



CHAPTER TWO

THE AUTHORITY AND MISSION OF JESUS AS DELEGATED IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN: THE THEOLOGICAL, CANONICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND FOR READING AND UNDERSTANDING ACTS

2.1 Recap and Transition

Against the prevailing view that Acts should be connected first and foremost to Luke's earlier volume as a continuous narrative,¹ the canonical approach argues for respecting the church's ultimate canonical decisions and for discovering and clarifying the hermeneutical implications.² A.B. Robinson and Robert Wall draw attention to two prime examples of the hermeneutical implications of retaining the final form of the four-fold Gospel rather than joining Luke-Acts.³ They

¹"The combination of Luke-Acts is a familiar part of present-day scholarship, and the study of both works together is common, but it is necessary to be reminded that there is no strong evidence to suppose that the two works were issued or ever circulated together. There is no early manuscript of the New Testament which places Acts with Luke. The separation of the two was established at a primitive stage, and ran very deeply in the tradition." W.A. Strange, *The Problem of the Text of Acts*, 181.

²James Barr dissents sharply from the canonical approach. He sees the canon only as a late development without hermeneutical significance. For Barr the notion of the canon is thoroughly within the parameters of an historical-critical approach that understands Scripture in naturalistic terms as a purely human production; much more is this true of the canon. For him, the canon is not an absolute standard, nor does it provide a comprehensive norm. It appears to me that his attempt to maintain any sense of biblical authority is a struggle for him and is the most muddled part of his discussion on canon. This is because of his underlying presuppositions. Barr has discussed the canon in a series of works: *The Bible in the Modern World* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973); *Holy Scripture: Canon, Authority, Criticism* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1983); *The Scope and Authority of the Bible* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1980).

³For an introduction to the canonical approach to Acts see Anthony B. Robinson and Robert Wall, *Called to Be Church: The Book of Acts for a New Day* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000).



propose that the Third Gospel does not adequately prepare for the leading role Peter performs in the opening chapters of Acts. The Gospel of John narrates Peter's restoration at the close of his gospel (21:15-17) and thus offers to the reader a better historical, theological transition to his chief role in the beginning chapters of Acts. They further argue that Jesus' teaching in the Fourth Gospel about the post-Easter role of the Holy Spirit (14-16) best facilitates an introduction to and understanding of the Spirit's role as the primary character in the book of Acts.⁴ These examples "suggest the important role that John's Gospel performs in preparing the reader for the story of Acts. Moreover, what it means to be a 'witness' of the risen Jesus (Acts 1:8) is now more fully understood by the reader in the context of John's Gospel (John 15:26-27; cf. Luke 24:48)."⁵

Thus, the canonical approach does not regard the strategic role of Acts within the final form of the biblical canon to be an accidental consequence of an arbitrary decision. To read Acts *only* as a continuation of his first volume and to view the insertion of John's Gospel as an interruption and as an ecclesiastical mistake in the formation of the final form of the canon may be too quickly dismissive of the possible theological discernment of the early Fathers.⁶ I am proposing that the reading of Acts in the light of its final canonical position and order may yield

⁴I will explore in detail these hermeneutical observations in the following two chapters.

⁵*Ibid.*, 270.

⁶"Independent of any theory of a unified Luke-Acts, then, the ancient church's reception of Acts as divinely inspired Scripture followed an independent path into the New Testament canon for different reasons and with a different role to perform from that of Luke's Gospel or that of the four-fold Gospel within which it circulated and was canonized. Those few canon lists, mostly in the East, that begin the fourfold Gospel with John's Gospel and conclude it with Luke's Gospel, and then place Acts adjacent to Luke's Gospel, perceive a 'canon logic' that is incidental to a critically constructed Luke-Acts. The apparent theological motive of these lists was to grant priority to John's Gospel for identifying Jesus as the incarnate Logos. To make the case for an intentional Luke-Acts and to review the reception of Acts on this basis as phenomenon of the canonical process is an anachronism of contemporary biblical scholarship. From the perspective of the biblical canon, there is simply no Luke-Acts: Acts is a stand-alone book with its own role to perform in shaping Christian discipleship." Robinson and Wall, *op. cit.*, 267f. The authors flesh out the implications of the canonical position of Acts in chapter 15, "Concluding Reflections."



significant insight into the logic of God for the continuation of the kingdom of God following the ascension. The words and actions of his Son, as particularly testified to in the Fourth Gospel, may be highly insightful for the theology of the opening scenes of Acts. In his recent work, Martin W. Mittlestadt makes a call for the exploration of the possible benefits of bringing Johannine theology into the canonical conversation with Acts:

Furthermore, given the scholarly dominance on questions surrounding the relationship between the likes of Lukan and Pauline hermeneutics and pneumatologies, whither the Fourth Gospel? How might scholars so focused on the relationship between Lukan and Pauline unity and diversity enlarge the conversation by bringing Johannine theology and practice into the mix?⁷

Speaking from a rhetorical criticism perspective, Johannes Vorster contends that the “main constituent of the rhetorical situation can be called the ‘problematization,’” defined as “the act by means of which a rhetorical situation is called into existence.”⁸ The proposal explored in the following chapters is that the ‘problem’ that calls forth the rhetoric of the *divine author* and, derivatively, the human author of Acts is the ‘problem’ created by the event of the ascension.⁹ How will the mission to establish the kingdom of God inaugurated by Jesus continue post-ascension and in what form? It is noteworthy that this problem is anticipated by and highlighted in the only recorded question asked by the disciples during the forty days of Jesus’ post-resurrection instruction on the kingdom of God: Οἱ μὲν οὖν

⁷*Reading Luke-Acts in the Pentecostal Tradition* (Cleveland, Tennessee: CPT Press, 2010), 160. The present work was in its closing stages when I gained access to this work. Hopefully I have made a good start in the following chapters in addressing his inquiry.

⁸*Focusing on the Message: New Testament Hermeneutics, Exegesis and Methods*, ed. Andrie du Toit (Pretoria: Protea, 2009), 543.

⁹Robinson and Wall highlight this point: “Not only does the story of Acts function as substantial proof of Jesus’ resurrection as “lord and Messiah” (2:36), without which there would be no story to tell; it also issues a normative response to the theological crisis for Christian discipleship occasioned by his bodily absence (cf. John 13:31-14:31). That is, those disciples who follow after the exalted Lord are to continue in the power of the Holy Spirit to do and say what Jesus began (cf. Acts 1:1-2).” *Called to Be Church*, 270.



συνελθόντες ἡρώτων αὐτὸν λέγοντες· κύριε, εἰ ἐν τῷ χρόνῳ τούτῳ ἄποκαθιστάνεις τὴν βασιλείαν τῷ Ἰσραήλ; (1:6). From a canonical point of view it is proposed that among the four gospels the “*problem* of the ascension” was most anticipated and most intentionally, directly and comprehensively addressed by Jesus in the second half of the Fourth Gospel. Evidence from the Gospel of John for this proposal will be expounded in the present chapter. Chapter three will assess whether Jesus’ anticipation of and pre-planned response to the “problem” of the ascension is actualized in the opening scenes of Acts. In the final chapter the “problem” created by the ascension as to the extension and continuation of the mission of Jesus in Acts will be viewed and addressed from the broader canonical perspective of the comprehensive four-fold Gospel testimony. In that chapter I will attempt to argue in detail that the reader of Acts who has comprehensively read the four-fold Gospel will readily perceive the striking resemblance of Jesus’ mission, gospel and the concurrent conflict and controversy he provoked to that which characterizes the church’s life and ministry in the narrative of Acts. I will argue in the final chapter from a broader canonical approach that the tri-fold Old Testament missional roles of prophet, priest and king, which Jesus fulfills as the anointed servant (μεσσίας) in the Gospels, continues to be the theology which drives the author’s literary choices in the narration of the history of the church in Acts. The church’s continuation of Jesus’ tri-fold missional roles in Acts (περὶ πάντων... ὧν ἤρξατο ὁ Ἰησοῦς ποιεῖν τε καὶ διδάσκειν) yields a second primary plot line that permeates the historical narrative of Acts: persecution. It will be argued that these two core elements of theology endemic to canonical history permeate and control the contrapuntal plot movements of the history and literary art of Luke in Acts. This is evident from the beginning of the church’s exercise of authority and tri-fold ministry in the name of Jesus in healing the lame man in Acts 3. What follows in Acts 4 is the first recorded persecution of the church. The church’s response was **to frame their experience in canonical perspective**, understanding that persecution is a primary theological theme woven throughout the history recorded in the canon (Acts 4:23-30). The church’s continuation of Jesus’ tri-fold missional roles leads to the ongoing



fulfillment in Acts of Jesus' words: “μνημονεύετε τοῦ λόγου οὗ ἐγὼ εἶπον ὑμῖν· οὐκ ἔστιν δοῦλος μείζων τοῦ κυρίου αὐτοῦ. εἰ ἐμὲ ἐδίωξαν, καὶ ὑμᾶς διώξουσιν” (John 15:20).

2.2 Introduction

The key problem in religious authority is to find the central principle of authority and the pattern through which it expresses itself concretely and practically. Most treaties on religious authority assert that God is the final authority in religion, but this bare assertion does not make its way. Unless the assertion is expressed in a more concrete fashion it becomes mere platitude. A principle of religious authority, along with its pattern designed for its practical and concrete expression and execution, should incorporate all the necessary elements associated with such a complex notion as religious authority.¹⁰

The primary concern of this chapter will be the challenge posed in the final two statements in the above quotation, as related to the Gospel of John and the book of Acts.¹¹ Particular interest will be in the delegation or extension of the

¹⁰Bernard Ramm, *The Pattern of Religious Authority* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 18. Ramm continues, “The authority of God, of Jesus Christ, of sacred Scripture, and of truth must be properly related, as well as proper regard given for human personality and freedom. The result will be a mosaic of authority, with the central piece being the principle of authority. Properly understood, one could even speak of a chain of authority with the principle of authority being the first and most important link.” The intertwining of multiple, closely related concepts is evident here, making the effort to isolate and explicate two or three strands of a multi-stranded cable of authority, revelation, and mission a formidable task.

¹¹Some might object to a “John-Acts connection,” claiming that the literary-historical connection should be restricted to Luke-Acts. But this is to not take seriously what Vern Poythress labels ‘the principle of unified divine authorship’: “Many commentators in the classical historical-critical tradition, by contrast, refuse in principle to let the New Testament cast further light on the implications of the verses [in this case OT verses], because they do not allow the principle of unified divine authorship to exercise an influence on interpretation.” [“Divine Meaning of Scripture,” *WTJ* 48 [1986]: 2630.] Acknowledgment of the unifying authorship of Scripture by God warrants the assumption that there is consistent theo-logic interconnecting the individual books of Scripture. Thus, a fundamental hermeneutical assumption informing the present study is that in a significant way the theology of John, specifically chapters 13ff., decisively informs the theo-logic of the sovereign God who is Lord of the events of the history (specifically church history) recorded by Luke in Acts.



authority and mission of Jesus as described in the second central section¹² of the Fourth Gospel, 13:1 – 20:31, the Book of Glory.¹³ The Son's agency/mission will be examined in this section of the Fourth Gospel as ground work for the central inquiry—the extension of the Son's authority and agency/mission in the opening narrative discourses of Acts. I will argue in the following chapters that the challenge of delegating authority to others by Jesus becomes a central plot issue in the opening sections of Acts (e.g. 4:7).

2.3 Part I: The Son's Agency/Mission and Its Relationship to the Apostles and the Holy Spirit in the Gospel of John: Establishing the Historical Redemptive Foundations to Acts Chapters One and Two.

2.3.1 Introduction

The Son's agency/mission has been the subject of a multitude of studies.¹⁴ Perhaps the most thorough treatment is the recent work by Andreas Köstenberger.¹⁵ This excellent study fully develops the various facets of the mission of the Son. The present monograph accepts and seeks to build upon the important work done in the major portion of his study, but would differ from his work in reference to the extension of the Son's agency. Köstenberger presents the extension of the agency/mission of Jesus as primarily accomplished through the

¹²“Interpreters generally agree that 13:1 marks the most significant transition in the Gospel, introducing not only the scene of the footwashing but the entire second half of the Gospel.” R. A. Culpepper, “The Johannine *Hypodeigma*,” *Semeia* 53 (1991): 133-52.

¹³D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 103.

¹⁴The bibliography gives a number of important studies on the topic.

¹⁵*The Missions of Jesus & the Disciples According to the Fourth Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998).



disciples, and then secondarily through the Spirit.¹⁶ In contrasting his work with that of McPolin (1969), he states that “it may be better still to subordinate the missions of John and of the Spirit to the missions of Jesus and of the disciples.”¹⁷ Thus, while acknowledging the work and mission of the Holy Spirit, his study makes few references to the Spirit’s involvement in the missions of Jesus and the disciples.¹⁸ It is the thesis of the present chapter that the mission and authority of the Son is extended through the cooperative (synergistic) work of both the Apostles and the Holy Spirit, while respecting that there is a salvation-historical order that is important to note in Acts.¹⁹ This point, well argued for by Hermann Ridderbos, is what I intend to elaborate in this chapter, by demonstrating the historical and theological connection of the Gospel of John to the opening sections of the book of Acts.

That ambivalent character of the New Testament witness finally enables us to understand in what sense it lays claim on our faith. Its claim is not made solely in a secular sense, whereby everything would depend on the personal trustworthiness of the eyewitnesses, a trustworthiness that could only be established on historical grounds. Rather, its claim is made because the Holy Spirit himself bears witness in and by the words of the apostles, so that those who deny the trustworthiness of that witness oppose the Holy Spirit. It is not simply the case that the Spirit sets His seal on the trustworthiness of historical information, so that those who accept the factuality of the content of

¹⁶Ibid., 320.

¹⁷Ibid., 8.

¹⁸While Köstenberger does outstanding work on the mission of Jesus, I think that the implications for present missions work would be more fully served by recognizing the importance of acknowledging the *equal* importance and involvement of the agency of the Spirit in conjunction with that of the disciples in the extension of Jesus’ mission.

¹⁹In chapter four I will argue that there is an important order of events that is theologically-historically established for the Church. That order is Ascension-Apostles reconstituted-the Spirit sent, and not Ascension-the Spirit sent-the Apostles reconstituted. Essentially I will argue that in the ordering of events it is the priority of the Word that is set for the Church. If anything comes to pass that proposes to be of the Spirit of Christ, (e.g., manifestations that cause the confusion on the day of Pentecost) it must thenceforth be judged by the testimony of the Apostles, which eventually becomes written in the New Testament. All ‘Spirit manifestation’ must be judged by the Word.



this witness satisfy its claim to faith. Rather, *New Testament witness is fully the witness of the Spirit only because the Spirit himself testifies through this word and convinces men that this word of testimony is the word of life (John 16:8). For that reason, one cannot separate the two components that give the New Testament witness its specific character without destroying the witness itself.* One cannot abstract the witness, as though it were simply a report of facts, from its call to put trust in these facts as redemptive facts.²⁰

That the two primary delegated, joint witnesses in the extension of Jesus' mission and authority are promised and bound together in the Fourth Gospel (especially in 13:1 – 20:31, the Book of Glory) and actualized in the book of Acts is what I will attempt to establish in this chapter. I am proposing the thesis that true apostolic succession is from Jesus to the joint witness of the Apostles and the Holy Spirit, and that witness being inscripturated in the New Testament. I will argue that the church in Acts can only carry on the mission of Jesus as it draws upon and is guided by the authoritative joint witnesses. Without submission to that delegated authority actualized in Acts, the church has no authority and mission.

As a foundation to the main purpose of this chapter, Part I will be an initial exploration into the inter-relationship of the concepts of authority, revelation, and mission in the Fourth Gospel.²¹ First, the three aspects will be examined together. Second, the triad will be examined in dyads: (1) authority and revelation, (2) revelation and mission, and (3) authority and mission, in an attempt to better

²⁰Hermann Ridderbos, *Redemptive History and the New Testament Scriptures* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1963), 67. Italics mine.

²¹In 1953 C. H. Dodd cleverly described the Fourth Gospel as a musical fugue: "A theme is introduced and developed up to a point; then a second theme is introduced and the two are interwoven; then a third and so on. A theme may be dropped, and later resumed and differently combined, in all manner of harmonious variations." *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: University Press, 1953), 383.



understand the various movements in the Johannine theological symphony.²² Part I will close with a brief examination of Jesus as the “primary apostle” of the Father.

Building upon this foundation, Part II of the chapter will develop and argue the central thesis stated above. Part III will then demonstrate the John-Acts connection by exploring the historical realization of the thesis in the opening sections of the book of Acts.

2.3.2 Authority, Revelation and Mission: Theological Correlates in the Gospel of John—A Prolepsis to the Book of Acts

A key passage where the interrelationship of the three concepts of authority, revelation and mission is clearly seen in the Fourth Gospel is in “the Lord’s Prayer” in chapter seventeen.

1 Ταῦτα ἐλάλησεν Ἰησοῦς καὶ ἐπάρας τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν εἶπεν· πάτερ, ἐλήλυθεν ἡ ὥρα· δόξασόν σου τὸν υἱόν, ἵνα ὁ υἱὸς δοξάσῃ σέ, **2** καθὼς ἔδωκας αὐτῷ ἐξουσίαν πάσης σαρκός, ἵνα πᾶν ὃ δέδωκας αὐτῷ δώσῃ αὐτοῖς ζωὴν αἰώνιον. **3** αὕτη δέ ἐστιν ἡ αἰώνιος ζωὴ ἵνα γινώσκωσιν σὲ τὸν μόνον ἀληθινὸν θεὸν καὶ ὃν ἀπέστειλας Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν. **4** ἐγὼ σε ἐδόξασα ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς τὸ ἔργον τελειώσας ὃ δέδωκάς μοι ἵνα ποιήσω·

1 After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: “Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. 2 For you **granted him authority over all people** that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. 3 Now this is eternal life: **that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.** 4 I have brought you glory on earth **by completing the work you gave me to do.**”²³

²²D. A. Carson, *The Farewell Discourse and Final Prayer of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980), 174.

²³Scripture quotations through this monograph are from the *New International Version* (East Brunswick, New Jersey: International Bible Society, 1984).



(1) The Father has granted *authority* to the Son;²⁴ (2) that authority is exercised in the mode of *making known* (revealing) the Father;²⁵ (3) and in the ultimate mission of glorifying the Father by speaking the words of the Father *and by completing the works* the Father assigned to him (the penultimate mission).²⁶ The grand goal or purpose of the authorization, revelation and mission of Jesus is to bring eternal life (John 10:10; 17:2; 20:31; 1 John 4:9).²⁷

I will argue in the following chapters that the three issues of authority, revelation and mission in the Gospels will reappear in narrative form in Acts, but not necessarily in the same explicit terminology. Authority clash or power struggle is *the* core issue in multiple narrative plots, both in the Gospels and in Acts. A clear example in Acts is when the Jewish authorities question the Apostles, “By what power or by what name did you do this?” (4:7). Jesus warned his disciples, saying, “If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also” (John 15:20). The exclusive

²⁴Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 555. “Rather, v. 2b refers to the Father’s gift, in eternity past, of authority over all humanity, on the basis of the Son’s prospective obedient humiliation, death, resurrection and exaltation. It is nothing less than the redemptive plan of God, for the second part of the verse makes the purpose of this grant clear: it is that the Son might give eternal life to those the Father has given him.”

²⁵*Ibid.*, 556. “Eternal life turns on nothing more and nothing less than knowledge of the true God. Eternal life is not so much everlasting life as personal knowledge of the Everlasting One...But because this one true God has supremely revealed himself in the person of his Son (1:18), knowledge of God cannot be divorced from knowledge of Jesus Christ. Indeed, knowledge of Jesus Christ, whom God has sent, is the ultimate access to knowledge of God (cf. 14:7; 20:31; especially Mt. 11:27).”

²⁶*Ibid.* 557. “Once that is seen, it makes best sense if v. 4 includes all the work by which Jesus brings glory to his Father, and that includes his own death, resurrection and exaltation (cf. 4:34; 5:36; 19:30).”

²⁷See R. E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 2 vols. (New York: Doubleday, 1966, 1970), Appendix I, 505-508. Also Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 663. “But such faith is not an end in itself. It is directed toward the goal of personal, eschatological salvation: that by believing you may have life in his name. That is still the purpose of this book today, and at the heart of the Christian mission (v. 21).” Also J. McPolin, “Mission in the Fourth Gospel,” *Irish Theological Quarterly* 36 (1969): 118. “The object of Jesus’ mission, then, is described in various ways- to confer life, to reveal his Father as the light and the truth, to accomplish his work, to do his Father’s will. But from various texts it emerges that the primary purpose, to which all others are subordinated, is to confer life.”



and authoritative claims of both Jesus and his disciples received harsh resistance as they faithfully carried out their divine mission. This is the important interconnection of these three themes. As I will explore in particular in the opening sections of Acts and the following narrative discourses, these topics are at the heart of the history and theology, and drive the literary artistry of Luke in the narratives. Through narrative conventions Luke conveys the theo-logic that is at work in the historical events.

2.3.2.1 Authority and Revelation

Foundational to Biblical authority is the scriptural correlation of authority and revelation. In the Old Testament, Exodus 3:1ff is a definitive text for this concept. Moses claimed that God revealed himself to him and gave him authority to challenge the highest authority in the land. How, then, does God express His authority? It is most fundamentally by divine self-revelation.

Objects in creation convey their properties to scientists in a number of ways—through the five senses and technological extensions of those senses, using means and instrument appropriate to the nature of the object. But in theology the knowledge of God, the uncreated, invisible object, necessarily is conveyed to the subject of theology by revelation (Rom 1:20; Col 1:15; 1 Tim 1:17) initiated by God.²⁸ Otherwise, knowledge of God is unattainable. Revelation is the scientific data by which the theological object conveys knowledge. P. T. Forsyth states:

In religion the fundamental movement of knowledge is in the reverse direction from that of science. In science we move to the object of

²⁸Ramm, *Patterns of Authority*, p.15f. “Authority is justifiable in the pursuit of knowledge. Authority in knowledge is the authority of the object investigated. Authority in the empirical sciences means that the investigator does not dictate to nature, but lets nature speak to him. It means that theories await the evidence, not evidence the theories. The freedom demanded in science is not freedom from evidence but freedom to determine what the evidence is; it is not freedom for freedom’s sake, but freedom for truth’s sake. Once truth is known, it wears its imperial crown and all should gladly submit to its sovereignty. Knowledge is gained only as there is submission to the authority of the object investigated. For the laws and the objects have the right to compel obedience and demand compliance.”



knowledge, in religion it moves to us. Religion is only possible by Revelation.²⁹

Thus, revelation is the key to religious authority.

For John, Christ is the supreme and primary agent of the revelation of God. This is expressed in several ways in the Fourth Gospel: principally in terms of the *logos* made flesh (1:14), the signs and works, and the “I am” sayings, all recognized as important elements in John’s revelatory theological vocabulary.³⁰ The primary way in which revelation is expressed is through the “sending” or “coming” of the Son: The transcendent God relates to the world through Christ as the “one sent” or “the one who comes from above.” These terms dominate the first half of the Fourth Gospel. Haenchen highlights this relationship between “sending” and the Johannine doctrine of revelation.³¹ He maintains there is only one possible way to gain knowledge of the invisible Father: when the Father himself sends someone with the knowledge. An opening premise of the Fourth Gospel is that Jesus is the emissary sent to reveal the Father and the things above (John 1:18 - No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father’s side, he has made him known.). He stands for the Father in the world and is the visible expression of the invisible Father (cf. Col. 1:15). In Jesus, as the one sent, the world hears God speaking and sees God working. In that the Son is sent by the Father, he is the authorized, authoritative revelation of the Father.

²⁹*The Principle of Authority*, 105f. The way that Forsyth constructs his statement implies that theology is not scientific. I would hold that theology is scientific, and that the science cannot *a priori* rule out the possibility of revelation as scientifically valid, when dealing with the unique nature of the object, the Creator, as opposed to scientific investigation of things created. This divine object is beyond scientific discovery, as initiated and controlled by His created beings, unless He wills to reveal Himself.

³⁰H. Schneider, “‘The Word Was Made Flesh’: An Analysis of the Theology of Revelation in the Fourth Gospel,” *CBQ* 31 (1969): 344-45.

³¹E. Haenchen, *A Commentary on the Gospel of John*, 2 vols., Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984): 1.94-97.



As such, then, the incarnation and the resurrection together form the basic framework in the interaction of God and mankind in space and time, within which the whole Gospel is to be interpreted and understood. But *they are ultimates, carrying their own authority* and calling for the intelligent commitment of belief, and providing the irreducible ground upon which continuing rational inquiry and theological formulation take place.³²

2.3.2.2 Revelation and Mission

Haenchen notes the centrality of the inter-relationship of revelation and mission in the Fourth Gospel. Reflecting on John 8:41 he notes that though the world was created by the Logos it is unable to know God. Seeking its own glory it self-deceptively believes it already knows him. He rightly contends that the Fourth Gospel presents the incarnation initiated by God as the only possibility for humans to obtain knowledge of God (John 1:14,18). He correctly argues that it is this event that presents the central “problem of Johannine Christology” which is set forth in the reoccurring phrase, “the Father who sent me.” Thus, Jesus is the one sent by the Father to be the revelation of God.³³ Out of the association of the Son with the Father (1:1,2,18), the Son of God was sent forth to make him fully known. This mission of revelation is then one of the dominant threads woven throughout the Fourth Gospel. John 3:31-34 is one of many examples of this consistent revelatory mission theme:

31 Ὁ ἄνωθεν ἐρχόμενος ἐπάνω πάντων ἐστίν· ὁ ὢν ἐκ τῆς γῆς ἐκ τῆς γῆς ἐστίν καὶ ἐκ τῆς γῆς λαλεῖ. ὁ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἐρχόμενος [ἐπάνω πάντων ἐστίν]: **32** ὃ ἐώρακεν καὶ ἤκουσεν τοῦτο μαρτυρεῖ, καὶ τὴν μαρτυρίαν αὐτοῦ οὐδεὶς λαμβάνει. **33** ὁ λαβὼν αὐτοῦ τὴν μαρτυρίαν ἐσφράγισεν ὅτι ὁ θεὸς ἀληθῆς ἐστίν. **34** ὃν

³²T.F. Torrance, *Space, Time, & Resurrection* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 20. Underline is mine.

³³*Der Vater der mich gesandt hat*, NTS 9 (1963): 210, quoted in G. R. Beasley-Murray, “The Mission of the Logos-Son,” in *The Four Gospels: Festschrift Fans Neiryck*, BETL. C. ed. Van Segbroeck et al., 3:1855-68.



γὰρ ἀπέστειλεν ὁ θεὸς τὰ ῥήματα τοῦ θεοῦ λαλεῖ, οὐ γὰρ ἐκ μέτρου δίδωσιν τὸ πνεῦμα.

The one who comes from above is above all; the one who is from the earth belongs to the earth, and speaks as one from the earth. The one who comes from heaven is above all. He testifies to what he has seen and heard, but no one accepts his testimony. The man who has accepted it has certified that God is truthful. For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit.

Further statements on the revelatory task of the Son to speak the words of God and to do the works of the Father may be seen in John 5:16, 31-47; 7:17; 14:10; 17:3; 18:37. The two revelatory modes appear together in 14:10:

10 οὐ πιστεύεις ὅτι ἐγὼ ἐν τῷ πατρὶ καὶ ὁ πατήρ ἐν ἐμοί ἐστιν; τὰ ῥήματα ἃ ἐγὼ λέγω ὑμῖν ἀπ’ ἐμαυτοῦ οὐ λαλῶ, ὁ δὲ πατήρ ἐν ἐμοὶ μένων ποιεῖ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ. **11** πιστεύετε μοι ὅτι ἐγὼ ἐν τῷ πατρὶ καὶ ὁ πατήρ ἐν ἐμοί· εἰ δὲ μή, διὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτὰ πιστεύετε.

Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? *The words* that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does *his works*. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of *the works* themselves.

But also notice the third element of the revelation-mission-authority triad appears in the first two lines of the quote. There is the denial that the Son speaks or acts “on his own.”

2.3.2.3 Authority and Mission

In all the varied aspects of the mission of Jesus to act as the messenger/agent of God, his authority is expressed or implied in the Fourth Gospel.³⁴ Since this is fundamental to the whole concept of mission in the Fourth

³⁴“We are told, not only of the sending of the disciples, but above all of the sending of Jesus, and moreover of the sending of the Baptist and the Spirit . . . Jesus’ divine sonship rests in his



Gospel. it is essential to explicitly demonstrate it from specific texts. The inter-connection of authority and mission is exhibited in John 6:38-40:

38 ὅτι καταβέβηκα ἀπὸ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ οὐχ ἵνα ποιῶ τὸ θέλημα τὸ ἐμὸν ἀλλὰ τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πέμψαντός με. **39** τοῦτο δέ ἐστιν τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πέμψαντός με, ἵνα πᾶν ὃ δέδωκέν μοι μὴ ἀπολέσω ἐξ αὐτοῦ, ἀλλὰ ἀναστήσω αὐτὸ [ἐν] τῇ ἐσχάτῃ ἡμέρᾳ. **40** τοῦτο γάρ ἐστιν τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πατρός μου, ἵνα πᾶς ὁ θεωρῶν τὸν υἱὸν καὶ πιστεύων εἰς αὐτὸν ἔχη ζωὴν αἰώνιον, καὶ ἀναστήσω αὐτὸν ἐγὼ [ἐν] τῇ ἐσχάτῃ ἡμέρᾳ.

For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. This is indeed the will of my Father, that all who see the Son and believe in him may have eternal life; and I will raise them up on the last day.

The power and authority of the Son to give life to the world, from his sacrificial death on behalf of the world, derives from his commission from the Father who sent him for this purpose (mission).

Obedience, then, is an essential requisite for the authority of the one given a mission.³⁵ The trustworthiness of a messenger is necessary to those who would receive him as an authorized agent of the one who sent him. This appears in the passage just cited (6:38): “I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me.” This element in the mission of Jesus as the messenger/agent of God occurs in a number of other passages in the gospel. It is

being sent by the Father (10:36)...What is decisive in the idea of sending is the thought of authority that is bound up with it.” Ferdinand Han, *Mission in the New Testament*, trans. Frank Clarke (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1965), 157.

³⁵“With that pre-understanding, how does the FG’s [Fourth Gospel] portrait of ‘the sending of the Son’ contribute to its entire mission theology? Perhaps most significantly, sending terminology clearly focuses on the themes of obedience and dependence. Coupled with the FG’s identification of Jesus as the “Son” of the Father (which stresses the uniqueness of Jesus, and thus the unique relationship he enjoys with God, “the Father”), the FG’s sending language underscores that the Son, the Sent One par excellence (cf. 9:2), carried out his mission (cf. ergon, erga terminology and the section on Terms Denoting Movement and Signs and Works Terminology above) in obedience and dependence upon his sender, the Father.” Andreas Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus and of the Disciples*, 167.



expressed in a general sense in what Jesus says to his disciples: “My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work” (4:34). In 5:30 Jesus restates what he had said earlier (5:19): “I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge; and my judgment is just, because I seek to do not my own will but the will of him who sent me.” Here, it is seen that Jesus is not simply aware of his mission to be obedient to the Father’s will, but has a complete commitment to it that takes precedence over even life’s basic necessities, and in the end, even over the tenacious, core human desire for life itself—voluntarily giving up his life on the cross in obedient surrender to the Father’s will.³⁶

In all the aspects of the mission of Jesus he acts with authority given by the Father who sent him. This is seen in the Evangelist’s conclusion to the public ministry of Jesus in 12:44-55 where the three major elements of the mosaic of divine authority in the Fourth Gospel appear together at the conclusion of the “Book of Signs”:

44 Ἰησοῦς δὲ ἔκραξεν καὶ εἶπεν· ὁ πιστεύων εἰς ἐμὲ οὐ πιστεύει εἰς ἐμὲ ἀλλὰ εἰς τὸν πέμψαντά με, **45** καὶ ὁ θεωρῶν ἐμὲ θεωρεῖ τὸν πέμψαντά με. **46** ἐγὼ φῶς εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἐλήλυθα, ἵνα πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων εἰς ἐμὲ ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ μὴ μείνη. **47** καὶ ἐάν τις μου ἀκούσῃ τῶν ῥημάτων καὶ μὴ φυλάξῃ, ἐγὼ οὐ κρίνω αὐτόν· οὐ γὰρ ἦλθον ἵνα κρίνω τὸν κόσμον, ἀλλ’ ἵνα σώσω τὸν κόσμον. **48** ὁ ἀθετῶν ἐμὲ καὶ μὴ λαμβάνων τὰ ῥήματά μου ἔχει τὸν κρίνοντα αὐτόν· ὁ λόγος ὃν ἐλάλησα ἐκεῖνος κρινεῖ αὐτὸν ἐν τῇ ἐσχάτῃ ἡμέρᾳ. **49** ὅτι ἐγὼ ἐξ ἐμαυτοῦ οὐκ ἐλάλησα, ἀλλ’ ὁ πέμψας με πατήρ αὐτός μοι ἐντολὴν δέδωκεν τί εἶπω καὶ τί λαλήσω. **50** καὶ οἶδα ὅτι ἡ ἐντολὴ αὐτοῦ ζωὴ αἰώνιος ἐστίν. ἃ οὖν ἐγὼ λαλῶ, καθὼς εἶρηκέν μοι ὁ πατήρ, οὕτως λαλῶ.

Then Jesus cried aloud: “Whoever believes in me believes not in me but in him who sent me (*mission*). And whoever sees me sees him (*revelation*) who sent me (*mission*). I have come as light into the world, so that everyone who believes in me should not remain in the darkness

³⁶“The picture of Christ in the FG is entirely determined by the idea of obedience.” Eduard Schweizer, “Jesus as the One Obedient in Suffering and Therefore Exalted to the Father,” in *Lordship and Discipleship*, SBT 38 (London: SCM Press, 1960): 68. (cf. 4:34; 5:19; 6:38; 8:28-29,35; 10:17; 12:49; 15:10; cf. also 13:4-14).



(*revelation*). I do not judge anyone who hears my words and does not keep them, for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world (*mission*). The one who rejects me and does not receive my word (*revelation*) has a judge; on the last day the word that I have spoken will serve as judge, for I have not spoken on my own, but the Father who sent me (*mission*) has himself given me a commandment about what to say and what to speak (*authority*). And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I speak (*revelation*), therefore, I speak just as the Father has told me (*authority*).”

The implications of this are substantial. There is no activity in the mission of Jesus in which he acts alone. As the messenger/agent of the Father, every word and action of his is said and done under the authoritative guidance of the Father.

2.3.2.4 Brief Preliminary Application to the Opening Discourse of Acts

In the light of these themes, Luke’s recording of the disciples’ single question during Jesus’ forty days of instruction on the kingdom of God in the opening discourse of Acts is quite revealing and agenda setting: “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?” Surely this was not the only question asked during the forty days. Then why does Luke record this particular one? Leland Ryken labels this literary convention “selectivity.”³⁷ He says that this is one of the techniques employed by a storyteller to “embody their point of view.”³⁸ When this question is combined with the only other ‘selective’ topic and snippet of conversation during the forty days of conversation and instruction it may be highly revealing as to the author’s point of view for the entire discourse of Acts.

4 καὶ συναλιζόμενος παρήγγειλεν αὐτοῖς ἀπὸ Ἱεροσολύμων μὴ χωρίζεσθαι ἀλλὰ περιμένειν τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν τοῦ πατρὸς ἧν

³⁷Leland Ryken, *Words of Delight: A Literary Introduction to the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book, 1987). A storyteller “makes his statements by selection, and if he is any good, he selects every word for a reason, every detail for a reason, every incident for a reason, and arranges them in a certain time-sequence for a reason.” Flannery O’Connor. *The Nature and Aim of Fiction* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux), 75.

³⁸Ryken defines ‘point of view’ as the perspective we are “invited to share with the storyteller as we look at the experience that is presented.” *Word of Delight*, 84.



ἤκούσατέ μου, **5** ὅτι Ἰωάννης μὲν ἐβάπτισεν ὕδατι, ὑμεῖς δὲ ἐν πνεύματι βαπτισθήσεσθε ἀγίῳ οὐ μετὰ πολλὰς ταύτας ἡμέρας. **6** Οἱ μὲν οὖν συνελθόντες ἠρώτων αὐτὸν λέγοντες· κύριε, εἰ ἐν τῷ χρόνῳ τούτῳ ἀποκαθιστάνεις τὴν βασιλείαν τῷ Ἰσραήλ; **7** εἶπεν δὲ πρὸς αὐτούς· οὐχ ὑμῶν ἐστὶν γινῶναι χρόνους ἢ καιροὺς οὓς ὁ πατήρ ἔθετο ἐν τῇ ἰδίᾳ ἐξουσίᾳ, **8** ἀλλὰ λήμψεσθε δύναμιν ἐπελθόντος τοῦ ἀγίου πνεύματος ἐφ' ὑμᾶς καὶ ἔσεσθέ μου μάρτυρες ἐν τε Ἱερουσαλὴμ καὶ [ἐν] πάσῃ τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ καὶ Σαμαρείᾳ καὶ ἕως ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς.

1:4 On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. **5** For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.” **6** So when they met together, they asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?” **7** He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. **8** But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

Luke is communicating through his ‘literary artistry’ the theological perspective of the history he is about to narrate. Again, the disciples are promised Holy Spirit empowerment and *authority* to carry out their *mission* to proclaim the exclusive *revelation* of God in Jesus, the King of the Kingdom that is to be restored and extended to the ends of the earth. With the words “you will be my witnesses,” the disciples are both given their *mission* and authorized by the ‘author’ of their *authority*, and their mission will be to reveal, through their witness to the King, the restoration of the Kingdom to Israel, albeit a reconstituted Israel in its fulfilled form--the Church. This is the central theo-logic that controls the historiography of Luke in Acts.

2.3.3 Jesus- the Primary Apostle and Delegated Authority of the Father

The Fourth Gospel does not attribute the title ἀπόστολος either to Jesus or to his disciples. Yet the most dominant designation of the Father in the Fourth Gospel is “the one who sent me”; and Jesus understands himself consistently as the



one who has been sent by, and returns to the Father, or comes down and goes back to the Father.³⁹ Jesus functions in every way in the Fourth Gospel as the supreme, unique apostle of the Father,⁴⁰ surpassing any other apostle, by being His Son.⁴¹ His authority and mission is derived from the Father with whom he was identified⁴² and who acted through him.⁴³ “The Father loves the Son and has placed everything

³⁹One of the great strengths of Köstenberger’s methodological approach is that he undertakes to much more broadly examine the semantic field of mission terminology, recognizing the theological complexity of a given theme. Sending may be the dominant term, but his search yields a much wider range of terms: the terms “send” (ἀποστέλλω, πέμπω); “come” (ἔρχομαι and derivatives); “go” (πορεύομαι, ὑπάγω); “become” (γίνομαι; but note that not all meanings of this term will be relevant here—ultimately, the term’s meaning in context is determinative); “descend” (καταβαίνω); “ascend” (ἀναβαίνω); “leave” (μεταβαίνω); “follow” (ακολουθέω); “bring,” “lead” (ἄγω); and “gather” (συνάγω). *The Missions of Jesus and the Disciples*, 67.

⁴⁰Calvin Mercer argues that “If Jesus functions like an apostle in the fourth gospel, why did John not utilize *apostolos*, a term that most likely was readily available to him, given the consensus that John dates after the synoptics and long after Paul? The most reasonable explanation is that the apostles, while clearly authoritative and revered, were men. For John to call Jesus an apostle—given the prior use of the term in early Christianity—would be to run the risk of demeaning his Lord by demoting him to the level of man. Therefore to refer to God sending Jesus on a religious mission John used *apostellein* (as opposed to *pempein*), which was different from but related to the title *apostolos*. In this way John communicated the idea of Jesus as the apostle from God but in a manner that preserved Jesus’ special status and was consistent with John’s high Christology. Hebrews 3:1 is the only place in the New Testament where Jesus is called an apostle, and there it clearly expresses a high Christology by virtue of both the manner of rendering and the book in which it is located.”

⁴¹“I would suggest, first, that the model in the evangelist’s mind was not just any agent, but the agent who is the principal’s son. A son, after all, was the best agent a man could ever have, and the one whose credentials were most likely to be accepted.” A. E. Harvey, “Christ as Agent,” in *The Glory of Christ in the New Testament. Studies in Christology in Memory of George Bradford Caird*, ed. L. D. Hurst and N. T. Wright (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 243.

⁴²In the FG the personal identity between the Son and the Father is stated in several different ways. One statement is “I and the Father are one” (10:30) and another is “the Father is in me and I am in the Father” (10:38; cf. 14:10-11 and 17:21-23). In 10:36-38 it is explicitly stated that it is the agent, the Son in the capacity of being sent into the world, who is one with the sender. Similarly, in 17:20-23, the unity between the Son and the Father will make it possible for the world to recognize the Son as agent of the Father, as made manifest in Jesus’ words and works which also are said to be the works of the Father.

⁴³Rengstorf, “*apostello (pempo)*,” 443, suggests that Jesus as the one sent is in reality *the apostolos* of the FG; J. Painter, *John: Witness and Theologian* (London: SPCK, 1975), 78, refers in passing to Jesus’ mission as his “apostleship.”



in His hands” (John 3:35); and “I have not come on my own; but He sent me” (John 6:42).⁴⁴ Here we have a clear expression of the grounds of Christ’s authority and mission. This means that nothing can be received from God except through Christ and thus, secondarily, through any authority He may delegate. Köstenberger, in summary of his examination of the mission of the “Sent One *par excellence*,” concludes that the role of the mission theme in the Fourth Gospel is to provide a complete, multi-perspectival portrait of Jesus’ person and work. And the goal of his mission is to lead people to faith in him as the revelation of the Father.⁴⁵

The religious authorities repeatedly challenged Jesus’ authority. They constantly sought to maintain control by demanding compelling, empirically verifiable demonstrations by Jesus that would meet *their* criterion of judgment. This reaches a climax before the crucifixion when they directly questioned Jesus concerning his authority.

One day as he was teaching the people in the temple courts and preaching the gospel, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, together with the elders, came up to him. “Tell us by what authority you are doing these things,” they said. “Who gave you this authority?” He replied, “I will also ask you a question. Tell me, John’s baptism—was it from heaven, or from men?” They discussed it among themselves and said, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will ask, ‘Why didn’t you believe him?’ But if we say, ‘From men,’ all the people will stone us, because they are persuaded that John was a prophet.” So they answered, “We don’t know where it was from.” Jesus said, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.” (Luke 20:1-8)

What Jesus proceeds to do is to tell them the parable of the tenants of a vineyard who disrespected him by rejecting the servants he sent, and then his son, thus challenging his ownership and authority. The listening Jewish authorities once again did not discern immediately that Jesus was indicating one more time that the cross was the answer to the question of his ultimate authority. But they did understand,

⁴⁴Cf. Matt 11:27; 28:18.

⁴⁵Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus and the Disciples*.



when he added quotes from Psalms concerning the builders rejecting the stone, that he gave them this parable to reveal that he was aware of their duplicity. Their question was a disguise for an excuse to kill him in order to retain their own positions of authority. These Jewish rulers desired to illicit from Jesus an appeal to some authority above, beyond, and outside of himself in order to believe in him. But Jesus would see through their subterfuge for not wanting to submit to him—always wanting to control their relation to him from a position of superiority. In a telling move, Jesus responded by questioning them concerning the baptism of John. His clear intention was to push them back to the searching question God had already confronted them with in the preaching of John the Baptist concerning sin and repentance. Thus, if they truly understood his question, they needed to repent from their duplicity and embrace Jesus' divine authority. God the Father and his delegated missionary and authority would control the questioning, not them. The irony is palpable. The highest of all authority is standing in the flesh in front of them and they are blind. Their questions are irresponsible and self-contradictory and Jesus reserves his harshest language for them.

“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cummin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former. 24 You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel.... “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. 26 Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean. (Matt 23:23, 25)

In the narrative of Acts the clash of authorities will continue, post-ascension, with the apostles, the delegated authorities of Jesus confronted by the same Jewish authorities.



2.4 Part II: The Delegation of the Authority, Revelation and Mission of Jesus to the Disciples and the Holy Spirit

2.4.1 Introduction

In conclusion we can only say that the deepest foundation of the canon can only lie in Christ himself, and in the nature of his coming and work. The very basis or ground for the recognition of the canon is, therefore, in principle redemptive-historical, i.e. Christological. For Christ is not only himself the canon in which God comes to the world, and in which he glorifies himself in contrast to the world, but Christ *establishes* the canon and gives it a concrete historical form. In the first place, Christ establishes the canon in his own word and work, but then also in the transfer of authority (*exousia*) to His representatives, in the Holy Spirit witnessing with them and through them, and in the apostolic tradition.⁴⁶

In the so-called Book of Glory (chapter 13ff), after Jesus exegeted the Father (John 1:18; 20:30-31) through the signs he performed and realized he would soon return to the Father, he became preoccupied with delegating his mission to others.⁴⁷ Jesus then began to spell out what he had in mind for his followers during his absence. John 13ff is dominated by the theme of Jesus' return to his Father: "Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God..." (13:3). From this moment in the narrative, Jesus begins to prepare for his ascent. The emphasis changes from his origins in

⁴⁶Ridderbos, *Redemptive History*, 37.

⁴⁷"Rather, we must recognize this episode [ch. 13] as the point on which the action of the entire gospel hinges: the action which is a dramatization of the principal theme to follow, and thus of the disciples' (readers') preparation for what will happen when Jesus is 'glorified.'" Peter G. Ahr, "He Loved Them to Completion": The Theology of John 13-14," in *Standing before God. Studies on Prayer in Scriptures and in Tradition with Essays In Honor of John M. Oesterreicher*, ed. Asker Finkel and Lawrence Frizzell (New York: Ktav, 1981), 76. Also, R. Alan Culpepper, "The Johannine Hypodeigma: A Reading of John 13," *Semeia* 53 (1991): 135: "Interpreters generally agree that 13:1 marks the most significant transition in the Gospel, introducing not only the scene of the footwashing but the entire second half of the Gospel."



previous chapters, to his destiny—his home going. The question of his hearers is now not so much, “How did you get here?” or, “Where did you come from?” but “Where are you going?” (John 13:36; 14:5; 16:18). The “Book of Signs” was dominated more by the terms of “sending,” “coming,” and “descending,” but the “Book of Glory” is dominated more by the terms of “going,” “ascending,” and terms of delegation: “sending” and delegating “greater works.” There is, then, a shift in the theology of sending which portends an alteration in the status of Jesus. While he has up to this point been the one sent by the Father, he now becomes, like the Father, the sender, anticipating his ascension.

In the “Book of Signs” it appears that what Jesus was saying over and over again in word and sign was that the glory of God was something the disciples saw and heard and touched in the person of Jesus, in time and space: in Cana of Galilee, in Capernaum, in Bethany, on the Sea of Tiberias, in Jerusalem (1:14; 2:11; 11:4; 1 John 1:1-3). But now with talk of Jesus leaving, where will the glory and the presence of God yet be experienced?

Jesus answers this question throughout the text of the discourse at the Last Supper. First, the authority, revelation and mission of Jesus will be transposed to the disciples. Second, the presence of the historical Jesus will be succeeded by the presence of the Spirit of Truth, the Paraclete, who will dwell with believers and be in them. But these are not separate, unrelated witnesses/missions. Both the disciples and the Spirit are sent to perform closely inter-connected tasks that relate to continuing the mission of Jesus.

2.4.2 The Joint Authorization and Mission of the Apostles and the Holy Spirit

In Christ, the one sent by the Father and the unique Son of God—and so the bearer of divine authority—God can be said to have revealed himself as canon over against the world. But the material authority of the New Testament originates in the history of redemption in another respect. For the *communication* and *transmission* of what was seen and heard in the fullness of time, Christ established *a formal authority structure to be the source and standard for all future preaching of the*



gospel. From the beginning of His public ministry, we see Jesus' intent on sharing His own power (*exousia*) with others so that this authority would take visible, tangible shape for the foundation and extension of the church on earth.⁴⁸

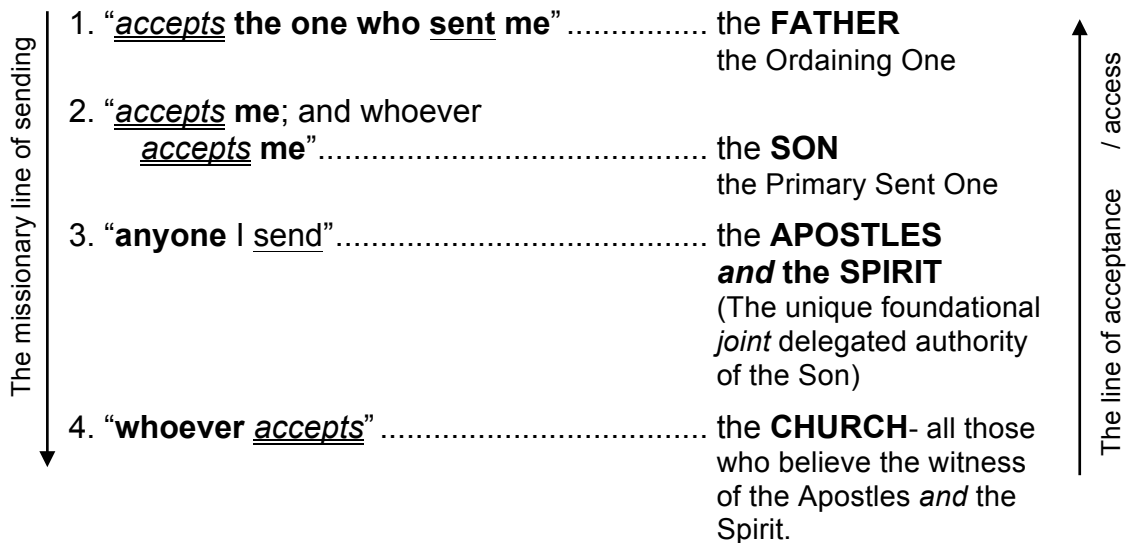
In the pivotal chapter thirteen we see the first formal general statement⁴⁹ of the principle of delegation of sending/authority by the Son: "I tell you the truth, whoever accepts anyone I send accepts me; and whoever accepts me accepts the one who sent me" (John 13:20). Here we have a statement of delegated authority "traced backwards"—a statement of scriptural apostolic succession. In context the repeated concepts of 'sending' and 'accepting' have to do with 'mission', 'authority' and 'revelation,' in that being 'sent' means both that one is on a 'mission' and is 'authorized' for that mission. It also entails the content of the mission: revelation of and witness to the 'sender.' The concept of 'accepting' also involves all three concepts. The present task will be to identify the antecedents to the pronouns in the passage. The antecedents to the pronouns of the first two phrases are identified and developed primarily in the "Book of Signs" (John chapters 1-12) and the antecedents to the pronouns of the second two phrases are identified primarily in "The Book of Glory" (chapters 13-20). The verse is charted below in reverse order to highlight the line of 'acceptance' of 'authorized missionaries' identified in the right hand column:

*SEE FIGURE ON FOLLOWING PAGE

⁴⁸ Hermann Ridderbos, *Redemptive History and the New Testament Scriptures*, 13.

⁴⁹ Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus and the Disciple*.

Figure 2.1



The church envisioned in phrase four is again specified in John 17:20- “I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their [apostles] word.” The proper antecedents to the “anyone” in the third phrase, the *duality* of delegated sending/authority, is stated explicitly in John 15:26f- “When the *Advocate* comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the *Spirit of truth* who comes from the Father, *he will testify on my behalf. You [apostles] also are to testify* because you have been with me from the beginning.” The sending (mission and authorization) of the dual witnesses is a topic throughout chapters 13-17 as Jesus becomes more and more expressive of his going back to the Father (ascension). This duality of delegated witnesses has much to do with the doctrine of Scripture and its place as the foundation to all extension of the mission of Jesus.

2.4.3 The Mission of the Apostles

In addition to implicit texts like John 17:20, there are three explicit texts in the Fourth Gospel that state that Jesus “sends” the disciples, of which the second two are directly relevant to the present discussion.



John 4:38 ἐγὼ ἀπέστειλα ὑμᾶς θερίζειν ὃ οὐχ ὑμεῖς κεκοπιάκατε· ἄλλοι κεκοπιάκασιν καὶ ὑμεῖς εἰς τὸν κόπον αὐτῶν εἰσεληλύθατε.
ονη

John 17:18 καθὼς ἐμὲ ἀπέστειλας εἰς τὸν κόσμον, καὶ γὰρ ἀπέστειλα αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸν κόσμον·

John 20:21 εἶπεν οὖν αὐτοῖς [ὁ Ἰησοῦς] πάλιν· εἰρήνη ὑμῖν· καθὼς ἀπέσταλκέν με ὁ πατήρ, καὶ γὰρ πέμπω ὑμᾶς.

John 4:38 I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labor.

John 17:18 As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world.

John 20:21 Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.”

The apostolic ministry is a significant step in the delegation of authority because it is the translation of the “self-ministry” of Jesus into ministry in His name: “And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it” (John 14.13f). It is the unique transition of the direct ministry of the Redeemer to the delegated ministry of the Redeemer through redeemed sinners, and thus all further ministry of the church thereafter is affected “at its root by the special function of the Apostles in their immediate relation to Jesus’ ministry on the one hand and to the historical Church of forgiven sinners and its mission in the world on the other hand.”⁵⁰ God’s sending of

⁵⁰T. F. Torrance, “Foundation of the Church,” in *Theological Foundations For Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 214. He continues: “The important point here is to discern both the rooting of the apostolic ministry in the ministry of Jesus, and to discern the difference which comes about when the self-ministry of Jesus is translated into ministry in his name. It is the vicarious mediation of Jesus which is of fundamental importance here and explains why the Early Church worshipped the Father and ministered only in the name of Christ, and why they regarded Christ in the absolute and proper sense, as the only Minister of the Church before God, the only One who was appointed and anointed (Christos) for office in the Kingdom- the supreme ‘Householder’ in God’s Kingdom who at the end would hand over everything to the Father.”



Jesus has its counterpart and continuation in the commissioning of the Apostles (Matt 10:40; 28:18f; John 20:21; Acts 9:17; 10:29).

2.4.4 The Mission of the Spirit

This sending, commissioning or authorizing of the Apostles does not stand alone in the “apostolic succession.” The Spirit is also sent by Jesus: “Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you (16:7). In chapters fourteen through sixteen the Spirit’s coming is promised five times.

John 14:16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever— 17 the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. 18 I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.

John 14:26 But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

John 15:26 When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me.

John 16:7 But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. 8 When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: 9 in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; 10 in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; 11 and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.

John 16:13 But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. 14 He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. 15 All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you.

The sending of the Apostles is indivisibly linked with the sending of the Spirit. Read from a canonical reader’s perspective, this is a crucial point as linked



historically and theologically to Acts 1 and 2. The Church Fathers perhaps consciously seeing the pneumatological final chapters of the Gospel of John, deliberately placed it immediately prior to Acts--as the narrative of the Spirit-empowered expansion of the Church.

In John's gospel, therefore, the sending of the Son and the sending of the Spirit grew together into a unity. But in this gospel, likewise, is the sending of the Spirit very closely associated with the sending of the disciples. The disciples are messengers and witnesses of their Lord, because the Spirit supports their testimony and helps them in their service, whatever may befall them.⁵¹

This close association is reinforced in John 20:21: "Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you [*apostles*].' When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the *Holy Spirit*.'" In the "line of sending" this is a joint commission (John 15:26-27). It is not one following the other in the ladder of authority but the two fused together,⁵² though there is a redemptive-historical order as I shall argue in the examination of Acts 1 and 2.

The joint sending of the Apostles and the Spirit and their relationship is explicitly spelled out in John 16:13ff, where all four parties of ultimate authority and delegated authority appear together.

⁵¹Ferdinand Hahn, "Sendung des Geistes—Sendung der Jüger. Die pneumatologische Dimension des Missionsauftrages nach dem Zeugnis des Neuen Testaments," in *Universales Christentum angesichts einer pluralen Welt*, Beiträge zur Religions-Theologie 1, ed. Andreas Bsteh (Mödling bei Wien: Verlag St. Gabriel, 1976), 104, quoted in Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus and of the Disciples*, 319.

⁵²Hermann Ridderbos, *Redemptive History*, 29f. "Furthermore, Christ expressly stated that the Spirit would not speak on His own initiative but would take the things of Christ and proclaim them to the apostles. The content of the Spirit's testimony, then, is inseparable from that of the apostles, and the power the apostles received from Christ to establish their word as the church's canon was realized in terms of the Spirit's leading and inspiring them. Therefore to make the canonicity of the apostolic word dependent on the contemporary operation of the Spirit and to oppose the latter to the objective content of the apostolic word clashes head on with the redemptive, historical significance of the canon. It abolishes the once-and-for-all character of the history of redemption and leaves no place for the canon as its authorized witness."



ὅταν δὲ ἔλθῃ ἐκεῖνος, τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας, ὀδηγήσει ὑμᾶς ἐν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ πάση· οὐ γὰρ λαλήσει ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ, ἀλλ' ὅσα ἀκούσει λαλήσει καὶ τὰ ἐρχόμενα ἀναγγελεῖ ὑμῖν. **14** ἐκεῖνος ἐμὲ δοξάσει, ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ ἐμοῦ λήμψεται καὶ ἀναγγελεῖ ὑμῖν. **15** πάντα ὅσα ἔχει ὁ πατὴρ ἐμὰ ἐστίν· διὰ τοῦτο εἶπον ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ ἐμοῦ λαμβάνει καὶ ἀναγγελεῖ ὑμῖν.

“But when **He**, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide **you** into all truth. **He** will not speak on **His** own; He will speak only what **He** hears, and **He** will tell **you** what is yet to come. **He** will bring glory to **me** by taking from what is **mine** and making it known to **you**. All that belongs to **the Father** is **mine**. That is why I said **the Spirit** will take from what is **mine** and make it known to **you**.”

Here again we have a summary of all the interconnections of scriptural apostolic succession and Biblical authority. Authority is involved: “He will not speak on his own; He will speak only what He hears.” Mission is pervasive: “He will guide you into all truth”; “He will tell you what is yet to come”; “He will bring glory to me.” Revelation is included: “and making it known to you”; “and make it known to you.” This passage also points to the joint sending of the Apostles and the Holy Spirit as having great bearing on the doctrine of Scripture. From his examination of John 15:26 and 16:13ff Hermann Ridderbos perceives an identical relationship between the testimony of the apostles and the testimony of the Spirit.⁵³ He argues that the two testimonies are indistinguishable because it is the Spirit that guided the apostles into all truth (16:13), by reminding them of everything Jesus said to them (14:26). But the additional work of the Spirit is distinguishable from that of the apostles in that he *convicts others* that the apostles’ witness is true. Ridderbos then concludes: “the redemptive, historical bond between the work of the Spirit and the canon is not to be found first of all in subjectively perceiving the gospel as canon but in its objective

⁵³Ibid., 29.



proclamation.”⁵⁴ That bond is to be found in the inspiration of the apostolic witness recorded in the canon and not in the Spirit’s illumination of believers.

2.4.5 Conclusion to Part II

The ministry of the Twelve was unique. Along with the Spirit they laid the foundation to the church, with Christ being the cornerstone of the house God promised to build David (2 Sam 7; Eph 2:20; 1 Pet 2:6; Rev 21:14). The document of their unique ministry is the New Testament, the written record of the fulfillment of their mission.⁵⁵ It is *the* missionary document of the Church. Thus, the term ‘apostolic’ in a definite sense refers to the New Testament as the source and norm of the Church’s life and existence throughout history. The Church as a whole is successor to the Apostles’ *and* the Holy Spirit’s missions (John 13:20 as diagrammed above). The Church’s mission is first and foremost defined by and derivative of the joint delegated missions of the Apostles and the Spirit as the original witnesses and the original messengers. This means that every individual member of the Church stands in this “apostolic succession.” The source from which the ἐκκλησία draws is a *double one*, the Christ-tradition, which has the original tradition of the apostolic witness as its norm, and the Holy Spirit, which bears witness to Christ. Every later generation remains bound to the word, the witness, and the service of the first apostolic generation. The Apostles are and remain the once-for-all and irreplaceable original witnesses, delegated by the Son. The Church not only lives by the New Testament, as the canon of its life and faith, but also it is the only sword of the Spirit, the primary weapon of the church in its mission. The Church not only continues to be built up through the exegetical study of the record of their fulfilled mission, but also the mission of Jesus is continued from generation to generation as the written

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵Emil Brunner, *The Christian Doctrine*, Vol. 3 (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962), 48. “Since the death of the Apostles the Apostolate has validity only in one form: as the norm of the original tradition fixed in writing, the norm of the original witness, the New Testament.”



testimony of the apostles and the Spirit is proclaimed and taught. In this primary way the mission of Jesus continues throughout history upon the foundation of his designated apostles.⁵⁶ Every generation must live in accordance with both the apostolic witness (Scripture) and the apostolic service (missionary extension in the world and the building up of the community). The church can only hear the Lord of the harvest and continue His mission via this apostolic witness.

Emil Brunner contends that we must “take seriously the bond between the Spirit and the kerygma, *as that bond is revealed in redemptive history itself.*”⁵⁷ In the present chapter I have attempted to exposit that bond in redemptive history as recorded in the Fourth Gospel. Of the four gospels, the redemptive history recorded in the second half of the Gospel of John is preoccupied with the transference of Jesus’ mission and authority to others in anticipation of his return to the Father. And that transference entails Jesus’ creation of a bond between the kerygma and the Spirit. Brunner concludes that “the kerygma is revelatory and a part of redemptive history above all because in *itself*, in its written form, it is the proclamation, prepared by the Holy Spirit, of the redemptive event that occurred in the fullness of time.”⁵⁸

⁵⁶Bernard Ramm, *The Pattern of Religious Authority* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 55. “The New Testament written by the apostles is the delegated authority of the Lord Jesus. It is not surprising that the New Jerusalem has the apostles’ names on the twelve foundation stones (Rev. 21:14).”

⁵⁷Emil Brunner, *Ekklesia and the Church*, 51.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*



2.5 PART III: The Theological, Historical Integration of the Narrative Discourses of Acts Chapters One and Two: The Pre-Ascension ‘Theo-logic’ and Promises of Jesus Realized.

The expression ‘theo-logic’ in the above title is intentionally chosen to emphasize that in the present and following chapters an attempt is made to discern and emphasize the rationale or logic of God’s sovereign guidance in the history recorded in the opening narrative discourses of Acts. This thesis assumes the Reformed doctrine on the relationship between history and theology in Scripture, which in turn is undergirded by their doctrine of the sovereignty of God. Paul R. Noble observes: “For the Reformers there was a natural coherence between the biblical texts and the ‘subject matter’ which made them religiously significant writing—to study, say, the Fourth Gospel’s account of the life of Christ was to study the life of Christ, and hence to study what we ought to believe for our salvation. There was simply no ‘critical distance’ between these things; rather the history and doctrine were directly rendered to the reader by the canonical text.”⁵⁹

In the pages that follow I will endeavor to argue that the historical-theological rationale driving the program that Jesus preset in the Gospel of John for the transference of his mission and authority to others is the same logic of God, not only orchestrating the events themselves and their historical relationships in Acts 1 and 2, but is that which is also at work in inspiring the literary art of Luke in his recording of those events. It is here that I arrive at the heart of the thesis expressed in the dissertation title: The Interrelationship of Theology, History and Literary

⁵⁹Paul R. Noble, *The Canonical Approach: A Critical Reconstruction of the Hermeneutics of Brevard Childs* (New York: E.J. Brill, 1995), 307. He further observes: “For Childs, then, the orientation of critical scholarship towards the *sensus historicus* or *sensus originalis* signifies a quest for something behind the text, which is typically recovered by historical reconstructions and/or an investigation of original meanings or original contexts. This was clearly very different from what the Reformers meant by the *sensus historicus*. According to Childs, however, critical scholars nonetheless continued to identify ‘the historical sense’ with ‘the literal sense,’ and thus engendered a correspondingly transformed understanding of what it means to ‘interpret the Bible literally’: For the Reformers this was a reading of the canonical text; for critical scholarship it was a reading *through* the text to recover something else behind it.” 307f.



Artistry. I am attempting to ascertain more clearly the scriptural details of the theology that underlies both the history itself and consequently the literary, artistic choices employed by Luke in his historiography.

The structure and content of Luke's narrative in Acts 1 and 2 are the historical verification and actualization of Jesus' preplanning in the Gospel of John for the extension of his ministry through the joint witness of the Apostles and the Holy Spirit upon his ascension. After the recording of the ascension of Jesus in Acts 1:1-11,⁶⁰ the next two narrated episodes have to do first, with the apostles, and second, with the Holy Spirit.⁶¹ These three events are consistent with what Jesus predetermined in the Fourth Gospel for the continuation of his ministry and the expansion of the kingdom of God. After the ascension/enthronement, the first two "acts" of the ascended King were to put in place his two authorized witnesses or missionaries by reestablishing the *twelve* apostles (Acts 1:12-26) and by sending the Spirit (Acts 2:1-4).⁶² These first two "acts" of the ascended Lord are strategic when

⁶⁰I take verses 1-11 as the first discourse segment and verses 12-26 as the second narrative segment.

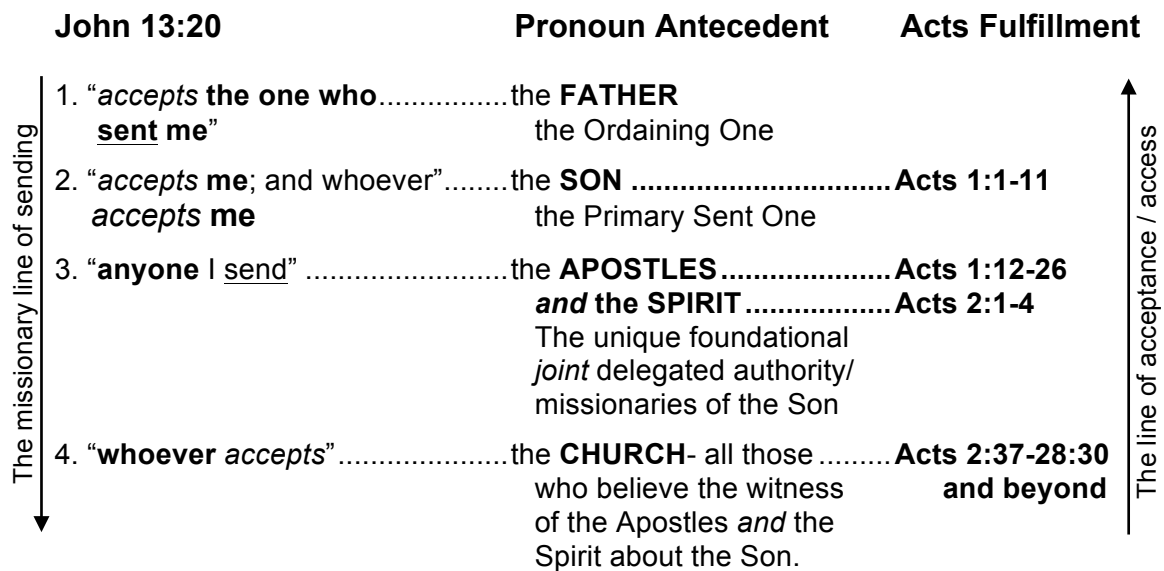
⁶¹"The original witness crystallized in the New Testament canon is, in Pauline thinking, not a fully valid substitute, for no letter (*gramma*) can replace the spirit (*pneuma*). But an apostle without *pneuma* is not an apostle. The sentence should therefore be formulated thus: 'The authority in the Church is the witness to Christ in agreement with the apostolic witness, as we possess it in the New Testament, so far as it is borne in the power of the Holy Spirit.' The witness must always be an uttered word, behind which stands the person of the witness as a man apprehended by Christ. The *pneuma* distinguishes the *Ekklesia* from the synagogue; bare Scripture is not the authority, but Scripture as it is witnessed to by the Holy Spirit and interpreted by Him. The source from which the *Ekklesia* draws is a double one, the Christ-tradition which has the original tradition of the apostolic witness as its norm, and the Holy Spirit which bears witness to Christ." Emil Brunner, *Ekklesia and Church*, 51. It is interesting that Bruce comments that "Luke makes it plain that it is by the power of that same Spirit that all the apostolic acts which he goes on to narrate were performed, so much so that some have suggested, as a theologically more appropriate title for his second volume, *The Acts of the Holy Spirit*." F.F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), p. 31. In the light of my argument I would understand a title "The Acts of the Apostles" as "The Acts of the Apostles and the Holy Spirit," understanding the Apostles in the title to mean the Twelve and by extension, in a derivative secondary sense, those who proclaim the apostolic message.

⁶²Jervel recognizes the dual witness in the opening of Acts: "The testimony of the Twelve is that God has fulfilled his promise to his people. The Spirit also testifies that Israel's Messiah has come" (2:33ff.). *The Theology of Acts*, 81.



read in the light of the second half of the Fourth Gospel from a canonical reader's perspective. Using the diagram developed previously, the opening narrative discourses of Acts may now be placed side by side in order to view how the theologic preset by Jesus pre-cross and resurrection in John's Gospel concerning the continuation of his ministry is historically actualized in the first four "acts" of the Book of Acts.

Figure 2.2



Reading the chart in reverse order, beginning with Acts 2:37 to the present time, incorporation into the Body of Christ, the Church, only occurs through accepting and believing the joint testimony of the 'external' witness of the Apostolic message and the 'internal' testimony of the Holy Spirit, who "will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment" (John 16:7-11). That joint testimony is the only access to Jesus provided and available to humanity as instituted by Christ in the Fourth Gospel. The Apostles and the Holy Spirit are the joint exclusive missionaries (sent ones) of the Son. But the content of their witness is not complete with their testimony to the incarnation, life, ministry, death and resurrection only, but with their eyewitness to the capstone event of the ascended Lord and King. It is the ascension of Christ recorded in Acts 1:1-11 that completes



the content of witness to which they must testify ('**Act I**' – Acts 1:1-11). Once this opening event of Acts occurs, the King establishes his two missionaries by completing the twelve⁶³ ('**Act II**' – Acts 1:12-26) and sending the Holy Spirit⁶⁴ ('**Act III**' – Acts 2:1-4). These joint witnesses will now have a 'complete' testimony to proclaim to the world, and that is precisely what occurs in '**Act IV**' (2:5-41). Peter stands with the eleven to testify to Jesus, which results in three thousand souls accepting and believing the apostolic testimony and consequently also experience incorporation into the church—the fourth level in the chart above (2:41- "Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day"). Examination of the content of Peter's Pentecost message shows that he testifies to the life, ministry, death, resurrection *and the ascension* of Jesus. The crowd hears the 'external' witness while the Holy Spirit is present as the 'internal' witness, as promised in John 16:7-11. An explicit acknowledgment of their joint witness activity is stated in Acts 5:32, "We [the apostles] are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him." Again, following the chart in the right hand column from bottom to top, three thousand people are incorporated into the **Church** through their trust in the joint testimony of the **Apostles** *and* the **Holy Spirit**, with the result that they place their faith in **Jesus**, as "both Lord and Christ" (2:36). And finally, to have knowledge of Jesus, who came to exegete or make known the **Father** (ἐξηγήσατο John 1:18; 6:45; 14:9) as the exclusive missionary of the Father according to the Fourth Gospel, is to have knowledge of the Father.

⁶³Either the Spirit of Christ is directing Peter's mind, according to the preset theo-logic he taught in the Fourth Gospel, in reminding him of the Psalms and inspiring application, or Peter randomly or coincidentally recalls the passages and concludes on his own to instigate the replacement of Judas. I believe there is a hint in the text by Peter himself as to which option is more likely. His words in 1:16 are, "Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled which the Holy Spirit spoke long ago through the mouth of David...." The same Spirit directing David long ago is most likely directing Peter at that moment.

⁶⁴John 15:26- "When the Counselor comes, *whom I will send to you from the Father*, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me."