

The Speeches in Acts: An Overview

O Heavenly Father, we thank You that we can pause and have the opportunity of fellowshiping with You and that You have made a way of access to You. Lord, we confess that we would not come to You of our own accord, that we do not have this natural spiritual inclination. But rather, You in Your kindness, in Your love, in Your loyalty, in Your tenderness, and in Your care, have pursued each one of us to the point of salvation, to the point of worshipping You, to the point of coming home to the Father. So we thank You for that standing; the rest of our lives are lived in gratitude and wonder, learning, maturing, experiencing, and absorbing that which You have already prepared for us. We thank You for that grace that we are surrounded by. We pray that we would not take it as a liberty, but as a sweet constraint on our lives so that our lives would reflect Your goodness, Your mercy, Your cleanliness, Your purity, and Your righteousness. Father, we need Your Spirit. We need Your strength. We need Your Word so that we may walk on that path of light. We thank You for Your forgiveness and for Your kindness that we experience even now. We pray that You would bless this time that we have together and that you would shed light on our lives through Your Word. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Before we begin to study the speeches in Acts, I want to make a small addition to what I have said about the work of the Holy Spirit in Acts. I would like to give you a summary statement so you can understand where I am coming from and how I am taking the descriptions concerning the work of the Holy Spirit in Acts. I have three main points, which you do not have to agree with, but I want you to know where I am coming from and how I try to understand this phenomenon.

The first point is that I am convinced that the Spirit of God has worked on people's hearts ever since the patriarchs of the Old Testament. There is a work of regeneration that occurs with any human being who turns to God at any stage of human history. This belief is derived from my understanding of the fall. The fall, as we observed briefly in the first lecture, has caused such havoc that man is not naturally inclined toward the worship of God. Thus, when I see movement toward God in the pages of Scripture, I believe that it must be caused by the regenerative work of the Spirit of God in people's hearts. You can see that in Psalm 51, perhaps among many other examples, where the brokenhearted, repentant David prays that God may not take His Holy Spirit from him. It is always regeneration toward repentance and faith. I do not have the time to go into the serious state that the people of Israel were in at the time of the coming of John the Baptist and then of Jesus, but both John and Jesus brought a serious call to return to the God of their fathers.

Secondly, on the basis of John 14-16, Romans 8:9, Galatians 3:14 (which speaks of receiving this promise of the Spirit), and Acts 2:38, I would say that the Spirit's coming and His promised presence in the life of a believer in Christ is something that has been anticipated. In the time between Abraham and the coming of Jesus I see that there is a call for restoration, for the people to return to that state of godliness that they may have had in the Abrahamic Covenant. But there is something even more particular still with the anticipation of the Spirit of God. The coming of the Paraclete marks an indiscriminate deepening of God's presence by means of His Spirit. That deepening is not necessarily associated with supernatural manifestations. I do affirm that the miraculous, the signs and wonders that we see in Acts, were meant to confirm the veracity of the apostolic witness that Christ was truly raised from the dead. I see that the miraculous is not necessarily un-supernatural, not necessarily associated with that deepening of God's presence by His Spirit. Thus I am not saying that there is something completely new happening with the outpouring of the Spirit, but there is a deepening. I would say that this conforms to the anticipation of Emanuel, because Emanuel means God with us. God has always sought a people unto Himself. God has always fellowshiped with His people. He has always sought not only the circumcision of the flesh, but also the circumcision of the heart. But as Christ is announced, as

He speaks of being with His people to the end of the age, and as He promises the Paraclete to be with His disciples, I see a certain deepening. The regenerative power of the Spirit is always there, but there is a certain deepening, a certain intensifying, that is noticeable here. I would associate the outpouring of the Spirit in Acts with the references in Paul where he says if you do not have the Spirit of Christ or the Spirit of God, you are not His. Galatians 3:14 says, “You have received the promise of the Spirit.” So there is something deeper, but not something absolutely new, with the coming of the Spirit.

Third, there is no exegetical ground, not even in Acts eight, to postulate a doctrine of the second blessing as distinct from receiving the Spirit of God. I have tried to explain that as best as I can in the previous lecture, particularly focusing on the difficult passage in Acts eight. Therefore, I do not think it is Scripturally faithful to postulate a doctrine of the second blessing, saying that while you may have received the Spirit of God, you may still need the power of the Spirit of God. I cannot see that in Scripture. Rather, I see that there is one work of the Spirit: the work of regeneration and the resting of the Spirit upon believers. In Acts 2:38 Peter speaks about repentance as the fruit of the regenerative work of God in people's hearts. Repentance, faith, baptism in Christ, and the receiving of the promise of the Spirit of God, these are all one work—the work of regeneration and the Spirit of God permanently resting on a person. That all together is this deep fellowship that has always been the intention of God throughout the ages.

Now, it could be said of David that he received the Spirit of God and that the Spirit of God rested on him. But I would say that there is now a deeper intimacy established between God and regenerate man. There is something that goes beyond the fellowship that has been possible before: “God with us,” God in our lives. So I would want to posit this continuity, but also the deepening effect of the work of the Spirit in the New Testament, particularly in Acts. I just wanted to give you that as a summary, and the various other aspects in Acts are subsumed under that.

I want to remind you of what we are doing. If you were to go in a submarine and search the grounds of the sea, you could easily lose track of where you are going. You might go from left to right, and right to left, and you would lose your perspective and need to surface briefly. I want to remind you that what we are trying to accomplish in this course is to understand the life and letters of Paul from the sources that we have access to. One very important source is Acts. As we try to understand the message, presentation, flow of thought, and purpose of Acts, we can slowly identify how Paul fits into that flow. It is as if the work and movement of God were a train running through the country—headed toward its goal—and Paul is being pulled into that train. It is not that Paul has his own agenda and God is thanking Paul that he is finally willing to help in the great task of his purposes. Certainly not! Rather, Paul is being pulled into that train that is moving along strongly and quickly. We are in some ways trying to understand that train. We want to understand where the Lord is going with His work and purposes before Paul was brought on board. We want to see how Paul plays into this and what significance he has in establishing, and continuing in the establishment of, this movement. As we now begin to study the speeches in Acts, we need to remember this overall goal of the course so that we will not get too caught up in the details and forget what we are trying to accomplish. We are inching our way toward understanding Paul and Paul's speeches in Acts, even though we will also study the early speeches in Acts as a way to better understand those of Paul.

As we look at the subject of the speeches in Acts, we can observe a very interesting phenomenon. If you compare Luke and Acts to ancient literature, we notice that there is a much greater amount of speech material in Acts as compared to other ancient narratives. If you look at descriptions in Josephus, for instance, or other narratives such as 1 and 2 Maccabees, you will find that normally there are not many speeches in these narratives. There is something conspicuous about the fact that Acts contains about

thirty percent speech material, if you want to speak about it in a theoretical sense. Acts is one-third debates, dialogues, monologues, and presentations, and two-thirds narrative, or description of events. That is an amazing amount, which amounts to about 24 speeches in all: eight from Peter, nine from Paul, one larger speech from Stephen in Acts seven, and one shorter speech from James in Acts 15 and also a few other smaller sections. But most of the speeches are made by Peter and Paul. This is significant.

If you are trying to understand somebody's self-understanding and mission, you may learn much by observing his or her actions and conduct. But in the end you will want to ask them, "What do you think? Who are you?" In a New Testament seminar that I had the opportunity to be a part of recently, we discussed the beginning of the Book of Mark. In our study, we all observed that Jesus is silent. John the Baptist speaks about Jesus and Jesus goes down to the Jordan to be baptized. The voice of God is heard and then Jesus is taken into the desert. Up to this point in Mark, Jesus has not said a word. We want to hear what He is saying—what is being communicated from the heart. The communication of the speeches in Acts tells us an enormous amount about the inner life of the early church and about the work that God is doing. As we remember that the purpose is to confirm and further the secure basis of the Gospel, we see this confirming and furthering of the Gospel through the speeches—through what is being pronounced by these witnesses. I have wondered why there are so many speeches, and perhaps one answer is that the early church devoted itself to the teaching of the apostles. And how better to get an understanding of the teaching of the apostles than to listen to what they say? By the speech material in Acts we are led to the fountain of what drives and moves the disciples. What is the engine for the actions that we observe? Why are they concerned to resolve tensions internally? Why are they willing to suffer and be opposed by earthly and unseen spiritual powers from the outside? What is going on? Why are they willing to be disbursed? What moves them? The speeches give us an insight into the driving force that lies behind their testimony. The pronouncements of the disciples give us insight into why they would be such people.

There are many scholars who will not accept that what we have in the speeches in Acts is a true report of what Peter, Paul, Stephen, James, and the others said. I would like to make you aware of this debate so that you will be able to intelligently entertain questions that may be addressed to you as you engage in evangelism. People may say, "I believe the narrative, the event descriptions in Acts, but how do you know that the speeches themselves were truly those that Peter or Paul or others gave?" You may have simple questions like, "How does Luke know what Peter said in Jerusalem? He was not there, you know." These are simpler questions that can be more easily answered, but there is a more fundamental question based on ancient historiography. In this tradition, during the time when Luke was writing, speeches were often invented by the authors. There may be an accurate account of events in a document, but the speeches in the same document may not be reliable. I would like to prepare you a little for that kind of an argument, so that you may be able to counteract it. This discussion on the speeches in Acts often begins with Thucydides. He was an historian who worked in the ancient Greek world from 460 BC to 396 BC. The author of *History of the Peloponnesian Wars*, he was perhaps the single most important historian of his time. He called one chapter of this book his *Method Chapter*, where he explained a little of how he wrote his history of the Peloponnesian Wars. I would like to read an excerpt from this chapter so that you can understand how he handles the account, and particularly what he does with speeches. This quote is from Book 1 of the History of the Peloponnesian Wars, Section 22 (the *Method Chapter*):

As to the speeches that were made by different men, either when they were about to begin the war or when they were already engaged therein, it has been difficult to recall with strict accuracy the words actually spoken, both for me as regards that which I myself heard and for those who from various other sources have brought me reports. Therefore the speeches are given in the language in which, as it seemed to me, the several speakers would express on the subjects,

considering the sentiments most befitting the occasion, though at the same time I have adhered as closely as possible to the general sense of what was actually said. But as to the facts of the occurrences of the war [Now he is moving to the narrative of the facts], I have thought it my duty to give them not as ascertained from any chance informant, but only after investigating with the greatest possible accuracy each detail, both of those events in which I myself participated and of those regarding which I got my information from others. And the endeavor to ascertain these facts was a laborious task because those who were eye witnesses of the several events did not give the same reports about the same things, but reports varied according to their championship of one side or the other or according to their recollection. It may well be that the absence of the fabulous from my narrative will seem less pleasing to the ear, but whoever shall wish to have a clear view, both of the events which have happened and of those which will some day in all human probability happen again in the same or similar way, for these to adjudge my history profitable will be enough for me. And indeed it has been composed not as a prize essay to be heard for the moment but as a possession for all time.

This is the testimony of a supreme, conscientious historian. He distinguished slightly between the narrative of events and the narrative of speeches, but even with the speeches he tried not to misrepresent, but rather to get as closely as possible to what was actually said. He did this with the purpose, as he states, to present a document that would be useful for future generations.

There are all kinds of implications you could draw from Thucydides and his final statement, but I only want to say this: after this historian established this very high ground of speech material in narratives, that high standard degenerated slightly among certain historians. In essence, they said, “There is a definite distinction between narrative of events and speeches, so let us take liberties with the speeches.” This got to the point that some classicists now ask whether the speech that Socrates gave before he took the cup, written by his pupil Plato, was put into the mouth of Socrates or whether that actually reflects what Socrates himself said. Thus there are many implications and questions. What can be said, with conscientious research, is that, at least from the time of Thucydides on, there are high grounds and low grounds of historiography.

There is sloppy reporting and there is conscientious reporting. When you encounter people who question whether the speeches in Acts are solid or not, the question you really need to ask is, “In whose company is Luke best seen? Is he in the company of conscientious historiography or in the company of sloppy historiography? What standards was he following?” It is interesting that what I read from Thucydides on his research of the details somewhat echoes what we hear from Luke concerning the rigor and the care that Luke has taken to research that which he is reporting to the patron and to all his readers and hearers. The general question on the speeches is not decided by simply saying, “Ancient historians wrote speeches out of their own imagination.” That is too simplistic of a statement. Some ancient historians did, but some did not. I find it quite instructive to see that the speeches in Acts fit their particular settings in an amazing way. They carry a common message with particular application and implication. There is wonderful variety, and yet they maintain a united message concerning the Gospel. I want to submit to you that the basic issue on the speeches in Acts is by no means an issue that can be easily dismissed.

F. F. Bruce, in his study on the speeches in Acts, has observed a few characteristics and I would like to present those to you. First of all, he has identified that the speeches do not seem to attempt rhetorical elegance. They seem natural, especially if you look at the early speeches in Acts two and three. There is a very simple thrust to them. One sign of suspicious speech writing among Asian writers was when they had such polished, elegant speeches. Here you do not have that. You have simple testimony, simple rhetoric. I think that is very significant because Luke loves good Greek—we see that from the prologue

in Luke. Luke 1:1-4 is very polished and very eloquent, for Koine Greek at least. But the Greek of the second speech of Peter in 3:16 is rather unusual and ponderous. Even if you read it translated into your native language it seems unusual and difficult to understand. Who is doing what with what? Whose faith are we talking about? You kind of have to sort out your pronouns and such, and the Greek text is even a little more difficult. This seems to show that Luke was more concerned with writing down what the speaker actually said than he was about rhetoric—he was not the sort of historian to refine and modify speeches.

A second point from Bruce is that the speeches in Acts contain basic elements of the Gospel. Here Bruce is entertaining the possibility with some other scholars that the speech in Acts ten, the Petrine speech to the Cornelius household, is a blueprint for the Gospel of Mark. I am convinced that Peter stands behind the Gospel of Mark. He is the apostle who is instructing and using Mark as his writer. What you see in the speeches is that there is a basic structure of the Gospel, a common Gospel.

The third point that Bruce makes is that the speeches fit very well into their context. When Peter speaks in Jerusalem, his speech has a different tone than when Paul speaks in Pisidian Antioch to Diaspora Jews. And when Peter speaks to the Cornelius household, God-fearing Gentiles who were close to the Jewish faith, this speech has a very different tone than that of Paul's speech in Athens to the epicurean and stoic philosophers. It is amazing how the speeches fit into their particular context.

Some critics have said, though, that the speeches do not really stay in their context. They may start to fit in there, but then they break out like a wild lion out of a cage and have their own momentum. One scholar from the early 1920s, who published some significant and influential articles, wrote exactly that. This scholar, among others, says that this clearly demonstrates that Luke is writing his own speeches, perhaps anchored to some context. I would like to ask you, have you ever heard one politician stay within the context that he was supposed to stay in? Or have you not rather heard them use a certain opportunity and then go with whatever agenda they have in their speech? And yet those are historical speeches, wouldn't you say? I would submit to you that the message these men are trying to communicate is so compelling that they cannot help but to say, "Listen, this lame man was healed! The reason this lame man was healed is because Christ has been exalted, and this is one small sign of God's mercy. This is a time of refreshment and He will send times of refreshment, times of breathing and relief." Then it makes sense for them to say, "Let me tell you a little more about this Jesus while you are listening." Far be it from me to try to compare the apostles to politicians, but I would say that they were motivated by a message and they could not help going beyond the context in which they began their speeches. So for Luke to reflect that characteristic that marked the early Christian preaching is actually a sign of accuracy and precision. Yes, the speeches are connected to the audience and the context, but the speaker breaks through those things. As the Gospel breaks through barriers, so the speaking breaks through these confines that would perhaps be set by some 20th century German scholar.

So these are the three major points that Bruce makes. One little addendum to the third point is this: there is only one longer speech that is addressed to Christians in Acts, and that is the speech by Paul in Acts 20:18-35, addressed to the Ephesian elders in Melita. It is amazing how much of Paul is in that speech. The other speeches from Paul in Acts sound a little more removed from what we know of Paul from his epistles. That, I believe, is clearly because the other Pauline speeches in Acts were made in the context of mission work. But this one speech has an amazing number of parallels to the Pauline Epistles. This is a clear tribute to the fact that the author of Acts was a companion of Paul. Luke very aptly reflects the particular instruction that Paul would have for those who have come to Christ—those who need to be encouraged and strengthened in the faith. This speech reported in Acts 20 is wonderfully compelling.

These three points from Bruce concerning the speeches in Acts lead us to believe that Luke used much care—the same type of “performance” that he used in the narrative. G. H. R. Horsley is a scholar who studied the speeches a little more intensively in one certain way. He says that the speeches in Acts are often interrupted or abbreviated in the text themselves. He sees this as a hint in the text that there were certain frustrations, certain points of stopping the flow of the presentation. His argument, which I think has some merit, is that this may reflect Luke's attempt to communicate to us that he is not claiming to give us every single word that Peter and the others may have said, but rather he is trying to give us excerpts and clear characterizations of the speeches he is presenting. For instance, in Acts 2:40 we learn from Luke that Peter “spoke in other words.” This seems to mean that Peter continued to present the Gospel in other words. A summary statement is not given to us, but Peter said more in Pentecost than is actually reported. In Acts 4:1-3 we hear that while he was still speaking there was an interruption, and the same goes for Stephen's long speech in Acts 7:57. The interruption of Stephen's speech is, I think, quite understandable. Stephen has said, “Let us look at the history of our people. Our history has a salvation history and a history of stubbornness and let's find out who is on which side.” Of course, he does not say exactly that, but he traces the history of God's faithful calling of messengers to His people and the obvious implication is that this messenger, Stephen, is in that line of those who patiently continue to be used by God as callers. Then he also traces the people's persistent rejection and resistance to the call of God. At the end of this speech he accuses his listeners in a rather strong way and says, “You are in that tradition of rejecting God's call.” Thus I think the interruption of his speech is quite understandable. But still, there is a motif of interruption in Acts.

In Acts 10:44, the outpouring of the Spirit of God interrupts Peter's speech. In Acts 17:32, there may be another interruption because of indignation. When you talk to a stoic philosopher about bodily resurrection, you are on dangerous ground. For the stoics, the body is what they want to get out of. They do not want to be reincarnated or do anything in the body. They want to get out of the body into the bodiless, mental sphere. That is what they are striving for, so they do not talk about resurrection unless they have to. But Paul had to talk to them about the bodily resurrection because that is so crucial to salvation. If the stoics, who would like to be immaterial, will be physically raised into eternal life or death, then you do need to speak about the resurrection. In another instance, Felix interrupts Paul in Acts 24:22. So we see that there are historical reasons that are given for many of the interruptions, but they may also be literary devices to abbreviate. Luke may have been measuring how much speech material to put into a report that was already long. The paper supply was not as ample as we have it, nor was it the purpose of God to reveal Himself in endless reports. Each speech has its purpose and, as they achieve their purpose, Luke goes on. There are a few exceptions in Acts 20:36 and 13:42. In these instances there are no interruptions. But Horsley observes, from his study of how the speeches end in Acts, that there is a certain tendency toward abbreviation, and I would agree with that. I can see from various statements in Acts that we do not get exhaustive presentations of what the respective speakers said, but that is not the same as saying that they were not accurately reported, or that he does not report excerpts of what was actually said in those speeches. I am more and more amazed as to what we find in the pages of Acts when it comes to the speeches. They provide wonderful access to the message that moved the apostles in the early Church.

We need to look a little at this other area that was briefly addressed: whether the speeches really are distinct. When we look at the various speeches in Acts there is a certain similarity, particularly when we look at the speeches in Acts two, three, five, ten, and thirteen. The first four of those are Petrine speeches, while the fifth, in chapter 13, is Pauline. When you compare these five speeches, you will notice a rather strong similarity in the sequence—in the order of what is being said. First, you will find in each of these speeches an introduction. This ancient rhetorical skill was called *captatio benevolentiae*: capturing the benevolence of the audience. I have only achieved that once in my life; I am not that

eloquent. I was preaching in a small little church North of Aberdeen, Scotland. The church was on a very steep cliff on the coast. The village was built on this cliff and the church was built on one of the rocks. You could barely get to it, by car or anything else, navigating down between the houses into the church. The congregants of this church were wonderful, solid, tested, dedicated, and warm Christians. It was a delight to be with them. I had the privilege of preaching there and my *captatio benevolentiae*, as you may easily guess, was to make reference to the solid rock upon which they had built their church. There is such an introduction to the speech in Acts two, for instance, where Peter says, “Do not think we are drunk, it is only 9:00 in the morning.” People do not get drunk that early, at least not in Jerusalem. So there Paul establishes a connection with the audience.

Another very eloquent *captatio benevolentiae* is in Acts 17, where Paul says, “I see that you are in many ways very religious people.” That word, “religious people,” that Paul uses there could be slightly negative or it could be flattery; it is left up to the audience to decide how to take it. But the particular rhetorical skill used in this speech in Athens was, “Do not do it too much, do not do it too little.” It was not only what Paul said, but how much he said that gained his audience’s attention. If he had showered them too much with strong praise of their great heritage, they would not have listened. What follows this introduction is a description of Jesus; let me call it the “Jesus testimony.” This is a reference to who Jesus is and it is conspicuous that the resurrection of Jesus plays a very significant part. I hope we can later discuss the importance of this.

In most of these five speeches, there are references to the Old Testament. This is in part because all five of these speeches, with the exception of Peter’s speech to Cornelius and his household in chapter 10, are addressed to Jewish hearers. Thus the references to the Old Testament are quite strong and are particularly clear in chapters two, three, and thirteen: the first major Petrine speeches in Jerusalem and the speech of Paul in the Jewish synagogue of Pisidian Antioch.

The next part of the speeches that we will focus on is the disciples as witnesses. This is a section of amazing convergence. There are signs and wonders that God gives to these apostles. There is reference to the Old Testament, to fulfilled prophecy, and then these living men stand before the people and say, “I have seen Christ resurrected.” These lines are converging; the prophecies of the Old Testament are coming to life. It is no wonder that in Acts two we hear, “Their hearts were pierced. The Spirit of God worked mightily.” There may be specific references here, then more general references to the Old Testament. Then normally in the structure of these speeches there is one common conclusion, or last point: the call to repentance. The structure, therefore, can be summarized as a brief introduction; a reference to the life, work, and significance of Jesus; the disciples as witnesses; the Old Testament reference; and then a call to repentance.

Because of the similar structure in these speeches, many scholars, particularly of the German and French tradition, have argued that this is clearly Luke putting his own spin on the speeches. They would argue that this structure does not come from Peter or Paul, but rather from Luke. What I have tried to prepare you for by reading from Thucydides comes home now. You could say that these speeches are cast from one mold—not the mold of Peter or Paul, but the mold of Luke. It appears that Luke thought, “What could Peter have said in Jerusalem? What could Paul have said in Pisidian Antioch?” And with his skilled hand, he wrote a speech. The problem with this is that the structure we find in these speeches has a long heritage as the common structure of repentance speeches. Peter and Paul are not the first ones to use this format. John the Baptist used a modification of this format, and Jesus himself used a form of this structure.

The repentance speech patterns go back to Nehemiah, and normally begin with a reference to God's faithfulness and loyalty toward His people—a gentle, clear, and strong reminder of God's faithfulness: "Remember what God has done, how He has been with you, how He has preserved you and sent His prophets to you; remember!" When the people heard a speech beginning in this way, those who had a guilty conscience would say, "Oh no, this is starting like those speeches I have heard before." Then sometimes there is a reference to God's present deeds. Perhaps there is an event, a salvation-historical event, where God has again shown His faithfulness at that time. After these reminders a challenge would come to the people to turn from their rebellious ways, asking them, "Why are you resisting the purposes of God?" This would then lead into the call to repentance, where many of these speeches ended.

There is variation here. For example, the reference to the Old Testament may certainly be attached to this theme of God's faithfulness, but overall, the structure of these Old Testament repentance speeches is maintained in the repentance speeches in Acts. God sees to man's response, either rebellion or repentance, in both the New and Old Testaments. And when Peter and Paul preach about Jesus to the people, they are preaching about the latest deed of God. These speeches are not without context—Peter and Paul are not the first to talk about God's faithfulness. There is a long history of telling the people of God's mighty deeds; the coming of Jesus is the most recent, and also the most conspicuous and the most glorious, of those deeds at the time of Acts. Christ is the servant of YHWH. If you look at the speech in Acts three in particular, you see the care that Peter takes in saying, "I am not preaching Jesus to you out of nowhere; the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, has established His servant, the one whom you have killed, to be raised from the dead and to be a blessing for you." Thus you see that the entire Jesus testimony—the preaching about Jesus—is embedded in a longer thrust of God's great and mighty and faithful deeds to His people. This is just one last station of that. Far from this being a new-found pattern, it is actually an ancient pattern of repentance speech in which God, through His prophets, reminds His people of His faithfulness in His deeds and then calls them to return from their stubbornness and repent. That is exactly what is happening in these chapters in Acts, so that we can say that the very structure of the Petrine and Pauline speeches identify them as prophetic speech. There is a strong connection between the apostolic ministry of the preaching of Peter and Paul and the prophetic ministry of the Old Testament.

Therefore, I would gladly reject those who would claim that these speeches come from Luke's creativity rather than from a renewed prophetic call to repentance. One particular scholar whose argument I strongly disagree with is Ulrich Wilkins. He has written a major thesis on the structural similarity, thus arguing for Luke's creative authorship of these writings. Wilkins focuses on the similarities between these speeches. However, there are some definite particulars which he overlooks. One example is the Pauline speech in Acts 13, especially verses 30 and 31 where Paul says, "But God raised him from the dead, and for many days he was seen by those who had traveled with him from Galilee to Jerusalem. They are now his witnesses to our people." This is an interesting deviation by Paul from the Petrine speeches which have the tone of, "We are witnesses of Jesus' public ministry from the beginning." This concession of Paul's that he was not himself a witness to Jesus' resurrection fits in with 1 Corinthians 15 where Paul identifies his own role as a witness to the resurrection "as one abnormally born." He is the last one to encounter the risen Lord, but Paul makes a clear statement of concession by saying "I am one that is late born." Thus the humility of Paul that is communicated in his letters is also communicated in this speech in Pisidian Antioch. These little indicators of the distinctiveness of the speech writers are easily missed and easily overlooked.

One major point is to remember the setting of Acts. Because most of the speeches in Acts, by both Paul and Peter, are made to non-believers—both Jew and Gentile—you would expect that their preaching ministries would converge rather strongly. While they may disagree on table fellowship and on what we

should do with certain Jewish rites (in Galatians two), when they present the Gospel there is a basic unity. We see that in experience and we see that borne out in Acts. Thus there is both an Old Testament justification for the similarities in structure, and a missiological explanation for that similarity. Therefore there is no reason to disbelieve that, when we hear Paul in Pisidian Antioch, we are actually hearing Paul; and when we hear Peter as recorded by Luke, we are actually hearing Peter. Beyond that, we can state that the speech in Acts 10, addressed to Cornelius, has very interesting patterns that converge with the Gospel of Mark; based on this I would say that Acts 10 is the origin of the Gospel of Mark. That is where the Gospel genre was born: with the description of Jesus' life, starting from John the Baptist through Jesus' ministry, and ending in the testimony of Christ' death and resurrection.