

### Study of Philemon

### Bellevue Church of Christ – Fall 2013

#### Timothy

- Acts 16:1-5; 20:4-5; 2Co 1:19
- Not Co-Author, but Co-Sender. Likely included as a courtesy, because he was with Paul.
- Phil 1:1; 1Th 1:1; 2Th 1:1

#### Church in Your House

- ἐκκλησία (ekklēsia)
- Assembly of Christians
- Rom 16:5; 1Co 16:19; Col 4:15

#### Paul's Thanksgiving

- Compare to Col 1:3
- Rom 1:8; 1Co 1:4; Eph 1:16; Phil 1:3; 1Th 1:3
- Contrast > Gal 1:6-10

#### I. Appreciation and Praise for Philemon (1-7)

##### Philemon is a...

##### (A) Family man (1-3)

-Apphia: possibly his wife - Wives managed household slaves in Graeco-Roman society.

-Archippus: possibly his son

##### (B) Faithful man (4-5)

-Paul gives thanks for Philemon's faith

##### (C) Fruitful man (6-7)

-He befriended and encouraged both Paul and many other believers

#### Why does Paul not identify himself as an Apostle? (Rom, 1&2Co, Gal, Eph, Col, 1&2Ti, Titus)

<sup>1</sup>Paul, a **prisoner** for Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, To Philemon our beloved fellow worker

i.e. Christians

<sup>2</sup>and Apphia our sister and Archippus our fellow soldier, and the church in your house:

ἐκκλησία (ekklēsia), Rom 16:5; 1Co 16:19; Col

<sup>3</sup>Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. <- Common Greeting

Rom, I & II Cor, Gal, Eph, Col

<sup>4</sup>I thank my God always when I remember you in my prayers,

<sup>5</sup>because I hear of your love and of the faith that you have toward the Lord Jesus and for all the saints,

<sup>6</sup>and I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective for the full knowledge of every good thing that is in us for the sake of Christ.

<sup>7</sup>For I have derived much joy and comfort from your love, my brother, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you.

<sup>8</sup>Accordingly, though I am bold enough in Christ to command you to do what is required,

<sup>9</sup>yet for love's sake I prefer to appeal to you—I, Paul, an old man and now a prisoner also for Christ Jesus—

<sup>10</sup>I appeal to you for my child, Onesimus, whose father I became in my imprisonment.

<sup>11</sup>(Formerly he was useless to you, but now he is indeed useful to you and to me.)

<sup>12</sup>I am sending him back to you, sending my very heart.

<sup>13</sup>I would have been glad to keep him with me, in order that he might serve me on your behalf during my imprisonment for the gospel,

ἀγάπη (agapē)  
Matt 22:34-40

##### Love God:

- Exo 20:3-11
- Deut 6:5; 10:12-13; 11:1
- John 14:15, 21, 23-24

##### Love Neighbor:

- Exo 20:12-17
- Lev 19:18
- Rom 13:9,10
- Jam 2:8

#### II. Appeal and Plea for Onesimus (8-17)

##### (A) Forgive him for your own sake (8-15)

##### Onesimus

- Name meant "useful" or "profitable."
- A slave who accompanied Tychicus to Colossae (Col 4:9)
- Paul likely had led him to Christ in Rome (v.10)
- He is returning to Colossae to be reconciled to Philemon. (Along with this letter)

##### On Your Behalf

-Paul wants Philemon to know that Onesimus has helped him and the ministry during his time away. He words this as if Philemon sent Onesimus to help him.

-Paul makes his appeal as a prisoner for Christ (v.1)

-Not upon his authority as an apostle of Christ

##### Useless / Useful

- Play on Onesimus' name
- As a runaway slave, Philemon would have considered him useless
- Paul takes a risk in sending Onesimus back to Philemon. According to Roman law, an owner could severely punish—even execute—a runaway slave
- Col 4:1

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**Perhaps**

-Paul suspects this is the providence of God, but doesn't state it as fact.

-Rom 11:33-35

(B) **Forgive him for his sake** (1:16)

(C) **Forgive him for my sake** (1:17)

**III. Assurance and Pledge from Paul (18-25)**

(A) **Guarantee** (18-19a)

(B) **Gentle Reminder** (19b)

(C) **Guest room** (22)

(D) **Greetings** (23-25)

**Epaphras**

-A Gentile Believer from the church at Colossae who likely planted the church there (Col 1:7)

-He possibly became a believer through Paul's ministry in Ephesus and Asia (Acts 19:10)

**Aristarchus**

-A Jewish missionary companion from Thessalonica

-He was with Paul in...

\*Ephesus (Acts 19:29)

\*Jerusalem (Acts 20:4)

\*Rome (Acts 27:2)

<sup>14</sup>but I preferred to do nothing without your consent in order that your goodness might not be by compulsion but *of your own* accord.

<sup>15</sup>For this **perhaps** is why he was *parted from you for a while*, that you might *have him back forever*,

<sup>16</sup>no longer as a *bondservant* but more than a *beloved brother*—especially to me, but how much more *to you*, both in the flesh and in the Lord.

<sup>17</sup>So **if** you consider me your partner, receive him as you would receive me.

<sup>18</sup>If he has wronged you at all, or owes you anything, *charge that to my account*.

<sup>19</sup>**I, Paul, write this with my own hand: I will repay it**—to say nothing of your *owing me even your own self*.

<sup>20</sup>Yes, *brother*, I want some benefit from you in the Lord. *Refresh my heart in Christ*. <- (v. 7)

<sup>21</sup>**Confident of your obedience**, I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say.

<sup>22</sup>At the same time, *prepare a guest room for me*, for I am hoping that through your prayers I will be graciously given to you.

<sup>23</sup>**Epaphras**, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends greetings to you,

<sup>24</sup>and so do **Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke**, my fellow workers.

<sup>25</sup>The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

**Demas**

-Though he accompanied Paul at the time of this letter, Demas later deserts Paul and goes to Thessalonica (2Ti 4:10)

**Luke**

-Missionary Companion of Paul (Act 16:11; 20:6)

-The Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts are attributed to him.

**Bondservant (Slave)**

**Temporary**

**Beloved Brother (Christian)**

**Forever**

**No Longer as a Slave**

-Gal 3:28

-Col 3:11

Paul regularly wrote the final greeting in his own hand (Col 4:18; 2 Th 3:17)

**(John) Mark**

-His mother hosted a church in her home (Acts 12:12)

-He accompanied Paul and Barnabas during the 1st missionary journey (Acts 13:5), but later deserted them (Acts 13:13)

-When Barnabas wanted John Mark to accompany them on the 2nd missionary journey, Paul refused. Because of this disagreement, Paul and Barnabas parted company (Acts 15:37-39)

-Mark later joined Paul in his missionary work, and Paul commended him to others (2 Tim 4:11)

-The Gospel of Mark is attributed to John Mark

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**Why Does Paul NOT Identify Himself as an Apostle?**

**Romans 1:1 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God,

**1 Corinthians 1:1 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> Paul, called by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, and our brother Sosthenes,

**2 Corinthians 1:1 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, To the church of God that is at Corinth, with all the saints who are in the whole of Achaia:

**Galatians 1:1 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> Paul, an apostle— not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead—

**Ephesians 1:1 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the saints who are in Ephesus, and are faithful in Christ Jesus:

**Colossians 1:1 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,

**1 Timothy 1:1 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope,

**2 Timothy 1:1 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God according to the promise of the life that is in Christ Jesus,

**Titus 1:1 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the sake of the faith of God's elect and their knowledge of the truth, which accords with godliness,

**Timothy**

**Acts 16:1–5 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> Paul came also to Derbe and to Lystra. A disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek. <sup>2</sup> He was well spoken of by the brothers at Lystra and Iconium. <sup>3</sup> Paul wanted Timothy to accompany him, and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those places, for they all knew that his father was a Greek. <sup>4</sup> As they went on their way through the cities, they delivered to them for observance the decisions that had been reached by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem. <sup>5</sup> So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and they increased in numbers daily.

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**Acts 20:4–5 (ESV)**

<sup>4</sup> Sopater the Berean, son of Pyrrhus, accompanied him; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy; and the Asians, Tychicus and Trophimus.<sup>5</sup> These went on ahead and were waiting for us at Troas,

**2 Corinthians 1:19 (ESV)**

<sup>19</sup> For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, whom we proclaimed among you, Silvanus and Timothy and I, was not Yes and No, but in him it is always Yes.

**Philippians 1:1 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus,

To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the overseers and deacons:

**1 Thessalonians 1:1 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy,

To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

Grace to you and peace.

**2 Thessalonians 1:1 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy,

To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

**Church in Your House**

**1711** ἐκκλησία (*ekklēsia*), ας (*as*), ἡ (*hē*): n.fem.; ≡ DBLHebr 7736; Str 1577; TDNT 3.501—**1.** LN 11.32 **congregation**, an individual assembly of Christians (or OT believers Ac 7:38; Heb 2:12), usually with leaders who conform to a standard, and have worship practices, with members interacting, more or less local (Mt 18:17; 1Ti 3:5; 1Co 11:16–22; Jas 5:14; Rev 1:4; 1Pe 5:13 v.r.); **2.** LN 11.33 **church**, the totality of all congregations of Christians at all times (Mt 16:18); **3.** LN 11.78 **assembly**, gathering of persons for a purpose, even riotous (Ac 19:32, 39, 40)<sup>1</sup>

**Romans 16:5 (ESV)**

<sup>5</sup> Greet also the church in their house. Greet my beloved Epaenetus, who was the first convert to Christ in Asia.

**1 Corinthians 16:19 (ESV)**

<sup>19</sup> The churches of Asia send you greetings. Aquila and Prisca, together with the church in their house, send you hearty greetings in the Lord.

**Colossians 4:15 (ESV)**

<sup>15</sup> Give my greetings to the brothers at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house.

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<sup>1</sup> Swanson, J. (1997). *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)*. Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

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**Paul's Common Greeting**

**Romans 1:7 (ESV)**

<sup>7</sup>To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

**1 Corinthians 1:3 (ESV)**

<sup>3</sup>Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

**2 Corinthians 1:2 (ESV)**

<sup>2</sup>Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Galatians 1:3 (ESV)**

<sup>3</sup>Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ,

**Ephesians 1:2 (ESV)**

<sup>2</sup>Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Colossians 1:2 (ESV)**

<sup>2</sup>To the saints and faithful brothers in Christ at Colossae:  
Grace to you and peace from God our Father.

**Paul's Thanksgiving**

**Colossians 1:3–4 (ESV)**

<sup>3</sup>We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, <sup>4</sup>since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints,

**Romans 1:8 (ESV)**

<sup>8</sup>First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed in all the world.

**1 Corinthians 1:4 (ESV)**

<sup>4</sup>I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus,

**Ephesians 1:16 (ESV)**

<sup>16</sup>I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers,

**Philippians 1:3 (ESV)**

<sup>3</sup>I thank my God in all my remembrance of you,

**1 Thessalonians 1:3 (ESV)**

<sup>3</sup>remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

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**Galatians 1:6–10 (ESV)**

<sup>6</sup> I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— <sup>7</sup> not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. <sup>8</sup> But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. <sup>9</sup> As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed.

<sup>10</sup> For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.

**Love**

All of God's Commandments Deal with either Loving God or Loving Neighbor

**Matthew 22:34-40 (ESV)**

<sup>34</sup> But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. <sup>35</sup> And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. <sup>36</sup> "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" <sup>37</sup> **And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."** <sup>38</sup> This is the great and first commandment. <sup>39</sup> **And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.** <sup>40</sup> On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."

**27** ἀγάπη (*agapē*), ης (*ēs*), ἡ (*hē*): n.fem.; ≡ DBLHebr 173; Str 26; TDNT 1.21—1. LN 25.43  
(Christian) **love** (Ro 5:8); **2.** LN 23.28 **Love Feast**, the fellowship meal (Jude 12+)<sup>2</sup>

**ἀγάπη agapē**; from 25; *love, goodwill*:—beloved(1), love(1), love(112), love feasts(1), love's(1).<sup>3</sup>

Love God by Keeping Commandments

*Deuteronomy – 4 speeches by Moses prior to the children of Israel entering the land of Canaan (1<sup>st</sup> speech talked about the failures of the first generation)*

*Chapter 4 – Reminds them of the Statutes, Rules, Commandments (three ways of saying the same thing)*

*Chapter 5 – Repeats the 10 Commandments for the current generation*

*Chapter 6 – Love God with ALL your heart, ALL your soul, All your Might*

**Deuteronomy 6:4-9 (ESV)**

<sup>4</sup> "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. <sup>5</sup> **You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.** <sup>6</sup> And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. <sup>7</sup> You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk

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<sup>2</sup> Swanson, J. (1997). *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)*. Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

<sup>3</sup> Thomas, R. L. (1998). *New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek dictionaries : updated edition*. Anaheim: Foundation Publications, Inc.

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of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. <sup>8</sup>You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. <sup>9</sup>You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

*Chapter 10 – Loving God = doing what God commanded*

**Deuteronomy 10:12-16 (ESV)**

<sup>12</sup> "And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, **to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul,** <sup>13</sup> **and to keep the commandments and statutes of the Lord, which I am commanding you today for your good?** <sup>14</sup> Behold, to the Lord your God belong heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth with all that is in it. <sup>15</sup> Yet the Lord set his heart in love on your fathers and chose their offspring after them, you above all peoples, as you are this day. <sup>16</sup> Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no longer stubborn.

*Chapter 11 – Loving God = doing what God commanded*

**Deuteronomy 11:1 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> "You shall therefore love the Lord your God and keep his charge, his statutes, his rules, and his commandments always.

*Jesus also equated the keeping of commandments to loving God*

**John 14:15 (ESV)**

<sup>15</sup> "If you love me, you will keep my commandments.

**John 14:21 (ESV)**

<sup>21</sup> "Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him."

**John 14:23-24 (ESV)**

<sup>23</sup> Jesus answered him, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. <sup>24</sup> Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me.

*Someone says "I just want to Love God, I don't want all that Bible stuff." This is not loving God. We can divorce Loving God from doing.*

Love Your Neighbor as Yourself

**Leviticus 19:18 (ESV)**

<sup>18</sup> You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord.

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### Romans 13:9-10 (ESV)

<sup>9</sup>The commandments, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet," and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." <sup>10</sup> Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

### James 2:8 (ESV)

<sup>8</sup> If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing well.

### Onesimus

**ONESIMUS.** A runaway slave belonging to Philemon, an influential Christian at Colossae. He made the acquaintance of Paul, while the latter was a prisoner, either at Rome or Ephesus (according to the view which is taken of the provenance of Colossians). He was converted by the apostle (Phm. 10), and became a trustworthy and dear brother (Col. 4:9). His name, which means 'useful', was a common name for slaves, though not confined to them; and he lived up to it by making himself so helpful to Paul that the latter would have liked to have kept him to look after him as, Pauls feels, Philemon would have wished (Phm. 13). But the apostle felt constrained to do nothing without Philemon's willing consent; so he returned the slave to his former owner, with a covering note the canonical \*PHILEMON. In this the apostle plays on the slave's name by describing him as 'once so little use to you, but now useful indeed, both to you and me'; and hints, tactfully but clearly, that he expects Philemon to take Onesimus 'back for good, no longer as a slave, but as more than a slave—as a dear brother, very dear indeed to me and how much dearer to you, both as man and as Christian' (Phm. 15–16, NEB). Nevertheless, Paul admits that sending him back is like being deprived of a part of himself (Phm. 12).

The mention of Onesimus is one of the links which bind together Colossians and Philemon, and shows that they were sent from the same place at the same time. Some scholars believe that the Onesimus known to Ignatius and described by him in his Epistle to the Ephesians as 'a man of inexpressible love and your bishop' was none other than the runaway slave. This hypothesis, though not impossible, would seem improbable on chronological considerations. It is urged in its support that it supplies a reason why Philemon was preserved as a canonical book. On the other hand, its close connection with Colossians, and its importance for the light it throws on the Christian treatment of slaves, would seem to provide adequate reasons for its canonicity.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY.** The role of Onesimus in Paul's letter is considered by P. N. Harrison, *ATR* 32, 1950, pp. 268–294. His later career has been made the subject of an elaborate theory by E. J. Goodspeed, *INT*, 1937, pp. 109–124, and J. Knox, *Philemon among the Letters of Paul*<sup>2</sup>, 1959. For a criticism (with bibliography), see R. P. Martin, *Colossians and Philemon*, *NCB*, 1974, introduction.

R. V. G. TASKER.

R. P. MARTIN.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Tasker, R. V. G., & Martin, R. P. (1996). Onesimus. In (D. R. W. Wood, I. H. Marshall, A. R. Millard, J. I. Packer, & D. J. Wiseman, Eds.) *New Bible dictionary*. Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.



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**Colossians 4:9 (ESV)**

<sup>9</sup> and with him Onesimus, our faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They will tell you of everything that has taken place here.

**Useless / Useful**

**Colossians 4:1 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> Masters, treat your bondservants justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.

**Perhaps**

**Romans 11:33–35 (ESV)**

<sup>33</sup> Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!

<sup>34</sup> “For who has known the mind of the Lord,  
or who has been his counselor?”

<sup>35</sup> “Or who has given a gift to him  
that he might be repaid?”

**No Longer as a Slaves**

**Galatians 3:28 (ESV)**

<sup>28</sup> There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

**Colossians 3:11 (ESV)**

<sup>11</sup> Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all.

**Write This with My Own Hand**

**Colossians 4:18 (ESV)**

<sup>18</sup> I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you.

**2 Thessalonians 3:17 (ESV)**

<sup>17</sup> I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. This is the sign of genuineness in every letter of mine; it is the way I write.

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### Epaphras

**EPAPHRAS.** In Col. 1:7; 4:12; Phm. 23, one of Paul's friends and associates, called by him his 'fellow slave' and 'fellow prisoner'. The name is abbreviated from Epaphroditus, but Epaphras is probably not to be identified with the Epaphroditus of Phil. 2:25; 4:18 (as he is by T. R. Glover, *Paul of Tarsus*, 1925, p. 179). We gather that Epaphras evangelized the cities of the Lycus valley in Phrygia under Paul's direction during the latter's Ephesian ministry, and founded the churches of Colossae, Hierapolis and Laodicea. Later he visited Paul during his Roman captivity, and it was his news of conditions in the churches of the Lycus valley that moved Paul to write the Epistle to the Colossians.

BIBLIOGRAPHY. J. B. Lightfoot, *St Paul's Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 1879, pp. 29ff.

F. F. BRUCE.<sup>5</sup>

### **Colossians 1:7 (ESV)**

<sup>7</sup> just as you learned it from Epaphras our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf

### **Acts 19:10 (ESV)**

<sup>10</sup> This continued for two years, so that all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks.

### **(John) Mark**

**JOHN MARK** According to Church tradition, John Mark was the author of the Gospel of Mark. He is identified as the son of Mary (Acts 12:12), a cousin of Barnabas (Col 4:10) and a missionary companion of Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13:5).

His Hebrew name was John—Mark was his Greek or Roman name (Acts 12:12). In first century Palestine, it was common for a man to have two names: one Hebrew name, by which he was known to friends and relatives, and a Greek name, by which he was known in the business world (Barclay, *Introduction*, 151).

Mark likely was a common name in the first century and there may have been more than one prominent person in the early church who had this name. Consequently, it is difficult to know if the references to someone named Mark, outside the book of Acts, refer to the same person (1 Pet 5:13; Phlm 24; Col 4:10; 2 Tim 4:11; compare the John Mark in Acts 12:12, 25; 13:5, 13; 15:37, 39).

### **John Mark in the Book of Acts**

John Mark first appears in connection with his mother in the book of Acts (Acts 12:12). Normally, Mark would have been identified with his father, such as "Mark son of," but he is not acknowledged in this way. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume his father was dead when the New Testament was written. The book of Acts indicates many Christians met at his mother Mary's house for prayer (Acts 12:12). It is presumed that Mary was relatively well-off, for she had a house large enough for "many" to meet in prayer. Further, it had a courtyard, an outer gate, and a servant to open it.

When Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch from Jerusalem, John Mark was with them (Acts 12:25). Mark accompanied Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey to serve as

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<sup>5</sup> Bruce, F. F. (1996). Epaphras. In (D. R. W. Wood, I. H. Marshall, A. R. Millard, J. I. Packer, & D. J. Wiseman, Eds.) *New Bible dictionary*. Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

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their “helper” (Acts 13:5 NIV). The word translated as “helper” designates one who is a servant or attendant. It was used to describe an assistant to doctors, army officers, priests, and politicians (Stott, *The Message*, 219).

When Paul, Barnabas, and Mark arrived at Perga in Pamphylia, Mark returned to Jerusalem (Acts 13:13). Numerous suggestions have been proposed to explain Mark’s decision to leave Paul and Barnabas (see Stott, *The Message*, 220), but they are conjectures. Mark’s departure later caused Paul to refuse his participation on their next missionary endeavor (Acts 15:36–39). A disagreement ensued between Paul and Barnabas about the decision not to include Mark. As a result, Paul chose Silas to go with him and Mark accompanied his cousin Barnabas to Cyprus.

### **Mark in the Rest of the New Testament**

Mark’s name is mentioned four other times in the New Testament. In his first letter, Peter refers to an individual named Mark as “his son” (1 Pet 5:13). This designation probably does not indicate a family relationship. According to rabbinic tradition, Peter’s reference to Mark as “my son” may imply that Mark was Peter’s disciple (b. Sanh. 19b; see also Clement, *Strom.* 1.12–13).

Mark is referenced a few times by Paul in his letters—an indication that their relationship was reconciled. For example, in the book of Colossians, Mark is identified as a source of comfort to Paul (Col 4:10–11). This person is John Mark—he is referred to as the cousin of Barnabas (Col 4:10). Second Timothy also implies that Paul and Mark at some point overcame whatever personal obstacle kept them from collaborating previously. Paul asks Timothy to get Mark and bring him to Paul, because Mark was helpful to him in his ministry (2 Tim 4:11). An individual named Mark is also mentioned in the closing of Paul’s Letter to Philemon (24).

### **John Mark as the Author of the Gospel of Mark**

Church tradition identifies Mark as the author of the second Gospel of the New Testament. The Gospel of Mark is an anonymous composition. It was not signed and the contents do not state the identity of the author. The title was likely added at a time when a collection of the gospels was circulating among the various churches in the latter part of the first century, or the early part of the second century. It became necessary to distinguish between the gospels.

The earliest assertion of Mark’s authorship of the second Gospel comes from Papias, a bishop of Hierapolis, at the start of the second century (ca. AD 110–150). Papias’ remarks concerning the second gospel’s author come from his five-volume work entitled *Interpretation of the Lord’s Sayings*. Although this work is lost, *Sayings* is preserved by the fourth-century historian and bishop of Caesarea, Eusebius Pamphili (ca. AD 260–340) in his composition *Ecclesiastical History* (3.39.15). Papias’ comments in *Sayings* identify Mark as the author of a body of literature containing the words and deeds of Jesus. In addition, he also states that Mark received the information he scribed into his literary work from Peter’s teaching. It does seem that Mark was well acquainted with Peter (Acts 12:12–17).

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DAVID SEAL<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Seal, D. (2012). John Mark. In (J. D. Barry & L. Wentz, Eds.) *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*. Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

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**MARK (JOHN).** Traditional author of the second Gospel, apparently a Jew and a native of Jerusalem. His Heb. name was the OT *yōhānān*, ‘Yahweh has shown grace’ (cf. 2 Ki. 25:23, etc.), shortened in English to the familiar ‘John’. The reason for his adopted Lat. name of ‘Marcus’ is uncertain; sometimes Jewish families that had been captured as slaves in war, and later freed, took, as ‘freedmen’, the name of the Roman family to which they had been enslaved; but this is unlikely in his case, the more so as Marcus is a praenomen, not a family name. It was not uncommon for 1st-century Jews to bear a Gk. or Rom. name in addition to their Heb. name, ‘in religion’; see Acts 1:23 for another such ‘surname’, again Lat. and not Gk. in origin. The same phenomenon is common among Jews today. If his early nickname of *kolobodaktylos*, ‘stumpy-fingered’, is a genuine tradition (see the anti-Marcionite prologue to Mark, dating from the later 2nd century, which is the earliest evidence for it), then it may refer either to a physical peculiarity on the part of the author or to some strange stylistic features of the Gospel which have puzzled critics of all ages. It may, however, be only a late conjecture, due to the confusion of ‘Marcus’ with the Lat. adjective *mancus*, ‘maimed’.

Scripture gives some very clear evidence about his family, and there are also several conjectures of varying degrees of probability. His mother, named Mary, was related to Barnabas (Col. 4:10), the wealthy Levite from Cyprus, who was a landowner (Acts 4:36) and, whatever his country of origin, was a resident of Jerusalem in the days of the opening chapters of Acts. Mary herself appears to have been a woman of wealth and position, as well as a Christian; certainly her house was large enough to house a number of people, boasted at least one maidservant and was used as a meeting-place by the apostolic church even in time of persecution (Acts 12:12). It is significant that Peter, released from prison, has no doubt as to where he will find the Christians gathered. John Mark’s father is nowhere mentioned in Scripture, and, from the fact that the house of Acts 12:12 is called Mary’s, it has been inferred, probably correctly, that he was dead by that date, and Mary a widow. To John Mark himself there is no certain early reference, although the young man of Mk. 14:51, who saved himself by ignominious flight, is usually taken to be Mark. (Was he sleeping in a hut on the family property, guarding the fruit?) It would be neither safe nor customary for an author to mention his own name in such circumstances (cf. Jn. 21:24 for similar deliberate anonymity). Less likely, as partly dependent on the above tentative identification, is the theory that the Last Supper of Mk. 14 actually took place in John Mark’s house; the shadowy ‘goodman of the house’ of v. 14 would thus be John Mark’s father, still alive then, although dead before the date of Acts 12:12.

John Mark apparently remained at home until brought to Antioch by Barnabas and Paul, who were returning from a relief mission to Jerusalem (Acts 12:25). When the two departed to Cyprus on the first missionary journey some time later he accompanied them, as travelling companion and attendant on the two older men (Acts 13:5). When, however, the party reached Perga, on the mainland of Asia Minor, John Mark left them, and returned to Jerusalem (Acts 13:13), while Barnabas and Paul continued alone. Paul apparently regarded this as desertion, and thus, when Barnabas suggested Mark as a travelling companion for the second journey, he refused point-blank (Acts 15:38). With both men, the attitude towards John Mark was no whim, but a point of principle (cf. Acts 9:27 and 11:25 for the character of Barnabas), so a separation was inevitable, Barnabas taking Mark back to Cyprus with him, and Paul taking Silas instead.

After that, Mark is lost to view in Acts, but appears spasmodically in the Epistles. By the date of Col. 4:10 he is in the company of Paul the prisoner, presumably at Rome; Paul is apparently intending to send him on a mission to Colossae, so that he must have forgiven and forgotten the past. Phm. 24 also mentions him among the same apostolic group, which includes Luke. By the time of writing 2 Tim. 4:11 Mark is now away with Timothy, but there has been no rift;

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presumably this means that Paul had sent Mark on the mission to Asia Minor envisaged above, if Timothy was indeed in Ephesus.

In the Petrine correspondence there is one significant mention, in 1 Pet. 5:13, where the wording shows the 'paternal' relationship existing between the older and younger disciples. If, as is probable, 'Babylon' in this verse stands for 'Rome', then the tradition of the Roman origins of Mark's Gospel may well be true. The tradition that Mark later founded the church of Alexandria (Eusebius, *EH* 2. 16) lacks support. As 'Mark' was the commonest of all Roman names, some have argued that the biblical references concern more than one person. But, in such cases, the Bible differentiates (*e.g.* Jn. 14:22), so we may reject the objection. For Bibliography, see \*MARK, GOSPEL OF.

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### **Acts 12:12 (ESV)**

<sup>12</sup> When he realized this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose other name was Mark, where many were gathered together and were praying.

### **Acts 13:5 (ESV)**

<sup>5</sup> When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. And they had John to assist them.

### **Acts 13:13 (ESV)**

<sup>13</sup> Now Paul and his companions set sail from Paphos and came to Perga in Pamphylia. And John left them and returned to Jerusalem,

### **Acts 15:37–39 (ESV)**

<sup>37</sup> Now Barnabas wanted to take with them John called Mark. <sup>38</sup> But Paul thought best not to take with them one who had withdrawn from them in Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work. <sup>39</sup> And there arose a sharp disagreement, so that they separated from each other. Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus,

### **2 Timothy 4:11 (ESV)**

<sup>11</sup> Luke alone is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is very useful to me for ministry.

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<sup>7</sup> Cole, R. A. (1996). Mark (John). In (D. R. W. Wood, I. H. Marshall, A. R. Millard, J. I. Packer, & D. J. Wiseman, Eds.) *New Bible dictionary*. Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

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### Aristarchus

**ARISTARCHUS** (Ἀρίσταρχος, *Aristarchos*). A “Macedonian traveling companion of Paul” (Acts 19:29).

Aristarchus and Gaius were seized by the Ephesians during the riot of the silversmiths (Acts 19:29). He was a native of Thessalonica (Acts 20:4; 27:2).

Aristarchus accompanied Paul from Greece (Acts 20:4) and to Rome (Acts 27:2). In Col 4:10, Paul calls him his “fellow prisoner.” Paul mentions him again in the Letter to Philemon (Phlm 24). In both of these letters, Aristarchus sends greetings of his own.

According to tradition he was martyred during the persecution of Nero.<sup>8</sup>

**ARISTARCHUS.** All the references undoubtedly relate to the same person. The first, Acts 19:29, describes him as already Paul’s fellow-traveller when seized by the Ephesian mob (though it has been argued that this is proleptic). In Acts 20:4 he accompanies Paul to Jerusalem, probably as an official Thessalonian delegate with the collection; and in Acts 27:2 he is on Paul’s ship from Caesarea. W. M. Ramsay argued that he could have travelled only as Paul’s slave (*SPT*, pp. 315f.), though Lightfoot’s suggestion still deserves mention, that the manner of reference indicates that he was on his way home to Thessalonica. However (assuming a Roman origin for Colossians), he rejoined Paul, and became his ‘fellow prisoner of war’ (Col. 4:10), possibly alternating with Epaphras in voluntary imprisonment (*cf.* Col. 4:10–12 with Phm. 23–24). On the ‘Ephesian imprisonment’ theory he will have gone home after the riot and the writing of Colossians (*cf.* G. S. Duncan, *St Paul’s Ephesian Ministry*, 1929, pp. 196, 237ff.). His association with the collection has suggested an identification with the ‘brother’ of 2 Cor. 8:18 (Zahn, *INT*, 1, p. 320). The most natural reading of Col. 4:10–11 implies a Jewish origin.

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### **Acts 19:29 (ESV)**

<sup>29</sup> So the city was filled with the confusion, and they rushed together into the theater, dragging with them Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians who were Paul’s companions in travel.

### **Acts 20:4 (ESV)**

<sup>4</sup> Sopater the Berean, son of Pyrrhus, accompanied him; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy; and the Asians, Tychicus and Trophimus.

### **Acts 27:2 (ESV)**

<sup>2</sup> And embarking in a ship of Adramyttium, which was about to sail to the ports along the coast of Asia, we put to sea, accompanied by Aristarchus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica.

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<sup>8</sup> Hunter, S. F. (2012). Aristarchus. In (J. D. Barry & L. Wentz, Eds.) *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*. Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

<sup>9</sup> Walls, A. F. (1996). Aristarchus. In (D. R. W. Wood, I. H. Marshall, A. R. Millard, J. I. Packer, & D. J. Wiseman, Eds.) *New Bible dictionary*. Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

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### Demas

**Demas** (Δημᾶς, *Dēmas*). Companion who deserted Paul because of his love of worldly things (Col 4:14; 2 Tim 4:10; Phlm 24).<sup>10</sup>

**DEMAS.** A co-worker with Paul in the first imprisonment, sending greetings in Phm. 24 and Col. 4:14. In the latter he alone is mentioned without commendation. There follows the pathetic notice of his desertion in the second imprisonment (2 Tim. 4:10; Parry neatly renders 'left me in the lurch'). Paul's words, 'in love with (*agapēsas*) this present world', suggest that personal interest, not cowardice, took Demas to Thessalonica: perhaps he was a Thessalonian. The name is not uncommon; it may be a pet-form of Demetrius. John Chapman (*JTS* 5, 1904, pp. 364ff.) argued that Demas, restored, is the Demetrius of 3 Jn. 12; but this is as conjectural as is the ugly portrait of Demas in the *Acts of Paul and Thecla*.

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### **2 Timothy 4:10 (ESV)**

<sup>10</sup> For Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia.

### Luke

**LUKE** (Λουκᾶς, *Loukas*). Occasional traveling companion of Paul. The books of Luke and Acts are attributed to him.

### **Luke in the New Testament**

Luke appears three times in the New Testament:

- (Phlm 24)—Paul lists Luke among his coworkers along with Mark, Aristarchus, and Demas.
- (Col 4:14)—Paul sends a greeting to the Colossians from Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas. As the author states that Aristarchus, Mark, and Jesus who is called Justus are his only Jewish coworkers, Luke, Epaphras, and Demas are likely Gentiles (Carson, Moo, Morris, *Introduction*, 115).
- (2 Tim 4:11)—The author notes that Luke is the only coworker currently with him.

The New Testament documents provide little information concerning Luke. The canonical writings support four points about him:

1. Paul considered him a coworker.
2. He was a physician.
3. He was a Gentile.
4. He was occasionally one of Paul's traveling companions.

### **Authorship of Luke—Acts**

While Luke and Acts are anonymous compositions, by the end of the second century the Luke of the New Testament was presumed to be the author of these two works (Brown, *Introduction*, 267). This is still debated.

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<sup>10</sup> Halcomb, T. M. W. (2012). Demas. In (J. D. Barry & L. Wentz, Eds.) *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*. Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

<sup>11</sup> Walls, A. F. (1996). Demas. In (D. R. W. Wood, I. H. Marshall, A. R. Millard, J. I. Packer, & D. J. Wiseman, Eds.) *New Bible dictionary*. Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

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**“We” Sections of Acts.** The “we” sections of Acts are sometimes listed as evidence for Luke’s authorship of Acts and the Gospel of Luke. On four occasions in Acts, the author stops narrating events in the third person and uses the first person (16:10–17; 20:5–15; 21:1–18; 27:1–28:16). These sections may reflect the author’s eyewitness account of the action (Hengel, *Acts*, 116–17; Hemer, “First Person”; Guthrie, *Introduction*, 116–17). Assuming that the author was accompanying Paul during the time recounted in these sections, it is unlikely that he would have named himself in these passages of Acts. This excludes Silas, Timothy, Sopater, Aristarchus, Secundus, Gaius, Tychicus, and Trophimus as possible authors. As Acts ends with a “we” section, the author may have been present with Paul in Rome, and was probably a person who is named in the prison epistles (Philippians, Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon) but not Acts. This narrows the potential pool of authors to Mark, Jesus Justus, Epaphras, Demas, Epaphroditus, and Luke.

However, the “we” sections do not necessarily reflect the author’s eyewitness testimony or demand Lukan authorship. A theory of authorship based on the “we” sections only narrows the pool of potential authors; it is not conclusive. Those maintaining anonymity explain these passages in other ways:

- Robbins states that they are modeled after a Graeco-Roman literary device (e.g., Robbins, *We-Passages*). Porter, however, argues that “... no truly suitable literary parallels to these ‘(’)we’ passages have been found in all of ancient Greek literature” (Porter, *The “We” Passages*, 548–58; see also Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 18–20).
- Porter argues that the unknown author drew upon sources for the “we” passages, or that these sections were interpolated by a later redactor (see Porter, *The “We” Passages*, 571–72). The author admits to using information in his composition that has been handed down from previous generations of believers (Luke 1:1–2; see also Wedderburn, “We-Passages;” Barrett, “Acts,” 4).
- Pervo offers an analysis of the “we” sections that includes elements of both the literary and source theories (Pervo, *Acts*, 392–96; also Campbell, “Narrator”).

**Relationship between Acts and the Pauline Epistles.** The primary objection to Lukan authorship is based on apparent discrepancies between Acts and the Pauline epistles, particularly Galatians. If the author of Luke—Acts was a companion of Paul, historical and theological differences should not exist (Barrett, “Acts,” 4; Knox, “Acts;” Walker, “Acts;” Porter, “Companion?;” Porter, “When and How?;” Enslin, “Luke and Paul;” Enslin “Once Again;” Goulder, “Did Luke?”). Guthrie lists several inconsistencies (Guthrie, *Introduction*, 119–22; Brown, *Introduction*, 268, 324):

- Paul’s statement that no person played a role in his conversion, while in Acts, Ananias does just that.
- Paul’s accounts of his Law contrasts several stories in Acts, including Timothy’s circumcision and Paul’s vow.

### **Self-Depiction of the Author of Luke—Acts**

Luke and Acts provide several indications of how the author wished his reader(s) to view him.

**Eyewitness Testimony.** The author of Luke—Acts claims that the information in his writings was “handed over” or “delivered” to him by eyewitness (Luke 1:2). For much of the material in Luke—Acts, the author was not an eyewitness to the events described. However, the author portrays himself as an eyewitness to certain events in the “we” sections of Acts (Bruce, *Acts*, 18). In these places, the author may want the reader to believe that he was personally involved



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in the events recorded, which would add veracity to the accounts (Droge, “Anonymously?” 496). Hemer concludes that the level of detail contained in the “we” sections indicates that the author was, in fact, present with Paul on the apostle’s journeys (Hemer, “First Person”). Josephus emphasizes the importance of eyewitness evidence in ancient writings; in J.W. 1.3, he claims that his account of the Jewish war with Rome is based on his own experience in the revolt, and is therefore more accurate than other histories. The author’s claims to have relied on firsthand testimony were meant to add credibility to the writings.

**Luke the Physician and Medical Terminology in Luke—Acts.** In the late 19th century, Hobart proposed that Luke—Acts contained an unusually large amount of medical terminology when compared to the other gospels, especially in the stories of healing miracles (Hobart, *Medical Language*). He argued that this demonstrates the author of Luke—Acts was Luke, the beloved physician (Col 4:14). While this thesis found many adherents, Cadbury demonstrated that the majority of the terminology was also found in the Septuagint (LXX) and in the writings of Josephus. Cadbury concludes that the medical terminology could have been used by any educated author in the Graeco-Roman world (Cadbury, *Style*, 39–51; also Fitzmyer, *Luke 1–14*, 52).

### **Writing Style of the Author of Luke—Acts**

The author’s writing style reveals his desire to compose an orderly narrative that was convincing to the recipient (Luke 1:1–4; see Alexander, *Preface*). Additionally, the author’s reliance on the LXX demonstrates his indebtedness to the scriptural tradition of Hellenistic Judaism. The author of Luke—Acts composed historical works that he intended for his recipient(s) to understand as credible and persuasive accounts.

**Trustworthy, Orderly Narrative.** In the prologue to the Gospel (Luke 1:1–4), the author states that he relied on source material derived from earlier narratives of the Jesus story, as well as testimony from eyewitnesses and servants of the word. He states that he orders this source material in such a way that his account will verify what his intended recipient, Theophilus, had previously been taught (Luke 1:4; Conzelmann, *Acts*, 40). The author does not merely repeat his source material, but orders it accurately for his reader (Luke 1:3). The author’s assertions resemble those of Thucydides who states, “But as to the facts of the occurrences of the war, I have thought it my duty to give them, not as ascertained from any chance informant nor as seemed to me probable, but only after investigating with the greatest possible accuracy each detail, in the case both of the events in which I myself participated and of those regarding which I got my information from others” (*History of the Peloponnesian War*, 1.22.2–3).

There are two key indications that the author has rearranged his source material in the narrative. Luke—Acts follows a broadly geographic outline. The Gospel is structured around Jesus’ journey to Jerusalem: Jesus’ ministry begins in Galilee (Luke 3:1), moves toward Samaria (Luke 9:51; note the author’s omission of material from Mark 6:45–8:26 which tells of Jesus’ northward movement away from Jerusalem), and ends in Jerusalem (Luke 19:28). This pattern reverses itself in Acts: the Church begins in Jerusalem (Acts 1:6), moves to Judaea and Samaria (Acts 8:4), and finally to the ends of the earth (Acts 9:32; 28:17–31).

Additionally, there are numerous examples of repeated stories and motifs in the two works. This repetition points to the author’s creating a cohesive story, which gives the impression of continuity between Jesus and the early church (Acts 1:1; Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*). Instances of repetition include:

- The ascension (Luke 24:50–53; Acts 1:6–9).

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- The chief priests' opposition to Jesus and the early church is a consistent motif (Luke 9:22; 19:47; 22:2–4; 23:10; Acts 4:23; 9:14; 25:2).

The author's penchant for repeating stories and motifs points to his decision to recast the stories in order to draw parallels with earlier stories and build a consistent, cohesive narrative. For example, there are many parallels between Jesus', Peter's, and Paul's miraculous activity (see Mattill, "Jesus—Paul Parallels;" Moessner, "Parallels"). All three:

- cure paralytics (Luke 7:22; Acts 3:1–10; 14:8–20).
- perform exorcisms (Luke 4:31–37; Acts 5:14–16; 16:18).
- raise the dead (Luke 7:11–17; Acts 9:36–43; 20:7–12).

**Speeches in Acts.** Thucydides also sheds light on the author's use of speeches in Acts when he writes, "As to the speeches that were made by different men, either when they were about to being 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 under consideration, 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" (History of the Peloponnesian War, 1.22.1). The author of Acts seems to follow this same pattern, drawing upon his sources for this material and not claiming to have been present for the speeches. The speeches are thus compositions based on recollections of what the speakers said, not transcriptions.

**Dependence on the Septuagint (LXX).** The author of Luke—Acts may have desired to be seen as continuing the biblical story of Israel contained in the LXX. The author was likely well acquainted with the LXX and patterned his own writings after the historical narratives of the LXX:

- Between 80 and 90 percent of Luke's vocabulary is also found in the historical writings of the LXX (Fitzmyer, *Luke 1–14*, 113; Haenchen, *Acts*, 72).
- The author frequently "Hebraizes" his Greek due to dependence on the LXX (Fitzmyer, *Luke 1–14*, 113).
- He also includes a large number of Semitic phrases in the writing, especially introductory and infinitival formulae (see Fitzmyer, *Luke 1–14*, 113–25 for an extensive survey of this phenomenon).

### Theological Concerns

While the author of Luke—Acts narrated historical events, the subject matter of that history is inherently theological. Central themes embedded in the historical accounts in Luke—Acts reveal the author's theological concerns.

**Salvation.** Salvation is a main theme of Luke and Acts:

- Both God and Jesus are called "Savior" (Luke 1:47, 69; 2:11; Acts 5:31; 13:23).
- Jesus embodies salvation (Luke 2:30; 3:6; Acts 4:12; 28:28)
- Jesus makes salvation available (Luke 1:69, 77; 19:9).
- The message about Jesus frequently includes an offer of salvation (Acts 13:26, 47; 16:17).
- Salvation entails rescue from enemies (Luke 1:71) and forgiveness of sins (Luke 1:77; see Johnson, *Luke*, 23; Carson, Moo, Morris, *Introduction*, 128).

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- Salvation is available for all people (Acts 1:8).

**Worldwide Expansion of the Church.** The expansion of the Church is also a theme:

- The disciples will be His witnesses in Jerusalem, Judaea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8).
- Opposition to the expansion of the Church is met with prayer and results in the Church's continued growth (Acts 4:24; 7:59–8:1; 12:5; 16:25; 18:9–10).
- The primary means of expansion is the proclamation of the word of God and the good news of Jesus (Acts 2:1–41; 8:4; 10:34–48; 16:10; 28:30–31).
- This mission is empowered and guided by the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8; 2:4; 7:55; 8:15–17; 10:44; 11:15; 13:2; 15:28; 19:6; 20:22).

**Holy Spirit.** In Luke, the Holy Spirit descends on/fills people (Luke 1:15, 41, 67; 2:25–27; 3:22; 4:1; 11:13) in order to empower them for specific tasks (Luke 4:14, 18; 12:12; 24:49). This continues in Acts as the Holy Spirit guides and impels the mission of the Church (Acts 2:1–4; 4:28–31; 8:15–17, 29, 39; 10:19; 11:15; 13:2; 15:28; 16:6; 20:22). From Luke's perspective, the Holy Spirit is the source of power for individual believers and various churches.

**Kingdom of God.** In Luke, the kingdom is simultaneously the eternal kingdom of Christ (Luke 1:33; 22:30; 23:42) and the kingdom of God (Luke 9:27; 11:2; 12:31–32; 22:29). The messages of Jesus and the early church focus on the kingdom of God (Luke 4:43; 8:1, 10; 9:2, 11, 60; 16:16; Acts 1:3; 8:12; 19:8; 20:25; 28:23, 31).

- The kingdom does not consist of miracles (Luke 17:20–21), though they indicate its close proximity (Luke 10:9; 11:20).
- It belongs to the poor (Luke 6:20; 18:24–25).
- It also belongs to those who are like children (Luke 18:16–17).

### **The Role of Theophilus**

The author of Luke—Acts names Theophilus as the original recipient of the works (Luke 1:3; Acts 1:1). He is addressed as “most excellent,” and was likely a person of high social standing (see Acts 23:26; 24:3; 26:25). However, the name Theophilus was common in the Graeco-Roman period—the identification of this particular Theophilus is unknown.

Josephus may shed some light on the relationship between the author of Luke—Acts and Theophilus. Josephus dedicates his later writings to one “most excellent” Epaphroditus, a man who loved learning and was curious about the matters discussed in Josephus' latter works (Ant. 1.8; Life 430; Ag. 1.1; 2.1, 296). His Ant. 1.8–9 may indicate that Epaphroditus commissioned Josephus to write *Jewish Antiquities*, *Life*, and *Against Apion*. As the one who commissioned the works, Epaphroditus may have funded their production. Goodspeed, noting dedications similar to Luke 1:3 found in Cicero and Pliny the Younger, suggests Theophilus may have served as the publisher of Luke—Acts (Goodspeed, *Greek Notes*, 84). Theophilus may have funded the project, served as its publisher or both (Alexander, *Preface*, 188–200; more broadly Gold, *Literary Patronage*).

### **The Person of Luke in Early Christian Texts**

In the late second and early third centuries, Christian authors built up traditions about Luke. These traditions are based partly on inferences gleaned from information about Luke found in the New Testament and partly on the various authors' apologetic interests. There are five key texts which reflect these traditions. These texts have played a key role in ascribing authorship of

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Luke—Acts to the Luke mentioned in the New Testament (see Haenchen, *Acts*, 3–14; Barrett, *Acts 1–14*, 30–48).

**Muratorian Canon, lines 2–8.** The Muratorian Fragment is a copy of a canonical list that dates to circa AD 170–180 (Fitzmyer, *Luke 1–14*, 37). The text states, “(2) The third book of the Gospel is that according to Luke. (3) Luke, the well-known physician, after the ascension of Christ, (4–5) when Paul had taken with him as one zealous for the law, (6) composed it in his own name, according to [the general] belief. Yet he himself had not (7) seen the Lord in the flesh; and therefore, as he was able to ascertain events, (8) so indeed he begins to tell the story from the birth of John” (Metzger, *Das Muratorische Fragment*).

This text makes several claims about Luke:

- He composed his writing for Theophilus.
- He wrote the Gospel shortly after the ascension.
- The events recorded in Acts took place during the author’s lifetime.

**So-called “Anti-Marcionite Prologue”.** This text, dating to the late second century, states, “Indeed Luke was an Antiochene Syrian, a doctor by profession, a disciple of the apostles: later however he followed Paul until his martyrdom, serving the Lord blamelessly. He never had a wife, he never fathered children, and died at the age of eighty-four, full of the Holy Spirit, in Boetia. Therefore—although gospels had already been written—indeed by Matthew in Judaea but by Mark in Italy—moved by the Holy Spirit he wrote down this gospel in the parts of Achaia, signifying in the preface that the others were written before his, but also that it was of the greatest importance for him to expound with the greatest diligence the whole series of events in his narration for the Greek believers, so that they would not be led astray by the lure of Jewish fables, or, seduced by the fables of the heretics and stupid solicitations, fall away from the truth. And so at once at the start he took up the extremely necessary [story] from the birth of John, who is the beginning of the gospel, the forerunner of our Lord Jesus Christ, and was a companion in the perfecting of the people, likewise in the introducing of baptism and a companion in martyrdom. Of this disposition the prophet Malachi certainly makes mention. And indeed afterwards the same Luke wrote the Acts of the Apostles. Later the apostle John wrote the Apocalypse on the island of Patmos, and then the Gospel in Asia” (Pearse, “The ‘Anti-marcionite’ Prologue”; for critical edition see Regul, *Die Antimarcionitischen Evangelienprologe*, 15–34; see Haenchen, *Acts*, 10–11 for more information).

**Irenaeus’ *Adversus Haeresus*.** In the late second century, Irenaeus maintains that the faith passed down to his generation is contained in the four canonical gospels, one of which is by “Luke also, the companion of Paul ... (Adversus Haeresus, 3.1.1 in Roberts and Donaldson, eds., *Irenaeus*, 258–59). Furthermore, Irenaeus goes on to add that “Luke was inseparable from Paul, and his fellow-labourer in the gospel,” citing several of the “we-sections” of Acts as proof for this claim and concluding that “as Luke was present at all these occurrences, he carefully noted them down in writing, so that he cannot be convicted of falsehood or boastfulness ...” (Adversus Haeresus, 3.14.1 in Roberts and Donaldson, eds., *Irenaeus*, 316–17). Irenaeus was thus the first author to base a claim of Luke’s authorship of Luke—Acts on the “we-sections” noted above.

**Tertullian’s *Adversus Marcionem*.** Tertullian states, circa AD 207–208, “I lay it down to begin with that the documents of the gospel have the apostles for their authors, and that this task of promulgating the gospel was imposed upon them by our Lord himself. If they also have for their authors apostolic men, yet these stand not alone, but as companions of apostles or followers of

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apostles ... from among the apostles the faith is introduced to us by John and by Matthew, while from among apostolic men Luke and Mark give it renewal.... Now Luke was not an apostle but an apostolic man, not a master but a disciple, in any case less than his master, and assuredly even more of lesser account as being the follower of a later apostle, Paul, to be sure ..." (Adversus Marcionem, IV.2 in Evans, *Tertullian*, 262–63; for additional information see Fitzmyer, *Luke 1–14*, 39–40).

**Bodmer Papyrus (P75).** Papyrus Bodmer XIV/XV is a fragmentary copy of the Gospels dating to circa AD 175–225. On the leaf that contains the ending of the Gospel of Luke, a scribe has added the words "gospel according to Luke." This further illustrates Luke's association with the third Gospel in the early church.

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**LUKE.** Among the companions of Paul who send their greetings in his letter to Colossae there appears 'Luke (Gk. *Loukas*) the beloved physician' (Col. 4:14); the way in which he is described suggests that he had given medical care to Paul, no doubt during the latter's imprisonment. In Phm. 24, probably written at the same time, he is described as a fellow-worker of Paul, which suggests that his help in the work of the gospel was not confined to his medical skill. There is a third reference to him in what appears to have been one of Paul's last messages: 'Luke alone is with me' (2 Tim. 4:11), and this confirms the close link between the two men. He is generally thought to have been a Gentile, but E. E. Ellis (pp. 51–53) has argued that Col. 4:11 refers to a particular group within the wider circle of Jewish Christians, and that consequently Luke may have been a Jewish Christian of the Dispersion.

Irenaeus (c. AD 180) is the first person to refer clearly to Luke and to name him as the author of the third Gospel and Acts. The same tradition is found in the Muratorian Canon and the so-called anti-Marcionite Prologue to the Gospel of Luke. The last of these documents speaks of Luke as coming from Antioch in Syria, and as serving the Lord without the distractions of a wife or family until he died at the age of 84 in Boeotia; the earliness and reliability of this tradition are uncertain.

The tradition that Luke was the author of Lk. and Acts can probably be traced back to earlier in the 2nd century. The fact that Marcion, a fanatical follower of Paul's theology, chose Lk. as the one Gospel which he recognized, probably implies that he regarded it as the work of a companion of Paul. Acts contains a number of passages written in the 1st person plural which describe events from the point of view of a companion of Paul (Acts 16:10–17; 20:5–21:18; 27:1–28:16). The fact that the author of Acts made no attempt to rewrite these passages in the 3rd person is best explained by identifying him as their original author. Of the possible companions of Paul, known to us from his Epistles but not named in Acts, Luke stands out as the probable composer of Acts and hence of Lk. This identification is found in a variant reading of Acts 20:13 ('But I Luke, and those who were with me, went on board') which may go back to early in the 2nd century.

The argument from the internal evidence of Acts is strong. It is confirmed by the external evidence of 2nd-century tradition cited above, and especially by the fact that no other candidate for the authorship of Acts was ever suggested. The claim that the tradition rests on a deduction from the NT evidence and has no independent value is pure hypothesis. There is more force in the objection that the picture of the early church in Acts, and of Paul in particular, are not such as might be expected from a companion of Paul, but this objection can be answered (F. F. Bruce, *NBCR*, pp. 968–973).

The literary style of Lk. and Acts demonstrates that their author was a well-educated person with considerable gifts of expression. The traces of medical language and the interest in medical matters displayed in them are consistent with authorship by the 'beloved physician'. Luke's gifts as a historian have been recognized by many scholars who have viewed his work against its classical background and compared him favourably with the best of ancient historians.

Luke's admiration for Paul comes out clearly in the course of Acts. Through his close contact with him and with other Christian leaders, and as a consequence of his visits to Jerusalem and Caesarea (*cf.* Acts 21:17ff.), Luke had ample opportunities to gain first-hand knowledge about the life of Jesus and the history of the earliest Christian church. He could rightly claim in the prologue to his Gospel that he was well qualified for his task, having carefully and thoroughly investigated all the relevant facts, as they were handed down by responsible witnesses in the church (Lk. 1:1–4).

The picture which emerges is of a self-effacing man possessed of strong human sympathies who regarded himself as a servant of the Word. With his considerable literary, historical and

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theological gifts, he was well fitted to recount the story of the beginnings of Christianity in a new way, adapted to the needs of the second generation in the church.

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**Acts 16:11 (ESV)**

<sup>11</sup> So, setting sail from Troas, we made a direct voyage to Samothrace, and the following day to Neapolis,

**Acts 20:6 (ESV)**

<sup>6</sup> but we sailed away from Philippi after the days of Unleavened Bread, and in five days we came to them at Troas, where we stayed for seven days.

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<sup>13</sup> Marshall, I. H. (1996). Luke. In (D. R. W. Wood, A. R. Millard, J. I. Packer, & D. J. Wiseman, Eds.) *New Bible dictionary*. Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.