was the Greek equivalent of Latin *duoviri*, signifying the two city magistrates of Philippi. Together with ἄρχοντες, στρατηγοί signifies the highest municipal officials.<sup>39</sup> Paul and Silas are subjected to beating by rods (ῥαβδίξειν, Acts 16.22–3), administered by ῥαβδοῦχοι (Acts 16.35, 38), 'constables' or 'police officers'. The constables deliver them to the jailer (δεσμωφύλαξ, Acts 16.23, 27) and to prison (δεσμωτήριον, Acts 16.26). This domino-style introduction to Greco-Roman civil administration is a virtual illustration of Jesus' warning in Luke 12.58. When Paul protests the violation of his rights as a Roman citizen, the chain of command is hastily reversed, with disgraced magistrates releasing the apostles from custody and publicly escorting them from the city (Acts 16.38–40).

<sup>38</sup> EDNT III.130; BDAG, 845.

<sup>39</sup> BDAG, 947–8.

In none of the above episodes is the gospel found guilty of sedition or undermining civil authority.<sup>40</sup> Rather, it exercises propitiuous effects on the secular order, and *saving* effects on credentialed leaders such as the Ethiopian eunuch and Lydia.

## 6. Pagan Cults and Supernatural Powers

### 6.1 Greek Philosophy

The Christian movement inevitably encountered pagan cults when it entered the mainstream of Greco-Roman culture. The architecture of a Hellenic πόλις was itself a representation of pre-eminence and power, the showcase of which was the agora, a central open-air forum constructed on a grand scale commensurate with the economic, social and political ideals of the Greco-Roman world. Paul's meeting in this eminent space with 'Epicurean and Stoic philosophers' (Acts 17.18) stands in polar contrast to the secrecy of the mystery cults of the ancient world. From the agora Paul advances to the acropolis for a summit conference with the Areopagus (Acts 17.16–34), the council whose origins extended into misty antiquity and whose jurisdiction over religion and doctrine in Athens was 'virtually sacrosanct'.<sup>41</sup> Despite the inconclusiveness of the meeting, Luke reports that the council took no action against Paul, and that an aristocratic council member, Dionysius the Areopagite, came to faith.

### 6.2 Magic

The non-Jewish world encountered by Christian missionaries was a world of permeable boundaries between heaven and earth, typified by spiritual commerce involving prophylactic amulets, vivid dreams, visits to temples, and devotion to auspices, apparitions, omens and prophecies.<sup>42</sup> The encounter with Simon the magician in Acts 8.9–25 reflects such a spiritually charged atmosphere.

40 A point often noted by older scholars. Thus, F. C. Grant, *Roman Hellenism and the New Testament* (New York: Scribner, 1962) 26: 'Luke-Acts is an apologia for Christianity ... designed to show that Christianity was not inimical to public law and order.' More recently, O'Toole, 'Luke's Position on Politics and Society', 8: 'The activity of the Christians and the tenets of their religion create no difficulty for a sensible, reasonable system of government. Only an irrational government or people, led by religious prejudice and/or hatred, could find fault with Christianity. In any nation ruled by reason, Christians make good citizens.' Note my remarks in the conclusion of this article, however, that Luke's purpose is not simply to define the relationship of Christianity to Roman political power, but to redefine *all* power and authority in relation to the gospel.

41 H. M. Martin, Jr, 'Areopagus', *ABD* 1.371. 'Areopagus' can refer either to the summit of Mars Hill or to the council that met there. Luke's reference to Paul's 'going out from among them' (Acts 17.33) apparently signifies the latter.

42 Suetonius's spiritual inventory of Caesar Augustus in *Lives of the Caesars*, Aug. 94, describes these and other practices in detail.

Especially in the eastern Roman Empire – and there particularly in Egypt – a class of mystical specialists attempted to harness supernatural powers for their own advantage or to the detriment of others. Simon is such a specialist, ‘astounding the people of Samaria’, profiling himself as ‘someone great’ and presuming to possess ‘the power of God called “Great”’ (Acts 8.9–10). When he seeks to enhance his spiritual inventory by purchasing the power of the Holy Spirit, Peter and John censure him sternly, causing him to implore, ‘You must intercede for me with the Lord in order that nothing of which you have spoken will happen to me’ (Acts 8.24).

Barnabas and Paul have a near-mirror encounter with a ‘magician, a false Jewish prophet named Barjesus’, also known as Elymas, who seeks to dissuade Sergius Paulus, the governor of Cyprus, from the faith (Acts 13.4–12). ‘Filled with the Holy Spirit’, Paul rebukes the magician no less vehemently than Peter rebuked Simon. Elymas is temporarily blinded by ‘the hand of the Lord’, and the governor, seeing what happened, is ‘astounded by the teaching of the Lord’ (Acts 13.12). Both encounters with magicians are narrated as exorcisms, both involve the strongest rebukes in Acts, both magicians are subjected to the authority of the gospel, and in both accounts third parties hear and believe the gospel.

### 6.3 *Divination*

A slave girl with ‘a spirit of divination who brought her owners a great deal of money by fortune-telling’ (Acts 16.16–18) exhibits another manifestation of occult arts. ‘Divination’, πύθων, derives from ‘Python’, the fortune-telling serpent protector of the Oracle of Delphi, whom Apollo slew and then assumed his predictive powers. The use of πύθων identifies the girl’s predictive powers with the spiritual manifestation typically recognised as ‘a spirit of divination’ (ἔχουσαν πνεῦμα πύθωνα, Acts 16.16).<sup>43</sup> Her repeated exclamations induce Paul to invoke a superior Spirit (τῷ πνεύματι), exorcising the rogue spirit. ‘I command you in the name of Jesus Christ, “Depart from her”, and the spirit left her in that hour’ (Acts 16.18).

### 6.4 *Exorcists*

‘Seven sons of a Jewish high priest named Sceva’ in Ephesus are described by Luke as ‘wandering Jewish exorcists’ (Acts 19.13–20) who attempt to commandeer the name of Jesus. This is the only instance in the Greek Bible where the technical term ἐξορκιστής is used of demon exorcism.<sup>44</sup> Ἐξορκιστής describes an office or practice attested from the fourth century BCE onwards in Greek inscriptions, papyri and magical texts. Indeed, the attempt of the wonder workers in

43 See the full discussion of the term by W. Foerster, πύθων, *TWNT* vi.917–20.

44 This is also true of the verb form (ἐξορκίζειν), which in its four occurrences (Gen 24.3; Judg 17.2; 1 Kings 22.16; Matt 26.63) is employed in the sense of ‘swear allegiance’ rather than ‘exorcise or expel’.

Acts 19 to exorcise via incantations in Jesus' name suggests they were magicians, for exorcism was the best-attested form of magic practised among Jews in the first century.<sup>45</sup> Josephus' description of Solomon's mastery of the demonic art likewise associates demon exorcism with magical rites and incantations (*Ant.* 8.44–9). The attempt of the Ephesus exorcists backfires, however, for the errant spirit, which knows (γινώσκω) Jesus and is familiar (ἐπίσταμαι!) with Paul, assaults the pretenders and drives them from the house. 'This became known to all Jews and Greeks living in Ephesus and fear fell upon them all and the name of Jesus was magnified' (Acts 19.17).

### 6.5 Pagan Deities

Opponents attempt to discredit Jesus' ministry with the claim that he expels demons by the power of Beelzeboul (Luke 11.14–20), an opprobrious name for a Philistine deity that Jesus associates with Satanic power.<sup>46</sup> Jesus refutes this nefarious insinuation by simple logic: his exorcisms cannot derive from Satanic power, for if the power of Satan is turned against itself, Satan will be destroyed (Luke 11.17–19). Jesus, rather, casts out demons by a superior power – 'the finger of God', which testifies to the kingdom of God (Luke 11.20).

In Lystra, Paul and Barnabas heal a lame man (Acts 14.8–18). When the local priest of Zeus, assuming Paul to be Hermes and Barnabas Zeus, prepares suitable offerings to them, the apostles 'tear their clothes' in abhorrence,<sup>47</sup> for they are mere 'humans bringing good news to turn from these futile ways to the living God who made heaven and earth' (Acts 14.15). Compared to the truth of the gospel, pagan sacrifices – even to Zeus, 'father of gods and men' – are 'futile' (μᾶταιος).

The crowning episode in the encounter of the gospel with classical paganism occurs in Ephesus (Acts 19.23–40). Worship of Artemis achieved its zenith at Ephesus in a unique figure, the many-breasted(?) 'Artemis of Ephesus', worshipped and venerated in the colossal Artemesium, the largest temple in the Greco-Roman world.<sup>48</sup> The boast of the silversmith guild that 'the whole world revered' Artemis of Ephesus (Acts 19.27) was scarcely an exaggeration. Blaming the decline of Artemis worship on Paul's preaching, the guild foments an uproar

45 See P. S. Alexander, 'Incantations and Books of Magic', in Schürer, *History of the Jewish People*, III/1.342–79.

46 For discussions of the origin and meaning of the term, see J. R. Edwards, *The Gospel according to Luke* (PNTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015) 342; L. Gaston, 'Beelzeboul', *TZ* 18 (1962) 247–55; E. MacLaurin, 'Beelzeboul', *NovT* 20 (1978) 156–60; M. Wolter, *Das Lukasevangelium* (HNT 5; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008) 416.

47 On public tearing of clothes as a sign of revulsion, see Str-B., 1.1007–8.

48 On the relation of the Artemis cult and the Magna Mater cult, see J. R. Edwards, 'Galatians 5:12: Circumcision, the Mother Goddess, and the Scandal of the Cross', *NovT* 53 (2011) 324–30.

in the enormous theatre (Acts 19.34), which is subdued only when a city official tacitly defends Christians: 'You have brought forth these men who have neither despoiled our temple nor blasphemed our goddess' (Acts 19.37). As in the story of Beelzeboul, here too the gospel – and reason – are an antidote to paganism.

### 6.6 *Satan*

Each foregoing episode fulfils Jesus' promise in the eschatological discourse, 'I will give you words and wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to withstand or contradict' (Luke 21.15): Simon begs for mercy, Elymas is blinded and the governor converted, a spirit of divination is exorcised by the Holy Spirit, exorcist pretenders are vanquished and the name of Jesus magnified, Beelzebul is expelled 'by the finger of God'. Indeed, the gospel is shown superior to the great Artemis herself. Each encounter reflects in differing ways the confrontation between Jesus and the forces of evil. Those forces are most frequently exhibited in the supremacy of Jesus over the demonic, referred to as 'demon' (δαμόνιον, 22x in Luke, 1x in Acts) and 'unclean spirit' (ἀκάθαρτον πνεῦμα, 6x in Luke, 2x in Acts). The two epithets occur in both singular and plural, and in Luke all within the first eleven chapters. Jesus' exorcisms of demons are a consequence of his principal victory over Satan, who is referred to as σατανᾶς or διάβολος (both occur five times in Luke, twice in Acts). In the wilderness temptation the devil promises the power and glory of 'all the kingdoms of the world' if Jesus will worship him (Luke 4.5–7). In rejecting Satan's power and in relying wholly on God's power in his teaching, parables, miracles, ministry and itineration, Jesus embodies and exhibits the alternative *way* of the kingdom of God in this world. The same kingdom, embodied in the church of Acts, 'turns the world upside down' (Acts 17.6) and establishes the standard of righteousness by which God will judge the world (οἰκουμένη, Acts 17.31).

### Conclusions

In his final appeal before Festus, Agrippa II and Bernice, Paul declared that the gospel 'was not done in a corner' (Acts 26.26).<sup>49</sup> Indeed not. The importance of setting the ministries of John and Jesus in the context of political and religious potentates of Luke's day (Luke 3.1–2) has been noted several times. This hall of fame is unnecessary merely to establish the chronology of John's and Jesus' ministries, for the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius alone suffices for that purpose. The chief reason for the hall of fame in Luke 3.1–2 becomes clear in the narrative of Luke-Acts as a whole, namely that the witness of the gospel not only appears in the reigns of such luminaries, but must be borne *to* them (Luke 21.12, 15; Acts 9.15; 19.21; 23.11; 27.24). John appears before Herod Antipas (Luke 3.19–20), as

49 The false prophet, according to *Herm. Mand.* 11.13, 'prophesies in a corner'.

does Jesus (Luke 23.8–12), who will further appear before Caiaphas as high priest (Luke 22.54, 66) and Pilate as governor (Luke 23.1, 13–25). The early Jerusalem apostles testify before the Sanhedrin, and Paul appears before Jewish religious authorities, Roman proconsuls, and by divine decree before Caesar in Rome (Acts 19.21; 23.11; 27.24). Robin Lane Fox rightly concludes, 'Acts and the third Gospel are the first, and greatest, of Christian apologies to be addressed to highly placed pagans.'<sup>50</sup>

The comprehensiveness of the apology is demonstrated by the sheer quantity of powers and authorities recorded in Luke-Acts. Seventy-nine different authorities are canvassed in this study, of which forty-four (= 56 per cent) are unique to Luke-Acts, occurring nowhere else in the NT.<sup>51</sup> More than half of the references to powers and authorities in this study are thus unique to Luke-Acts.<sup>52</sup> An additional five authorities occur only once again in the NT outside Luke-Acts.<sup>53</sup> When these two bodies of data are combined, over three fifths of the powers and authorities contained in this study occur either exclusively or with one exception in Luke-Acts. Further, many authorities are *named*, implying close rather than merely formal acquaintance. Persons of prominence and authority, such as Gamaliel, Cornelius, Lydia, Agrippa II, are likewise placed at turning points in the narrative. Luke casts a broader narrative net than do other NT writers, drawing nearly fifty powers and authorities into his two-volume work that occur nowhere else in the NT. No first-century Christian work, and no first-century Jewish works save those of Philo and Josephus, encompass a broader cross-section of powers and authorities in the Roman world than does Luke-Acts. Not until Eusebius, writing 250 years later, will a Christian writer produce a continuous history of the church with more powers and authorities than Luke-Acts.<sup>54</sup>

50 R. Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989) 430.

51 Four terms occur in Luke and nowhere else in the NT: ἡγεμονία, θυσιαστήριον τοῦ θυμιάματος, νομικός and τετρααρχέω; and the remaining forty occur in both Luke-Acts or Acts alone : ἀγοραῖος, Ἀγρίππας I, Ἀγρίππας II, Αἰθίοψ εὐνοῦχος, ἀνθύπατος, Ἄρειος πάγος, Ἄρτεμις, ἀρχιερατικός, Ἀσιάρχης, Βερνίκη, Γαμαλιήλ, γερουσία, γραμματεὺς (as city clerk), δεσμοφύλαξ, Διονύσις ὁ Ἀρεοπαγίτης, δωδεκάφυλον, Ἐλύμας, ἐξορκιστής, ἐξοχή, Ἐπικούριος, ἐπιτροπή, ἡγεμονεῦω, ἱερεὺς τοῦ Διός, Κλαύδιος, κράτιστος, κυβερνήτης, Λυδία, Λυσίας, ναύκληρος, Πόπλιος, πύθων, ῥαβδόουχος, στρατηγός, Στωικός, πολιτάρχης, ρήτωρ, Σεβαστός, Σίμων (Μάγος), Φῆλιξ, Φῆστος.

52 The thirty terms that Luke-Acts share in common with the NT are: ἀκάθαρτον πνεῦμα, ἀρχιερεὺς, ἀρχισυνάγωγος, ἀγορά, ἄρχων, γραμματεὺς, δαιμόνιον, διάβολος, ἑκατοντάρχης, ἐπίτροπος, ἡγεμών, Ἡρώδης, Ἡρώδης Ἀντίπας, ἱερεὺς, ἱερόν, καίσαρ, Μωϋσῆς καὶ Ἥλιος, Πόντιος Πιλάτος, πρεσβύτερος, πρῶτος, Σαδδουκαῖος, σατανᾶς, στρατιώτης, συναγωγή, συνέδριον, τελώνης, ὑπηρέτης, Φαρισαῖος, χιλιάρχος.

53 Βουλευτής, δεσμοπῆτριον, νομοδιδάσκαλος, πρεσβυτέριον, τετραάρχης.

54 M. Hengel, 'Problems of a History of Earliest Christianity', *Studien zum Urchristentum: Kleine Schriften* vi (WUNT 234; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008) 308–9.

The emphasis on powers in Luke-Acts serves, in the first instance, to defend the gospel from false conceptions. As the first Christian historian of the Christian cause, which was 'everywhere spoken against' (Acts 28.22), Luke found himself the de facto first Christian apologist in relation to pagan religions, Judaism and political authorities.<sup>55</sup> To be sure, the dominant witnesses to 'the Way' inevitably run afoul of ruling authorities throughout the two-part work. The attending altercations and accusations are duly recorded, for Jesus predicted that believers would be 'handed over ... and hated by all because of my name' (Luke 21.16-17).<sup>56</sup> All charges against believers are nevertheless shown to be the result of unjust causes – especially enmity, jealousy and rivalry – and injustice by corrupt courts and judges. In no instance is Christianity found guilty of offending Roman law or of sedition.<sup>57</sup> The judgement of T. D. Barnes that 'no Roman official in ... Acts regards Christianity as a punishable offense'<sup>58</sup> is correct – as long as we understand 'offense' in terms of legality and legitimacy. Whenever the gospel is maligned, it is exonerated; and whenever a conflict is provoked, the gospel emerges with strength and credibility.

The ultimate purpose of Luke's apologetic is not simply to defend the gospel from false conceptions, however, but to produce a metanarrative that redefines all powers and authorities in relation to the gospel. We must beware of accommodating the total evidence in this study to false dichotomies, for example, that the Way is a politically innocuous movement that tacitly endorses the Roman Empire,<sup>59</sup> or, conversely, that it is a subversive force that collides head-on with the Empire.<sup>60</sup> Such theses err in reducing powers and authorities solely to *political* expressions. They err further when they seek to deduce concomitant political philosophies and theories from them. Powers and authorities confronted by the

55 F. F. Bruce, 'Paul's Apologetic and the Purpose of Acts', *BJRL* 69.2 (1987) 390.

56 In addition to the turmoil at the trial of Jesus (Luke 23.13-25), Luke includes opposition against Paul in Damascus (Acts 9.23-5), expulsion of Paul and Barnabas from Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13.50), mob actions in Iconium (Acts 14.5) and Lystra, where Paul is nearly killed (Acts 14.19), public beating of Paul and Silas in Philippi (Acts 16.22-3), Paul's escape from persecution in Thessalonica (Acts 17.10) and his flight from Berea (Acts 17.14), and riots against Paul in Ephesus (Acts 19.23) and Jerusalem (Acts 21.28), including in the Sanhedrin (Acts 23.10).

57 Apologists will need to defend Christianity against charges of sedition throughout the second and third centuries, e.g. Tertullian, *Apol.* 10, *sacrilegii et maiestatis rei convenimur, summa haec causa, immo tota est* ('We are accused of sacrilege and treason; that is the chief charge, nay, the sum total of our offences').

58 T. D. Barnes, 'Legislation Against the Christians', *JRS* 58 (1968) 33; similarly, and more recently, C. S. Keener, 'Paul and Sedition: Pauline Apologetic in Acts', *BBR* 22.2 (2012) 201-24.

59 Nowhere in Luke-Acts do we see the blanket endorsement of Roman political power as we do, for example, in the encomium of Melito of Sardis to Roman emperors (with the exception of Nero and Domitian), as recorded in Eusebius, *HE* 4.26.7-11.

60 For a discussion of these polarities, see C. K. Rowe, *World Upside Down: Reading Acts in the Greco-Roman Age* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009) chs. 2-3.



gospel in Luke-Acts exist in other than political forms, and those that are political are rarely axiomatically endorsed or categorically subverted, for the same or similar powers often exhibit both faithful responses to the Way and rejections of it. Christian and ecclesial existence stands in dialectical tension not merely with political powers, but with all powers and authorities. The entelechy of the gospel cannot be equated with powers and authorities, its purpose is not fulfilled in theirs, and its essence is independent of their responses to it. Christian witness is not made efficacious by a positive response, nor nullified by a negative response, nor relegated to a suspended state until its effect is determined. The repeated necessity of Paul's testifying before Caesar (Acts 19.21; 23.11; 27.24), without Luke ever reporting a response *from* Caesar, attests to this principle.

In its various encounters with authorities in Luke-Acts, the gospel fundamentally redefines power. The principle is established already in the wilderness temptation by the devil, where Jesus rejects the power and glory of 'all the kingdoms of the world' and qualifies even the religious power centred in Jerusalem (Luke 4.5-10). In the remainder of Luke-Acts the redefinition takes the form of a critical posture with regard to the forms and faces of power encountered by Jesus and the church. This redefinition is signalled in various ways. In the Benedictus, Zechariah claims the 'way of peace' in Isa 59.8 with reference to its inauguration in the birth of John (Luke 1.79) and subsequent incarnation in Jesus. In Luke 22.24-7 power is redefined by setting 'the one who serves' (ὁ διακονῶν) in distinct antithesis to 'the one who rules' (ὁ ἡγούμενος). In the story of Cornelius, Jesus is declared 'Lord of all' (Acts 10.36; cf. Rom 10.12),<sup>61</sup> in relation to whom all other lordships are relative. The Thessalonians perceive that Paul and Silas proclaim Jesus as 'another king' in contrast to Caesar (Acts 17.7). The cosmic significance of Jesus' Lordship is signalled by Luke's use of οἰκουμένη, 'the (inhabited) world'. The gospel destabilises (Acts 17.6; 24.5) the counterfeit potentates and powers to which the world is currently subjected – whether Caesar (Luke 2.1), Satan (Luke 4.5), Artemis (Acts 19.27), famines (Acts 11.28) or eschatological terrors (Luke 21.26) – in anticipation of the return of Christ to judge the οἰκουμένη in righteousness (Acts 17.31). In relation to the ministry of Jesus the authority of the high priests and temple guards and elders is one of 'darkness' (Luke 22.52-3), and the ministry of Paul 'turns the world upside down' (Acts 17.6).

These various insights and images attest to one overarching conviction: that the only true power, by which all others – and in all their various forms – must be made critically accountable, is the name, person and work of Jesus. Powers and authorities stand in no less need of the redeeming and transforming word of the gospel than do the poor, needy and outcast. The gospel of Jesus is the sole authority of the church, to which the resurrected Jesus in his final

61 On the significance of Acts 10.36 for the Lukan programme of mission and evangelism, see especially Rowe, *World Upside Down*, 112-14.

commandment of the Gospel and first commandment in the book of Acts enjoins believers: 'Be my witnesses' (Luke 21.13; 24.48; Acts 1.8). Christian witness must therefore be rendered to 'every city and place' (Luke 10.1), before 'kings and governors' (Luke 21.12), 'to the temple cult' (Acts 5.20), 'to Caesar' (Acts 27.24), and 'to the ends of the earth' (Acts 1.8).