

EXPLICIT QUOTATIONS FROM GENESIS WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF STEPHEN'S SPEECH IN ACTS*

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to offer a limited contribution to ongoing studies on the Book of Acts, particularly in the area of the manner in which the New Testament quotes and expounds the Old. The discussion confines itself to an examination of the two explicit quotations from Genesis, (Gen 12:1, and 15:13) which are identified with introductory formulae, in the Stephen discourse of Acts 7. The study first seeks to situate the Genesis texts in their original context, after which attention is paid to their appearance in the Stephen speech in Acts. Firstly a brief overview of the differences between the pertinent Old Testament textual traditions (e.g., MT, LXX, etc), and the New Testament is provided, with the aid of a table. This will assist in understanding the most obvious changes and modifications present in Luke's reading of his original material. Secondly and finally, the discussion will seek to provide an assessment of Luke's theological and hermeneutical framework, reflected within the Genesis quotations of the Stephen speech.

1. Introduction

The fact that the New Testament writers frequently quoted from and alluded to the Old Testament in the composition of their writings, has been universally recognized by the Church since its inception. Furthermore, it can be observed that the ancient practice of the NT writers in the quotation of the Canonical OT is not altogether different from the Church's handling of the Bible in its preaching and teaching ministry, over the centuries. Ongoing studies in this area remain both important and necessary and part of this endeavour includes the study of the number of the OT quotations within the New.¹

1 There are of course, differences regarding the amount of quotations of the OT found in the New. Sweet (1939, 1516) and Kaiser (1985, 3) calculate that some 3000 explicit

An indication of the importance and relevance of this field of research is reflected by the perennial debates amongst scholars and specialists. According to Bock (1997, 823-824) this matter is “. . . *one of the most debated aspects of New Testament study outside of the Gospels.*”²

The aim of this study is to investigate the Genesis quotations in the context of Acts 7. It is significant to observe that Genesis is quoted only twice in the Stephen speech, and both quotations originate from the narrative of the Abraham story. The two Genesis quotations in Acts 7, interestingly, are not found anywhere else in the NT. In addition, all the OT quotations in Acts appear in the speeches themselves, except for Isa 53:7-8 appearing in Acts 8:32-33 (Moyise 2001, 61). If it is acknowledged that together with Luke’s narrative itself, the main component of Acts is the speech³ as a literary and theological device, an investigation of the employment of Genesis in the Stephen speech is of value to the overall study of the Book itself.

It is not the intention of this study to reconstruct the *Vorlage* of the Genesis quotations themselves *per se*, nor to reconstruct the possible underlying Hebrew version to the LXX Genesis text. It is rather the intention of this study to investigate the adaptation and position of the Genesis quotations within Stephen’s speech and the theological deductions that can be made from this—all against the backdrop of different viewpoints from secondary literature.

2. Luke’s Modifications in the Light of the LXX and MT Editions

2.1. Gen 12:1 in Acts 7:3

quotations from the OT, can be identified in the New. If this is the case, needless to say, the language, thought-patterns and idiom of the OT has had a profound impact on both the formation and the final form of the established NT Canon.

- 2 Porter (1997, 79) also says that this study is “. . . an active area of contemporary New Testament research.”
- 3 By Haenchen’s calculation, the speeches take up about 300 out of the 1000 verses in the Book of Acts (1971, 104). There are 36 speeches in Acts (Porter 2001, 126) and they can be sorted into 20 main speeches (Steyn 1995, 29-30).

<p>NT(NA₂₇) Acts 7:3b</p> <p>ἔξελθε ἐκ τῆς γῆς σου καὶ [ἐκ] τῆς συγγενείας σου</p> <p>εἰς τὴν γῆν ἣν ἄν σοι δείξω</p>	<p>LXX Gen 12:1b</p> <p>ἔξελθε ἐκ τῆς γῆς σου καὶ ἐκ τῆς συγγενείας σου καὶ ἐκ τοῦ οἴκου τοῦ πατρός σου εἰς τὴν γῆν ἣν ἄν σοι δείξω</p>	<p>MT Gen 12:1b</p> <p>וּמִמְלֶכְתְּךָ מֵאֲרָבָה</p> <p>וּמִבֵּית אָבִיךָ</p> <p>אֶל-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֶרְאֶה:</p>
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The explicit quotation from Gen 12:1 is identified by an introductory formula in Acts 7:3a (καὶ εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτόν).¹ Both the MT and the LXX provide identical readings at this point.

2.1.1. Comparison of the LXX and Acts

The quotation in Acts 7:3 corresponds closely with the LXX version of Gen 12:1 (Fitzmyer 1998, 370). Nevertheless, there are also two major as well as one minor deviation visible in Acts 7:3, compared to the LXX.

The two major changes are the following: Firstly, the phrase καὶ ἐκ τοῦ οἴκου τοῦ πατρός σου is omitted, and secondly, the words καὶ δεῦρο have been added.

¹ According to Steyn (1995, 27-28), the formulae generally used to indicate explicit quotations in Acts, appear in one of two main forms—γράφω and λέγω. For example, γράφω is used when citing the two Psalms, in Acts 1:20. See also Acts 1:20 (presenting two Psalms citations); 7:42; 8:32; 13:33; 15:15; 23:5. Out of the 26 explicit quotations in Acts, the term is employed 7 times. The second formula λέγω is employed in the following references: Acts 2:16, 25, 34; 3:21-22, 25; 4:25; 7:3, 6, 27, 33, 35, 37, 40, 48; 13:34, 35, 40, 47(?); 28:25. If we include Acts 7:3, λέγω is seen to appear in 19 out of the 26 examples of explicit quotations. Other than the purpose of indicating location or place from where the text is derived in the OT, ὁ προφήτης is also used more generally in Acts (cf. Acts 2:16; 7:42, 48; 13:40; 15:15; 28:26). This term is used in 6 of the 9 times when the prophets are cited. In the case of other possible occasions when the OT is referred to, the following terms are employed: In the case of citation from the Psalms, ψαλμοὶ or βίβλος ψαλμοὶ are used (cf. Acts 1:20; 13:33). Additionally, the term Δαυὶδ also appears (cf. Acts 2:25, 34; 4:25). When the Torah is referred to, the term Μωϋσῆς is used (cf. Acts 3:22(Deut); 7:35(Exod); 7:37(Deut)).

The minor change is seen in the omission of ἐκ. However, it needs to be noted that this omission ἐκ is present in only two manuscripts.

2.1.1.1. Omissions

Firstly, some comments on the omission of ἐκ. The LXX and all MSS of Acts have ἐκ before the phrase τῆς συγγενείας σου, except in the case of B and D. Most scholars do not make mention of the omission of ἐκ before τῆς συγγενείας σου (cf. Archer & Chirichigno 1983, 5; Arnold 1996, 311-312; Bruce (1951)1976, 162; Conzelmann 1987, 52; Fitzmyer 1998, 370; Haenchen 1971, 278; Richard 1978, 41-43). Although the omission is attested to in only a few witnesses (B D), an alternative reading is presented in the margin of Westcott/Hort, and NA25. This is due to the fact that the addition of the term is supported by the vast majority of manuscripts (P⁷⁴ κ A C Ψ 33 1739 ℵ lat sy Ir^{lat}). Of particular significance is the attestation to the term in the more important manuscripts such as P⁷⁴ and κ.

Secondly: καὶ ἐκ τοῦ οἴκου τοῦ πατρὸς σου. Although both the LXX and the MT retain this phrase after τῆς συγγενείας σου, it does not appear in the equivalent NT reading. Wilcox (1965, 26-7) has suggested that the absence of the term forms “. . . a point of contact between a Targumic tradition and a text in Acts.” However, the parallel with the late Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, is merely accidental (cf. Conzelmann 1987, 52). According to Fitzmyer (1998, 370) the reason for the omission, lies in the question of why Abraham departed from Haran.

The other possible reason for the omission of this phrase in Acts, lies in Luke's retention of the phrase καὶ [ἐκ] τῆς συγγενείας σου, which appears prior to the omitted portion. It can be suggested that the essential meaning of the omitted phrase is still retained in the text of Acts, due to the retention of the prior phrase, which essentially says much the same thing (cf. Koivisto 1982, 57; Barrett 1994, 342). It is interesting to observe that Colson (1935, 62) in his translation of Philo's *On Abraham* unites the two words, 'relatives' and 'father's house' with the one term: 'kinsfolk.'

Thus, it can be established that the omission in Acts of καὶ ἐκ τοῦ οἴκου τοῦ πατρὸς σου is understandable as Abraham departed from Ur in company with Terah, his father (cf. Haenchen 1971, 278).

2.1.1.2. Addition

Here, we refer to: καὶ δεῦρο. This phrase appears before εἰς τὴν γῆν in the NT, but is lacking in both the MT and the LXX. Of course, the word δεῦρο has no exact parallel in the Hebrew, but appears in all NT manuscripts of

Acts 7:3. Hatch maintains that this expression “. . . *might be an early and graphic gloss*” ((1889)1970, 154).² Of interest is the fact that the two LXX manuscripts, E and M retain these two words as well as Chr passim, Cyr I 165; Eus VI 9, Tht III 760; Arm^{ap} Bo (cf. Davidson 1843, 384; Turpie 1868, 169; Bruce (1951)1976, 162; Wevers 1974, 149; Richard 1978, 42). However, the term does not appear in the reading of Clement (*I Clem.* 10:3). Nevertheless, the presence of the term in the minor LXX witnesses is paralleled by its appearance in the quotations of other Church Fathers.

However, the addition (or absence) of these words does not have a major impact on the context of the Abraham story whether in the NT or the OT.

The adverb δεῦρο generally means, ‘Come (here).’ It could thus indicate that God intended to reveal himself to Abraham in Canaan or in some way was particularly connected with Canaan. However in its context, the term points to the fact that Abraham meets God when he leaves his close relationships and goes on a pilgrimage without an inheritance of his own (Davies 1974, 268-272).

The inclusion, therefore, of καὶ δεῦρο could be regarded as a conscious addition by Luke.

In summary: Although a reference to Gen 12:1 might be implied in Heb 11:8, the Genesis text is not found explicitly quoted anywhere else in the NT.³ Even if Acts does not quote from Gen 12:1, word for word, it is nevertheless clear that Luke followed the LXX in his reading of Genesis (cf. Wilson 1962, 168; Kilgallen 1976, 125; Richard 1978, 41; Johnson 1992, 115; Barrett 1994, 342; Fitzmyer 1998, 370). However, as indicated above, Luke's changes do not significantly alter the original meaning of the Genesis text whether of the LXX or the MT, and thus in comparison to the original reading, they do not create any contextual difficulty within the Stephen discourse. Luke therefore uses this quotation the way he does, in order to reflect his theological intentions and agenda.

2.2. *Gen 15:13-14 in Acts 7:6-7*

The explicit quotation from Gen 15:13-14 is clearly identified by an introductory formula in Acts 7:6a (ἐλάλησεν δὲ οὕτως ὁ θεὸς ὅτι). Fitzmyer (1961, 302) has discovered a parallel to this introductory formula in CD 6:13 and 8:9. Unusually, another introductory formula is found in the middle

2 Fitzmyer (1998, 370) states that “. . . it catches the sense of the original Hebrew.”

3 Cf. Philo, *Migr.* 1; idem., *Her.* 56; *Jub.* 12:22-23.

of the quotation, more precisely at the beginning of v. 7b (ὁ θεὸς εἶπεν). Generally, two introductory formulae do not frequently occur in the case of only one explicit quotation; in fact one introductory formula often suffices for the introduction of two quoted texts:

The LXX adds καὶ ταπεινώσουσιν αὐτούς after καὶ κακώσουσιν αὐτούς compared to the equivalent account appearing in the MT. However, this addition, present in the LXX is not found in the equivalent Acts reading. Thus, there is a harmony between both the MT and the NT at this point. It should, however, be noted that both the LXX and the MT, retain the plural pronoun (αὐτούς; אַתָּם) before the phrase in the LXX, against the reading of the NT.

NT(NA ₂₇) Acts 7:6b-7	LXX Gen 15:13b-14	MT Gen 15:13b-14
<p>ὅτι ἐστὶ τὸ σπέρμα αὐτοῦ <u>πάροικον</u> ἐν γῆ <u>ἀλλοτρία</u> καὶ δουλώσουσιν <u>αὐτὸ</u> καὶ κακώσουσιν</p>	<p>¹³ ὅτι <u>πάροικον</u> ἐστὶ τὸ σπέρμα σου ἐν γῆ <u>οὐκ ἰδία</u> καὶ δουλώσουσιν <u>αὐτούς</u> <u>καὶ κακώσουσιν αὐτούς</u> <u>καὶ ταπεινώσουσιν</u> <u>αὐτούς</u></p>	<p>כִּי־יָרֵד יְהִי־לְךָ בְּאֶרֶץ לֹא־לְיָדְךָ וְעַבְדוּם וְעָנּוּ אֹתָם</p>
<p><u>ἔτη τετρακόσια καὶ</u> <u>τὸ ἔθνος</u> ὃ ἐὰν δουλεύσουσιν κρινῶ ἐγὼ ὁ θεὸς <u>εἶπεν</u> <u>καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα</u> <u>ἐξελεύσονται καὶ</u> <u>λατρεύουσίν μοι ἐν τῷ</u> <u>τόπῳ τούτῳ</u></p>	<p><u>τετρακόσια ἔτη</u> ¹⁴ <u>τὸ δὲ ἔθνος</u> ὃ ἐὰν δουλεύσωσιν κρινῶ ἐγώ, <u>μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα</u> <u>ἐξελεύσονται</u> <u>ὧδε μετὰ ἀποσκευῆς</u> <u>πολλῆς</u></p>	<p>אַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה: וְנָם אֶת־הַגּוֹי אֲשֶׁר יַעֲבֹדוּ דָן אֲנִי וְאֶת־הָאָרֶץ יִצְאֵוּ בְּרַכְשָׁ גְדוּלָּה:</p>

2.2.1. Comparison between the LXX and Acts

A comparison between Acts 7:6-7 and Gen 15:13-14, reveals ten main differences:

Acts features two transpositions of the LXX phrase, *firstly* ἐστὶ τὸ σπέρμα αὐτοῦ πάροικον and, *secondly* ἔτη τετρακόσια. *Thirdly*, Acts 7:6 reveals a change of the second person pronoun (σου) appearing in the LXX, to the third person pronoun (αὐτοῦ). Two substitutions are also evident.

Fourthly, ἀλλοτρίᾳ replaces οὐκ ἰδίᾳ and *fifthly*, καὶ replaces δέ. *Sixthly*, a number change is also evident. The plural pronoun (αὐτούς) is converted to the singular pronoun (αὐτό). There are also two omissions: *Seventhly*, αὐτοὺς καὶ ταπεινώσουσιν αὐτούς is omitted after καὶ κακώσουσιν; and *Eighthly*, ὥδε μετὰ ἀσποσκευῆς πολλῆς after ἐχλεύονται. *Ninthly*, a mood change is also evident. The subjunctive of the LXX (δουλεύωσιν) is changed into the indicative mood (δουλεύουσιν) in the NT. *Tenthly*, we have an addition. The NT adds καὶ λατρεύουσι, ν μοι ἐν τῷ τόπῳ τούτῳ after ἐχλεύονται.

We now turn our attention to some of these changes in more detail.

2.2.1.1. Transpositions

Firstly, we observe that πάροικον ἐστὶ τὸ σπέρμα σου (LXX) is changed to ἐστὶ τὸ σπέρμα αὐτοῦ πάροικον (Acts). In this transposition, the noun σπέρμα is placed at the beginning of the quotation, for the purpose of emphasis. The retention of σπέρμα from the LXX, retains the OT idea of the promise concerning Abraham's descendents. Of significance is the fact that no LXX MSS attest to this transposition,¹ although it is found in all textual witnesses of Acts 7:6. Therefore, the transposition as found in Acts, reflects Luke's interpretation.

Secondly, we turn to τετρακόσια ἔτη (LXX) which is changed to ἔτη τετρακόσια (Acts). It is noteworthy that the order 'year/cardinal' is also found in the LXX MSS (M b d f n s Chr Passim; Cyr II 117; Epiph I 372, Or IV 546; Tht I 172; La).² According to Steyn (2004, 67-68), this order of 'year/cardinal,' with a few exceptions, is very often found in Luke-Acts (cf. Lk 2:36-37, 3:1, 23; 4:25; 8:42-43; 12:19; 13:11; Acts 4:22; 7:30, 36, 42; 9:33; 13:20-21; 19:10; 24:17).³ When this order does appear, it is always in order to give weight to the cardinal number (cf. Lk 13:7, 16; 15:29; Acts 24:10). Therefore *pace* Barrett (1986, 59), this transposition is never insignificant in Luke-Acts.

Richard (1982, 40) irrefutably concludes that ". . . *in all probability the LXX employed by Luke provided the requisite text form or else, lacking this, he follows his own preference and modifies the word order.*"

1 The exception here would be the later MSS, Chr IV 630. It reads πάροικον after σου.

2 Cf. Wevers 1974, 170.

3 See also Mk 5:42; 2 Cor 12:2; Gl 1:18; and 1 Tm 5:9.

In conclusion, it seems to this researcher that the transposition is indeed partly due to Luke's stylistic preference, as well as the possible influence of his *Vorlage*.

2.2.1.2. Person change

Here, we consider σου (LXX) which is replaced by αὐτοῦ (Acts). The second person pronoun of the LXX reading (σου) is substituted by the third person pronoun in Acts 7:6: (αὐτοῦ). It stands to reason that the text of Gen 15:13 is in direct speech, whereas the text of Acts 7:6 is in indirect speech (cf. Cadbury 1929, 416). No LXX witnesses attest to this change.

2.2.1.3. Substitutions

We begin, firstly, with the substitution of οὐκ ἰδίᾳ (LXX) with ἀλλοτρίᾳ (Acts). The phrase ἐν γῆ ἀλλοτρίᾳ in Acts 7:6 reflects a somewhat awkward rendition of the LXX ἐν γῆ οὐκ ἰδίᾳ. In his employment of this phrase in the Stephen speech, Luke might well have recalled the expression: ἐν γῆ ἀλλοτρίᾳ from Exod 2:22, even if it is difficult to make any certain ruling.

In conclusion, the following can be said. Although Luke's substitution might reveal somewhat different wording, both the original phrase in the LXX, as well as Luke's own rendition in Acts, retain essentially the same meaning. Richard (1978, 51) suggests that the replacement is ". . . *consistent with the author's tendency to transform particular events, concepts, etc., into more generalized statements of the same.*"

It is notable that this tendency in Luke is found at various points in Acts 7 (cf. vv. 5(X2), 9, 10, 11, 26, etc.). Significantly, the substitution is supported by all NT witnesses as well as the minor LXX witnesses, which are also found in the quotations of the early Church Fathers at later points in history (cf. Chr IV 630; Cyr II 120; Epiph I 372; II 229; La^s). Accordingly, it can be suggested that the substitution once again, reflects an intentional change on the part of Luke.

Secondly, we consider δέ (LXX) which is substituted by καί (Acts). The conjunction δέ which appears twice in the quoted LXX text, has been replaced twice by καί in Acts. This is probably attributable to Luke's stylistic preference. The practice of using καί to mark the beginning of a sentence seems to be also evident in Luke's transpositions. Thus: (τὸ δε. ἔθνος → καὶ τὸ ἔθνος; μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα → καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα).

The replacements are supported by all NT witnesses, while among the LXX witnesses, C^v413 b n read καὶ τό, and 54 La^s (sed hab La^A) read καὶ μετὰ.

These substitutions therefore seem to reflect the stylistic preferences of the author, although the influence of his *Vorlage* cannot be ruled out.

2.2.1.4. Number change

Here we refer to αὐτούς (LXX) which is changed to read αὐτό (Acts). Even if as a collective,⁴ αὐτούς is well denoted by the personal plural pronoun. However, it is true that αὐτό, the personal singular pronoun is consistent with σπέρμα (Barrett 1994, 345). However, as this change needs to be discussed together with the omission of the LXX phrase αὐτοὺς καὶ ταπεινώσουσιν αὐτούς, we will return to the matter of this number change in the succeeding paragraph (2.2.1.5.) below.

2.2.1.5. Omissions

There are two omissions which need to receive our attention. First, αὐτοὺς καὶ ταπεινώσουσιν αὐτούς. Together with the change of number (discussed above), the personal pronoun αὐτούς is also omitted twice in the NT reading. The phrase αὐτοὺς καὶ ταπεινώσουσιν αὐτούς of the LXX is also not found in the NT reading, and here the MT is followed.

Luke here seems to have possibly used an independent *Textvorlage*, which differs from the LXX. Nevertheless, the LXX witnesses are fairly complicated in this regard, but in short, a reading which omits these four words is supported by only one LXX witness (55). At the same time, the change of number discussed above, together with the omission of the phrase, are not attested to by any LXX witnesses. Finally, it is to be noted that there are no NT readings which follow exactly the LXX readings, either.

In our opinion, again, the omissions of Luke here seem to be deliberate.

Second, there is the phrase ὃδε μετὰ ἀποσκευῆς πολλῆς. Luke also omitted this phrase which in the LXX, appears after ἐξελεύσονται, probably in order to bring about stylistic improvement. Within its new context, Luke's addition (καὶ λατρεύουσίν μοι ἐν τῷ τόπῳ τοῦτω) which replaces the omitted portion, reads more smoothly. No LXX witnesses support this omission and replacement.

2.2.1.6. Mood change

Here we turn our attention to the phrase δουλεύωσιν (LXX) which is replaced by δουλεύουσιν (Acts). The aorist subjunctive (δουλεύωσιν) in the LXX has been replaced by the future indicative (δουλεύουσιν) in Acts 7:7. According to Bruce (1976, 163), “. . . (t)he use of *άν* with *Fut. Indic.* is

4 Cf. Lk 1:55; Acts 3:25.

post-classical, being a mixture of two constructions, (1) the simple future, and (2) ἄν with the aorist subjunctive.”

No LXX witnesses support the mood change, but of interest is the fact that some NT witnesses (P⁷⁴ A D pc Ir^{lat vid}) read δουλεύουσιν, while others (P³³ κ B E Ψ 1739 M) read δουλεύωσιν, which agrees with the LXX.

In conclusion, therefore, it can be suggested that while Luke’s adjustment of the text can be attributed to a stylistic preference, the influence of his possible *Vorlage* cannot be ruled out, either.

2.2.1.7. Addition

Here we concentrate our attention on καὶ λατρεύουσίν μοι ἐν τῷ τόπῳ τούτῳ. This addition (referred to briefly, above) is likely based upon the LXX reading of Ex 3:12 (καὶ λατρεύετε τῷ θεῷ ἐν τῷ ὄρει τούτῳ). If Exodus is the background here, then Luke can be observed to have changed the Exodus phrase ἐν τῷ ὄρει τούτῳ in the LXX reading to ἐν τῷ τόπῳ τούτῳ. Thus, what we have here in the final Acts reading, is a case of Luke firstly subtracting from another OT text, before importing it into his reading of the Genesis text of the LXX.

In the context of the OT itself, the Exodus verse focuses on God granting to Moses and the Israelites the privilege of worshipping him in the future land of Israel or Canaan (Schille (1983)1989, 181), despite the fact that ἐν τῷ ὄρει τούτῳ refers literally to Mount Sinai. In the context of the NT, Schneider (1980, 455) and Barrett (1994, 345) regard the phrase ἐν τῷ τόπῳ τούτῳ as referring to the Temple Site, or Jerusalem, which can be seen as a synonymous term. Weiser (1981, 184), however, maintains the term refers specifically to the Temple.⁵

This understanding of the term, ‘this place,’ (τῷ τόπῳ τούτῳ) as referring to the Temple in Jerusalem, obviously resounds in, and bolsters the accusation Stephen is presenting to his contemporaries in Acts 6:13-14 (κατὰ τοῦ τόπου τοῦ ἁγίου [τούτου]) in v. 13; τὸν τόπον τοῦτον in v. 14). However, this is not to say that Stephen looked upon Temple worship as the primary goal of the Exodus (Barrett 2002, 99).

Kilgallen (1976, 38) rightly states that “. . . *it seems, worship of God was added by Stephen, and seemingly this addition serves in the nature of an explanation of why the people were going free.*” Not one of the LXX textual witnesses support this addition found in Luke’s NT reading.

5 Conzelmann (1987, 52) asserts that both Jerusalem and the Temple are equally acceptable alternatives.

In conclusion the following observations can be made. This quotation is found nowhere else in the NT. As already suggested, it is possible that Luke partly drew upon another *Vorlage* in the composition of his unique rendering of the LXX. However, if we look at the other modifications that Luke has also made to the LXX text, resulting in the final Acts reading, this addition might be due to both (1) the other grammatical changes (i.e., the Person Change, Number Change, Mood Change discussed above) as well as (2) the author's own stylistic preferences (revealed in the Transpositions, Substitutions, Omissions, and finally, the Addition).

Having mapped the changes Luke made to the LXX, and in some cases the MT for his reading of Acts 7, we are now in a position to comment in the next section on the possible theological motives that are reflected in the changes themselves.

3. Stephen's Speech: Theological Deductions

Stephen commences his speech with the employment of ἀδελφοί in v. 2, in order to assert that both he and his hearers, the Sanhedrin, belong to the same Abrahamic line of offspring to which he will presently refer. He emphatically repeats the term πατὴρ ἡμῶν Ἀβραάμ in v. 2. Employing this designation is critical to Stephen as the Sanhedrin will accuse him of attacking the two most sacred Jewish traditions: the Temple and the Law. In making use of the expressions: "Abraham our father" and "brothers and fathers," Stephen intends to show that he is just as much of a true Israelite as are his audience.⁶

Nevertheless, Stephen's thinking presents a complete contrast to the mindset of his audience in the way he uses the term "your fathers," at the end of his speech in vv. 51-52 (πατέρες ὑμῶν).⁷ Koet's statement (1989, 132) is right on the mark when he states that the term πατέρες ". . . depends mostly on the possessive pronouns whether it deals with the positive or negative aspect" of Israel's history. However, Stephen does not in fact distinguish himself from his hearers until his speech reaches its climax, and this means Luke has skillfully structured the speech around a striking, tragic reversal in its conclusion.⁸

6 For the use of "our fathers" in Luke-Acts, see Lk 1:55, 72; Acts 3:13; 5:30; 7:11-12, 15, 19, 38-39, 44-45; 22:14. See also: "your fathers" in Acts 3:25.

7 For the use of "your fathers" in Luke-Acts, see also Luke 11:47-48. Notice also "our fathers" in Acts 7:39.

8 Tannehill (1985, 78-81) points out that reversal in the plot is a central device of tragedy.

3.1. *The first quotation (Gen 12:1)*

The first quotation from the OT in Stephens' speech is taken from Genesis, Luke wishes to establish his theological and hermeneutical agenda. With the reading of Gen 12:1, Luke intends to establish that God appeared to Abraham in Mesopotamia and instructed him to leave his country and his people, before he came to live in Haran. This command, representing the *ipsissima verba* of God, serves to demonstrate that while many of the great events of Israel's salvation history took place within the land,⁹ this is not exclusively the case. A great many workings of God took place outside of the land itself¹⁰ (cf. Bruce 1976, 161; Ehrhardt 1969, 34; Richard 1979, 259; Dunn 1991, 65; Polhill 1992, 189; Sterling 1992, 373; Larsson 1993, 388; Witherington 1998, 266). Says Bruce (1987, 145): ". . . (i)t was in Mesopotamia, far from the promised land, that God first revealed himself to Abraham."

What then is Luke's attitude towards "the land" in Acts? It is most likely that whilst he did not necessarily criticize the general idea of God promising his people "land," in Scripture, he wishes to criticize the theological associations his Jewish contemporaries had made with respect to the land. According to Allison (1997, 644), Luke desired to disassociate himself from strong territorial theologies of the land, which had arisen in rabbinic tradition, such as that evident in *Mekilta* on Exod 12:1.

Of interest to the reader, is Luke's method of frequently making mention of various geographic locations, in describing the unfolding of Israel's history in the first section of his speech, in vv. 2-8. The geographical references are as follows: 'Mesopotamia,' 'Haran' (v. 2), 'the land' (v. 3), 'the land of the Chaldeans,' 'Haran' again, 'this land' (v. 4), 'the land' again (v. 5), 'a country not their own' (v. 6), and 'this place' (v. 7). These frequent references seem to downgrade the importance of the land, as in this section, Luke is at pains to illustrate the fact that Abraham and his descendants had no fixed place of residence.

Luke wishes to contrast the sovereign, unchangeable God, with the impermanent, contingent nature of the land. Through this contrast, God's faithfulness to the Israelites is made manifest in the Abraham story. In other

9 Luke presents positive and negative viewpoints on 'the land,' both in Luke-Acts generally, as well as within the Stephen speech. For positive references in Stephen's speech, see vv. 4,7,16,45. For a negative perspective, see vv. 2, 9-10, 20, 29, 30-33, 38, 43, 48-50.

10 Munck (1959, 222) regards Stephen's speech as a ". . . statement of a Diaspora Jew's attitude to the OT."

words, although Israel wandered incessantly from place to place in their history, God always accompanied them. Therefore one of the most notable theological motifs, frequently reflected in Luke-Acts, is the idea of God the sovereign Lord and subject of history.¹¹

In the Stephen discourse, God calls Abraham and in fulfilling his purposes for Abraham's descendants, God works even through Joseph's malicious siblings. God protects his people during their sojourn in Egypt, finally enabling them to leave the land of slavery through miraculous means, and settles them in the Promised Land, Canaan. Luke's selective reading of Israel's past, reflected in the Stephen speech, enables him to present to his audience, the recurring OT theme of God as the true agent operating in Israel's history (cf. O'Neill (1961)1970, 81; Schubert 1968, 243; Kilgallen 1976, 24-26; Richard 1978, 265, 330-332; Marshall 1980, 131-132; Squires 1983, 66-67; Kee 1984, 196-197; Johnson 1992, 121).

The theme of God as master of history is further confirmed in the Stephen discourse, through the employment of nine verbs that are concomitant with the subject, "God" in the first section: ὠφθη (v. 2), εἶπεν, δείξω (v. 3), μετώκισεν (v. 4), ἔδωκεν, ἐπηγγέιλαιτο (v. 5), ἐλάλησεν (v. 6), κρινῶ (v. 7), ἔδωκεν (v. 8). Martin-Asensio (1999, 244) says that God ". . . appears three times as full explicit subject, seven times as non-explicit subject and once as a non-subject participant."¹² At the same time, it is significant to note that Abraham is not referred to as an explicit subject of any action in Acts 7:2-8.¹³ The author is clearly not wishing to draw attention to the role of Abraham, as much as the all-important role of Abraham's God.

Luke's attitude towards Israel's land in the earlier part of the Stephen speech, foreshadows his view of the temple, which will become apparent in the later part of the discourse. Luke will argue that God and his actions are not exclusively restricted to any real estate, even the temple in Jerusalem.

11 In his Book, "The Unity of Luke's Theology," O'Toole testifies to this theme of Luke-Acts, noting Luke's regular usage of the following verbs πληρώω, ὀρίζω, τιθήμι, τάσσω, and especially δέι (cf. 1984, 23-32).

12 For references to God as explicit subject, see ὁ θεὸς τῆς δόξης ὠφθη τῷ πατρὶ ἡμῶν (v. 2); ἐλάλησεν δὲ οὕτως ὁ θεός (v. 6); ὁ θεὸς εἶπεν (v. 7). For references to God as a non-explicit subject, see εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτόν (v. 3a); εἰς τὴν γῆν ἣν ἂν σοι δείξω (v. 3b); μετώκισεν αὐτόν (v. 4); οὐκ ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ κληρονομίαν (v. 5a); ἐπηγγέιλαιτο δοῦναι αὐτῷ (v. 5b); κρινῶ ἐγώ (v. 7); ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ διαθήκην περιτομῆς (v. 8). For a non-subject participant category, see also λατρεῖσουσίν μοι (v. 7).

13 Porter (1993, 200) argues that the use of the subject in the explicit sense, is a means of emphasizing the importance of a character in Greek discourse.

This theme is progressively reinforced by Stephen as he proceeds in his presentation to the Sanhedrin.

3.2. *The second quotation (Gen 15:13-14)*

With the second Genesis quotation, Stephen now addresses himself to answering the charges of those who witness falsely against him, namely that he (1) is guilty of blasphemy against the temple, and that he (2) claimed Jesus would destroy the temple, and (3) change the customs of Moses (Acts 6:13-14).

This quotation reinforces Luke's argument that whilst no part of the Promised Land was ever given to Abraham, he nevertheless, had the promise of God's future blessing. However, together with the promise of future blessing, comes the present necessity for preparation (Rackham 1953, 102). In connection with this need to prepare for the coming inherited promise, Luke now moves to the second quotation from Genesis in the Stephen discourse of Acts 7. In spite of God's promise, Luke pointedly refers to the lengthy period during which Abraham's progeny wandered without a fixed abode, as well as enduring a 400 period of slavery.

Spencer (1997, 71) points out that in the context of the Stephen speech, the space dedicated to describing the lengthy delay before entering the land, as we have seen, serves the purpose of relativizing the significance of the actual land itself. With reference to the first quotation, the second citation also serves to emphasize that the major events within Israel's early history, occurred outside of the land. This remains a consistent theme throughout the Stephen speech, but particularly in the early section, dealing with Abraham (cf. Davies 1974, 270-272). This focus also serves to indicate Luke's attention to God's omnipresence in the argument. It refers to ". . . *the providential care of God for his people,*" irrespective of place (Marshall 2004, 165).

The speech then (v. 7) refers to the fact that after subjecting the Hebrews to four hundred years of slavery, God punished the nation who enslaved them, and brought Israel out of Egypt, in order to worship him in "this place." The second quotation focuses on the fact that God fulfilled this promise originally given to Abraham (cf. Bihler 1963, 38-46; Dahl 1966, 139-158; Pesch 1986, 258; Johnson 1992, 121; Polhill 1992, 189-190; Kee 1997, 97; Witherington 1998, 267). The quotation supplies the overarching theological framework to the rest of the speech, which confines itself to a promise/fulfillment pattern. According to Kurz (1999, 151), ". . . *(o)ne of the most consequential themes for the plotting of Luke and Acts is that of*

fulfillment of God's biblical promises to Abraham, a fulfillment that takes place from the beginning." See here also Dahl (1966, 143-145,147); Dupont (1985, 153-167); Hall (1991, 197); Brawley (1999, 109-132); Tannehill (1999, 327-328); Penner (2004, 306-307).

If the prediction of the partial fulfilment of the promise occurs in Acts 7:17, the complete fulfilment in Christ is finally depicted in Acts 7:37, when Luke refers to the coming of an eschatological prophet according to the model of Moses ("a prophet just like me"). Luke is clearly interested in how the promise given to Abraham will lead to an ultimate fulfilment that comes about much later, long after Abraham himself. Nevertheless, Luke portrays the fulfilment of the promise given to Abraham in different ways. The fact that Stephen and his hearers were in Jerusalem at that time, represents a partial fulfilment (Marshall 1980, 136). Furthermore, the deliverance of Joseph and Moses, along the way, also represents a partial fulfilment of the promise, even if its actual realization only comes about ". . . *in the messianic relation of the promise*" (Johnson 1992, 121).

We have already noted in the course of the argument above that the last part of Acts 7:7, differs from its OT source. Stephen states, ". . . *and afterward they will come out of that country and worship me in this place.*" However, as already seen, the OT text reads: ". . . *and afterward they will come out with great possessions.*" Luke has clearly inserted an addition, an addition which is based upon another OT passage, namely Exod 3:12. Here, instead of wishing to draw attention to the Israelite's deliverance from bondage in the insertion of the citation based on Exod 3:12, Luke intends rather to highlight the goal and destination of the exodus, which is to worship God in this 'place' (cf. Dahl 1966, 145; Spencer 1997, 71). Luke might have also intentionally substituted 'this place' for 'this mountain' in order to ". . . *make explicit what is only implied in the Genesis passage, namely, that Abraham's posterity would return to Canaan*" (Walasky 1998, 133).

In conclusion, it can be said that most of the grammatical changes and interpolations for which Luke was responsible, reflect his specific theological agenda, clearly seen not only in the new context of the speech itself, but also working itself out in Luke-Acts as a whole. This theological agenda is mostly seen in the mere fact of quoting the two selected Genesis passages, and only to a lesser extent in the changes that Luke actually made

to his originals, even if we acknowledge that in some cases, the changes were substantial.¹⁴

4. Conclusion

In this study we have attempted to demonstrate that the *first quotation* serves to highlight God's command to Abraham, to leave his country and proceed to the new land, to be revealed to him. Within the context of this first quotation, Luke portrays God as the Lord and the true subject of history, largely because of his revealing of himself to his people at various geographical points, many of which were *outside* of the land. This sovereign attribute of God is also made clear in the great commission of Acts: ". . . you will be my witnesses. . . and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8).¹⁵

The *second quotation* enables Luke to reflect on Israel's redemption from Egypt and her arrival in Canaan, in order to worship God, subsequent to the call of Abraham. The very presence of Stephen and his Jewish peers in Jerusalem serves to illustrate this promise's fulfilment. Although one of the major themes of the second portion of the Abraham's story is God's promise of land and offspring, the presence of God with his people cannot be restricted to any one particular place as God is universally present.

The implication therefore, is that the worship of God cannot be restricted to the temple in Jerusalem only. Because God is the sovereign subject of all history, he can be worshipped wherever his people find themselves (Acts 17:26-27). The sign of the true worship of God's people is not a matter of the worship venue, but whether or not God's people are obedient to him (Kee 1997, 97).

In conclusion, this paper has sought to illustrate that Luke's stylistic and grammatical changes to the LXX originals in the citations of Acts 7, serve to place the original quotations within the new context of Stephen's speech in Acts. This speech has been seen to reflect particular Theo-centric theological priorities, which include God's omnipresence, God's faithfulness to his promise and finally, God as the subject and master of history.

14 As pointed out above, the most noticeable change in Luke's two quotations from Genesis, is the addition-cum-substitution of the phrase και λατρεύουσίν μοι ἐν τῷ τόπῳ τούτῳ, of Exod 3:12.

15 Acts 1:8, NIV.

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