

Abstract

“THIS IS GOD’S WITNESS: A LITERARY ANALYSIS OF *DYNAMIS* IN LUKE AND ACTS”

JESSE KENNEDY COLBERT

Project under the direction of Professor Paul Holloway

This project is a literary examination to explore the use and theme of *dynamis* in Luke and Acts. *Dynamis* is one of the Greek terms for power which is most often translated into “power” or “miracle.” This examination will show that *dynamis* is integral to the verification of witnesses and their message is truth from God. *Dynamis*, for Luke, is the visible evidence authenticating the origin of the message as being from God. Acts 2:22, Luke states that Jesus was attested through *dynamis*, and this project will show how Luke uses *dynamis* as attestation.

The six sections of this paper will cover the following topics. Section one will explore Luke’s definition and use of *dynamis*. There are five uses of *dynamis* in Luke and Acts: first *Dynamis* is the power to perform miracles. Next, *dynamis* in the plural refers specifically to miracles. Also, *dynamis* can reference the heavens or heavenly beings. Additionally, *dynamis* can be eschatologically focused. Finally, *dynamis* is power from the Spirit. Most often in Luke and Acts *dynamis* is connected to the miraculous. Along with *dynamis*’s connection to the miraculous, it is important that the Spirit is the source of *dynamis*, because for Luke *dynamis* is proof that God’s witnesses are indwelt by the Spirit.

Section two will show the power struggle between God and the Devil that permeates the books of Luke and Acts. This section will explore the greatness of God's power that moves and controls history, but God is not the only power in Luke and Acts. The Devil's power is extensive in its scope: leading people astray, possessing some individuals, and even causing physical illness. The Devil shares his power with magicians, but even with the impressive power of the Devil, in Luke and Acts God is proved time and again to be the supreme force.

Section 3 will show that *dynamis* is wielded by God's witnesses and often directly defeats the Devil. People who the Devil has led astray are converted to Jesus. Demons are exorcized, and the sick and infirmed are healed. The *dynamis* that defeats the Devil shows that the one possessing it is a witness from God because God is the supreme power.

Section four will focus on *dynamis* is given not self-generated. This fact is important because it is distributed by God through the Spirit, marking the one utilizing *dynamis* as God's witness. God's witnesses are quick to point out that the *dynamis* is not theirs but is a gift from God, again showing them to be God's witnesses.

Section five shows that *dynamis* is often utilized by God's witness early in his mission for God. This early use of *dynamis* verified and established the individual as God's witness. God's witnesses display *dynamis* to verify a new economy. When Jesus forgives sin (Luke 5) and accepts an unclean woman with an issue of blood (Luke 8), as

well as when Peter preaches salvation through Jesus (Acts 3 and 4), *dynamis* accompanies these and others of a like nature to verify them as true.

Section six explores Luke's pattern to verify God's witnesses. Since Luke views faith as being based on what is visible, he desires to show salvation. *Dynamis* is an essential feature in displaying faith. God's witnesses are indwelt with the Spirit, and Luke reveals the reception of the Spirit by having God's witnesses utilize *dynamis* to perform visible miracles, signs, and wonders.

Dynamis for Luke is an arrow that points to one of two things. First, *dynamis* is an arrow that points to one declaring this is God's witness. Second, *dynamis* is an arrow that points to a message saying this is truth from God. *Dynamis* is visible evidence to help others believe in Luke's gospel message.

Approved _____ Date _____
Adviser

This is God's Witness:
A Literary Analysis of Luke's Use of *Dynamis* in Luke and Acts

by

Jesse Kennedy Colbert

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Adviser

Introduction

Power in the New Testament is expressed by various terms and metaphors. In New Testament literature, there are twenty-seven Greek words that convey the meaning of power and/or force.¹ Luke employs many of these words, but the focus of this study will be the term *dynamis*. Luke uses *dynamis* fifteen times in the book of Luke and ten times in the book of Acts. In regard to *dynamis* in Lucan theology, scholar Francois Bovon stated, "To my knowledge, there is no satisfactory study of the concept of *dynamis* in Luke."² With *dynamis* appearing twenty-five times in Lucan writings, Bovon's quote is a challenge that this paper will attempt to meet.

This project will be a literary analysis of the term *dynamis*. It will seek to describe, what the theme of *dynamis* is in the overall literary portrait painted by Luke. This paper will not only examine what *dynamis* does in the text, such as a healing, empowered speech, etc. The question being answered here is why Luke places an act of *dynamis* in specific points in his story. What is Luke trying to accomplish in the mind of his reader by using *dynamis*?

The paper's structure will be as follows: Section One will examine the meaning and the various uses of *dynamis* in Luke and Acts. Acts 2:22 and Luke 10:13 are expounded to glean Luke's overall theme of *dynamis*. This section will show the close connection between *dynamis* and miracle, and lastly *dynamis*'s source in the Spirit is revealed. In

¹ J. P. Louw and E. A. Nida, eds., *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains, vol 1* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1988), 680-683

² Francois Bovon, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 3 Volumes* trans. Christine M. Thomans and ed. Helmut Koester (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), 1.181 n. 23

Section Two an overview of God's power in Lucan thought will be given, which will aid the understanding of acts of *dynamis* which are most often manifestations of God's power in individual(s). The importance of *dynamis* in the struggle between God and his forces and the Devil and his forces will be explained. The difference between God's power and the Devil's will be explained, and God's power will be shown to be supreme, so victory over the Devil's power is strong evidence that a witness is indeed from God. In Section Three many of the uses of *dynamis* are proven to be direct defeat of the work of the Devil. Direct defeat of the Devil and those wielding his power is compelling evidence that a person is God's witness. Section Four will explore the importance that *dynamis* is not self-generated but is, in fact, a gift from God through the Spirit marking the one wielding *dynamis* as God's witness. In Section Five, a pattern will be shared where an act of *dynamis* often occurs while a new economy is being established. The new economies include: new agents of God beginning a ministry, new theological ideas, and/or new religious practices. *Dynamis* is the evidence that shows these new economies are from God, and in Section Six, the thematic connection concerning the theme of *dynamis*, the Spirit, miracle, signs and/or wonders, will be explored. A reoccurring pattern of verification emerges, as Luke gives attestation for God's witnesses by proving their reception of the Spirit through the utilization of *dynamis* causing a visible miracle, sign, and/or wonder to occur. In Luke and Acts, *dynamis* is a tool to prove or evidence something. It will become clear that Luke uses the theme of *dynamis* as a literary device to verify certain witnesses and their messages originate from God.

Section 1 – Foundation to Understand Luke’s Use of *Dynamis*

A. *Dynamis*’s Meaning in Luke and Acts

Dynamis in the New Testament means power or miracle.³ *Dynamis* originally meant ability or capacity,⁴ but through its use in Greek and Hellenistic philosophy, *dynamis*’s meaning grew to mean supernatural powers of various kinds from creation, miraculous acts, and some philosophies view *dynamis* as a form of deity.⁵ For Luke, *dynamis* is the power to act, and that action in Luke and Acts involves the miraculous.⁶ *Exousia*, often translated “authority” or “power” is another term for “power” often utilized by Luke. Since *exousia* is also often translated “power” in Luke and Acts, it is helpful to contrast *dynamis* and *exousia* to see the differences between the two terms. Understanding their differences will help focus our definition of *dynamis*. Hanz Conzelmann differentiated between the two by describing *exousia* as “potential power” or “delegated authority” and *dynamis* as “actual power.”⁷

Dynamis is used in a variety of ways with a range of nuances,⁸ and there are five of these nuanced meanings used in Luke and Acts pointed out by C. K. Barrett. First,

³ Gerhard Friedrich, “*Dynamis*,” in *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* (hereafter *EDNT*), eds. Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1990), 356

⁴ Walter Grundmann, “*Dynamis*” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (hereafter *TDNT*), eds. G. Kittel and G. Friedrich; trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley 10 Volumes (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964-76), 2.285

⁵ To trace the history of the use of *dynamis* as see its development from meaning ability to come to mean supernatural powers of various kinds see Grundmann, “*Dynamis*” in *TDNT*, 2.284-2.317 and Friedrich, “*Dynamis*,” in *EDNT*, 356-358

⁶ Pervo, *Acts a Commentary*, 42-43

⁷ Conzelmann, *The Theology of St Luke*, 181

⁸ C. K. Barrett, *The Holy Spirit and the Gospel Tradition* (London: S P C K, 1958), 69-93

dynamis is power to accomplish miracles.⁹ Healings (Acts 3:12, Acts 10:38), powerful speech (Acts 4:33), and numerous miracles without specific description (Acts 6:8) are described as acts of *dynamis* in Luke and Acts. Second, *dynamis* can mean the act of the miracle itself.¹⁰ When used in the plural, *dynamis* means miraculous actions (Acts 2:22, 19:11). These two uses are the two most common uses of *dynamis* in Luke and Acts.¹¹ Luke's abundant use of these two meanings makes it clear that *dynamis* is equated with supernatural miraculous power in the mind of Luke. Third, *dynamis* can refer to the heavenly realm whether it be heavenly beings or generally to the heavens (Luke 21:26 and 22:69).¹² Fourth, *dynamis* will be revealed as eschatological power.¹³ It is true that Mark uses *dynamis* eschatologically more than Luke (Mark 9:1 and 8:26), and Luke connects the Spirit with eschatological ideas more so than *dynamis*,¹⁴ but Luke does, in Luke 21:27, state that Jesus' *paurosia* will be joined with an outpouring of *dynamis*. The final definition of Barrett argues that *dynamis* is power of the Spirit¹⁵ (Luke 24:49, Luke 1:17, Luke 1:35). The Spirit is the source of *dynamis*, and with the Spirit being the source, an appearance of the Spirit is often accompanied by acts of *dynamis*.

There are twenty-five uses of *dynamis* in Luke and Acts. Although the D-tradition has a twenty-sixth use of *dynamis* in Acts 5:39, this is most likely an editorial

⁹ Ibid 75

¹⁰ Ibid 71-72

¹¹ See chart on page 5

¹² Barrett, *The Holy Spirit*, 73

¹³ Ibid 73-74

¹⁴ Conzelmann, *Theology of Luke*, 183

¹⁵ Barrett, *The Holy Spirit*, 76-77

addition to the D-tradition and not Lucan in origin.¹⁶ The following chart shows the uses of *dynamis* in Luke separated according to Barrett's definitions:

<i>Dynamis</i> meaning the power to perform miracles¹⁷	<i>Dynamis</i> meaning the miracle(s)	<i>Dynamis</i> referring to the heavenly realm	<i>Dynamis</i> used with an eschatological focus	<i>Dynamis</i> as power of the Spirit
Luke 1:17, 1:35, 4:36, 5:17, 6:19, 8:46, 9:1, Acts 3:12, 4:7, 4:33, 6:8, and 10:38	Luke 10:13, 19:37, Acts 2:22, 8:13, and 19:11	Luke 21:26, Luke 22:69	Luke 21:27	Luke 1:17, 4:14, 24:49, Acts 1:8, and 10:38

Some verses (Luke 1:17¹⁸ and Acts 10:38) overlap definitions between connecting *dynamis* to its source in the Spirit and the power to perform miracles. Seventeen of the twenty-five uses of *dynamis* are in regard to a miraculous action. The close connection between miracle and *dynamis* is further shown by three specific reactions to miracles. In Luke 4:36, the spectators are filled with admiration and religious terror because Jesus' words were filled with the power to expel a demon.¹⁹ They wonder about Jesus' *dynamis*. In Acts 3, Peter heals a lame man. In Acts 3:12, a crowd is amazed by this miracle of healing a lame man, and Peter explains the true

¹⁶ Bruce Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 293 and Eldon Jay Epp, "Anti-Judaic Tendencies in the D-Text of Acts: Forty Years of Conversation," in *The Book of Acts as Church History: Textual Traditions and Ancient Interpretations* Tobias Nicklas and Michael Tilly, eds., (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2003), 130-132

¹⁷ There are two uses of *dynamis* that are not placed in the above chart because they are a special category (Luke 10:19 and Acts 8:10). Both of these verses describe the *dynamis* of the Devil and one of his magicians. This *dynamis* of God's enemies will be explored in section 2B, 2C and 2D.

¹⁸ Luke 1:17, in section 3A, will be shown to be the miracle of empowered speech employed by John the Baptist to convert many.

¹⁹ Bovon, *Commentary on Luke*, 1.163

source of the *dynamis* was neither John nor himself.²⁰ In Acts 4:7, Peter and John are before Jewish leaders to discuss this same healing of the lame man. The Jewish leaders ask them to declare the name or power (*dynamis*) by which they have performed this miraculous act, which serves to set up Peter's speech to follow.²¹ On these three occasions, miracles are performed and the topic of *dynamis* arises in the reactive discussion thus displaying that when the miraculous occurs *dynamis* is also in view in Lucan theology. Luke's theology of miracle is laid on the foundation of his understanding of *dynamis*.

B. Luke Uses *Dynamis* as Evidence to Verify God's Witnesses and Their Message

In his own words, Luke describes *dynamis* as evidence that an individual and/or a message is from God. There are two verses in particular that reveal this fact, the first being Acts 2:22, which states, "Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles (*dynamis*) and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know"²² Acts 2:22 is from Peter's speech at Pentecost where he explains the outpouring of the Spirit and the speaking in tongues from earlier in the chapter. In his writings, Luke describes what *dynamis* accomplishes. For Luke, *Dynamis* is attestation, for it was through *dynamis* that the crowd in the text and the reader should know that Jesus was a man of God.

²⁰ Perco, *Acts a Commentary*, 96-97

²¹ Haenchen, *Acts of the Apostles*, 216

²² All scripture is quotations are taken from the *New American Standard Bible* version unless otherwise noted. The Lockman Foundation 1995

Jesus' miraculous acts are familiar to this crowd since no examples are given.²³ These miraculous acts make it clear that Jesus stood in a special relationship with God.²⁴ Ernst Haenchen wrote of this verse, "Jesus is described as a man for whom God has vouched to the Jews by wonders of all kinds."²⁵ The acts of *dynamis* by Jesus authenticated him as God's witness. Because of the evidence of *dynamis*, the guilt of those who have not converted is intensified.²⁶

Luke 10:13 makes the same point. Luke 10:1-12, the seventy are sent out to various towns across the region to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. Bovon writes "For Luke, salvation is not only a hearing of the words: it is also a seeing of God's great deeds."²⁷ According to Luke, viewing acts of *dynamis* should lead to salvation. The miracles of healing are to convince the people of the truth of the preaching of God's kingdom. When people witness these miracles and do not believe, it is startling because for Luke the evidence is clear. Then, in Luke 10:13, the towns of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum have woes pronounced against them by Jesus for not repenting. These woes are pronounced against them specifically because they are able to see God's witnesses perform miracles.²⁸ Their wickedness is pointed out as no ordinary wickedness. This wickedness is on a monumental scale, equal to and even

²³ Pervo, *Acts a Commentary*, 81

²⁴ C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles Vol I*, J. A. Emerton, C. E. B. Cranfield, and G. N. Stanton Eds., (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), 1.141

²⁵ Ernst Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary* translated by Basil Blackwell (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1971), 186

²⁶ Pervo, *Acts a Commentary*, 81

²⁷ Bovon, *Commentary on Luke*, 3.9

²⁸ Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 2.851

surpassing other infamously despicable cities.²⁹ In the mind of Luke, one would have to be legendarily evil to not believe when seeing *dynamis* displayed because it is convincing evidence.

Dynamis as verification is not unique to Luke. Miraculous acts are viewed in this manner by some of the Ante-Nicene Fathers. Haenchen wrote of the early Church, “Here the Holy Spirit appears as the mediator of the marvelous power (*dynamis*) which works miracles (*dynameis*³⁰). Since these were regarded in primitive Christianity as the decisive sign of legitimation...”³¹ Tertullian views “miracle” as legitimizing evidence. Tertullian wrote, “They will relate how that these men strengthened belief in their own doctrine through mighty works, how that they raised the dead, restored the sick, foretold the future-so that they might deservedly be regarded as apostles.”³² Tertullian continues, “If, as is the case, similar stories (*miracle stories*) are told among the pagans, God everywhere manifests signs of his power-to his own people for their comfort, to strangers, for a testimony unto them.”³³ According to Tertullian, mighty works caused individuals to be regarded as apostles, and miracles are a testimony of the truth of God. Lactantius speaks of miracles of being evidence so powerful that nations hurry to convert. He writes, “Christ’s virtues have been made manifest to you, along with that unheard-of-power...that was used over the whole world by those who proclaimed him. It has subdued the fires of passion and caused races, peoples, and nations that are most

²⁹ Ibid, 2.852

³⁰ This is plural form of *dynamis* which is usually translated “miracle.”

³¹ Haenchen, *Acts of the Apostles*, 143

³² Tertullian, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers 10 Volumes* eds. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994) 3.264-265

³³ Ibid 3.228

diverse in character to hasten with one accord to accept the same faith.”³⁴ Lactanius believes that miracles are not merely evidence, but rather mighty and magnificent evidence. It must be noted that this belief was not universal amongst the Anti-Nicene Fathers. In Contra Celsum, Origen affirms that miracles by themselves do not prove anything.³⁵ The idea of miracle as verification may not have been collectively agreed upon amongst the Anti-Nicene Fathers, but this opinion was held by Tertullian and Lactanius. Luke was not unique in using *dynamis* as evidence.

C. The Source of *Dynamis*

As mentioned earlier, the final definition Barrett gives of *dynamis* in Luke and Acts is that of power of the Spirit,³⁶ and this connection is made for good reason.³⁷ Five times³⁸ in Luke and Acts the Spirit and *dynamis* are presented as parallels in the style of Hebrew poetry.³⁹ This reveals the close nature of the Spirit and *dynamis*.

There are two major transitions in Luke and Acts. The first transition is from the Old Covenant to the ministry of the Messiah (Luke 4:14). Secondly, there is the transition from the ministry of the Messiah to the disciples (Luke 24:49 and Acts 1:8). In both

³⁴ Lactanius, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers 10 Volumes* eds. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994) volume 7 p. 52

³⁵ Origen, *Contra Celsum* 3.51 found in Pervo, *Commentary on Acts*, 42-43

³⁶ C. K. Barrett, *The Holy Spirit*, 76-77

³⁷ This point is debated by some scholars, who argue that the spirit and *dynamis* have separate tasks that do not overlap in Luke and Acts. They argue the Spirit is involved only in prophecy and *dynamis* is only involved in miracles, such as healing. However this view is dated and fallen out of favor with modern scholarship. To see this argument refer to E. Schweizer, “*Pnuema*” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, eds. G. Kittel and G. Friedrich; trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley 10 Volumes (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964-76) 6.389-455 or Robert P. Menzies, “Spirit and Power in Luke-Acts: A Response to Max Turner” in *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* no 49 Mr 1993, 11-20

³⁸ Luke 1:35, 4:14, Acts 1:8, 6:8. 10:38

³⁹ Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 1.350

transitions, the Spirit and *dynamis* come hand in hand as the heart of these transitions.⁴⁰ In fact, the Spirit and *dynamis* are so intertwined and interconnected at times, Hans Conzelmann points out that they appear to be practically identical.⁴¹ Conzelmann does not argue that they are identical, but only that their purposes are very similar. This close connection caused Hermann Gunkel to write, “[The Spirit] is the supernatural power of God which works miracles in and through the person. Everything we have learned of the activities of the Spirit witnesses to the appropriateness of this definition.”⁴² In saying that the Spirit is the “power of God which works miracles,” Gunkel is uniting the Spirit with *dynamis* because *dynamis* is the power to perform miracles. It becomes clear that the Spirit is the source of *dynamis* for both Jesus and the disciples as the witnesses of God.⁴³ He further writes that, “this power is given through the Spirit, and conversely the Spirit in Acts may be defined as the divine agency that gives this power.”⁴⁴

The work of the Spirit is similar to those actions performed with *dynamis*. First, the Spirit engages in empowered speech.⁴⁵ The Spirit gives words to God’s witnesses that are beyond human intelligence, and when they are spoken they amaze and captivate the hearers (Luke 12:11-12, Acts 4:13, 4:31, 11:28, and 21:10ff).⁴⁶ The Spirit

⁴⁰ Conzelmann, *Theology of Luke*, 183

⁴¹ Ibid 183

⁴² Hermann Gunkel, *The Influence of the Holy Spirit*, trans Roy A. Harrisville and Philip A. Quanbeck II (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 35 Similar definitions can be found in Conzelmann, *The Theology of Luke*, 183 and Barrett, *The Holy Spirit*, 77

⁴³ Max Turner, “The Spirit and the Power of Jesus’ Miracles in the Lucan Conception” in *Novum Testamentum* 33 no 2 Ap 1991, 124-152

⁴⁴ Barrett, *Acts of the Apostles*, 1.79

⁴⁵ Gunkel, *The Influence of the Holy Spirit*, 36

⁴⁶ Ibid, 36

performs external miracles, such as healings and resurrections.⁴⁷ The Spirit is given and received by individuals through faith,⁴⁸ so the Spirit is not self-generated. Empowered speech, miracles, and the Spirit being received will also be shown to be important aspects of *dynamis*. When discussing the charismatic gifts, Barrett lists healings, exorcisms, preaching with authority, distinguishing spirits, prophesying, forgiving sins, and physical protections. He continues by saying that a “pneumatic” man, or one indwelt with the Spirit, will possess some or all of these gifts.⁴⁹ This list overlaps many of the actions of *dynamis* in Luke and Acts. With these parallels as well as the Spirit being the source of *dynamis*, examining patterns of the Spirit will be helpful in dissecting the theme of *dynamis*.

The Spirit arrived at the beginning of major events or ministries to verify these as God’s works. Luke tells the readers that Jesus’ conception involved the Spirit (Luke 1:35), and prior to his public ministry again, the reader is told that the Spirit was upon Jesus (Luke 4:14). The disciples are promised in Luke 24:49, Acts 1:5 and 1:8 to be given the Spirit prior to their ministries, and in Acts 2:4, this promise is fulfilled. Acts 4:31 tells of a group of believers who are filled with the Spirit before their empowered preaching in Acts 4:33. When the seven are chosen in Acts 6, the reader is told that all who are chosen are full of the Spirit in Acts 6:3, and Luke is sure to tell us a second time in Acts 6:5 that Stephen is full of the Spirit. Philip’s ministry in Acts 8 is grounded in his indwelling of the Spirit in Acts 6:3 as one of the seven. In Acts 10:44-45, Gentiles

⁴⁷ Ibid, 36-37

⁴⁸ Although sometimes there are accompanying external signs, such as the laying on of hands or baptism, all of these external acts point toward the faith involved. Gunkel, *The Influence of the Holy Spirit*, 17

⁴⁹ Barrett, *The Holy Spirit*, 114

believe, receive the Spirit, and speak in tongues, which Luke equates to prophecy.⁵⁰

Barnabas, serving in Antioch, is a recipient of the Spirit in Acts 11:24. Agabus's prophecy of the famine is the work of the Spirit in Acts 11:28. Prior to their missionary work, Barnabas and Paul are mentioned as being set apart by the Spirit (Acts 13:2). Ephesian believers receive the Spirit and begin to speak in tongues (Acts 19:6). Jesus, the disciples, apostles, the seven, which include Stephen and Philip, Gentile believers, Barnabas, Paul, and Ephesian believers all have their reception of the Spirit made known by Luke to his readers in the early stages of their ministries.

Conversions are also verified by the arrival of the Spirit. Peter promises the Spirit to converts (Acts 2:38). Later in the book of Acts, Samaritans convert and receive the Spirit (Acts 8:17-19) and so do Gentiles (Acts 10:44-45 and 19:6). Also, upon Paul's conversion, his reception of the Spirit is mentioned by Ananias (Acts 9:17). In Acts 10:44, the Spirit enters Gentiles, which Peter takes as an undeniable sign that they are believers. Peter then states that baptism cannot be withheld from them. In Acts 11:15-18, Peter argues before the church in Jerusalem that Gentiles have received salvation because they have received the Spirit. At the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15, this argument again is made that the Gentiles are Christians because they received the Spirit,⁵¹ so the Spirit is undeniable proof of one's salvation.

The Spirit not only verifies individuals; it verifies a message, as well. John R. Levison writes that the Spirit gives truth in two important ways. First, the Spirit gives

⁵⁰ Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 15 and Pervo, *Acts a Commentary*, 63-65

⁵¹ Gunkel, *The Influence of the Holy Spirit*, 26

inspired interpretation of the scriptures.⁵² Peter's speech in Acts 2 cites Joel and Psalms, and alludes to Kings, Isaiah, and Deuteronomy. His speech gives the proper interpretation of these passages by the work of the Spirit in Peter.⁵³ Stephen's speech in Acts 7 is another example of the scriptures being interpreted by one filled with the Spirit. Paul's first proclamations of the gospel are of this sort, and as such he rightly interpret the scriptures (Acts 9:22).⁵⁴ These interpretations from the Spirit are unchallenged and accepted by Christians, because they find their origin in the Spirit, who attests to their veracity.

Along with inspired interpretation of scriptures, the Spirit gives truth in inspired proclamation.⁵⁵ The Spirit often in Luke and Acts brings a message to individuals and that message is unchallenged truth, which sees almost immediate fulfillment. In Luke 2:26, the Spirit reveals to Simeon that he will meet the Messiah before his death, and two verses later Simeon holds Jesus.⁵⁶ In Acts 10:19-20, the Spirit reveals to Peter that three men are looking for him and commands him to go downstairs. In the next verse, Peter goes downstairs and boldly declares that he is the one the three strangers are seeking, all this in confidence that the Spirit was speaking truth.⁵⁷ Peter goes with these men to help begin the Gentile mission. When reporting the Gentile mission to the church in Jerusalem in Acts 11:12, Peter justifies the Gentile mission and their inclusion

⁵² John R. Levison, *Filled with the Spirit* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 347-363

⁵³ Ibid, 349

⁵⁴ Ibid, 351-352

⁵⁵ Ibid, 357-363

⁵⁶ Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 1.427

⁵⁷ Gunkel, *The Influence of the Holy Spirit*, 23

by saying that the Spirit told me to do so,⁵⁸ which in the mind of Luke, verifies it as truth. In Acts 11:28, Agabus prophesies by the Spirit of a famine, and the church begins to collect food in the next verse.⁵⁹ Paul and Barnabas are set apart by the Spirit for a mission, and the church in Antioch sends them (Acts 13:2ff). Paul accepts that he will be delivered to the Gentiles because it came as a prophecy of the Spirit (Acts 21:11ff). When others are upset and urge Paul not to go to Jerusalem, Paul states his readiness for the fulfillment of this prophecy of the Spirit.⁶⁰ The Spirit gives a message and it is accepted and proved to be truth in Luke and Acts. The Spirit's presence verifies people as God's witnesses, and the Spirit verifies the truth of messages as well.

The work of the Spirit goes beyond this,⁶¹ but the aspects of the Spirit's work shared here are most relevant to the work and theme of *dynamis*. The Spirit verifies God's witnesses and their messages, and since *dynamis* comes from the Spirit, it too works as a verification tool in Lucan theology.

Section 2 – The War of *Dynamis* in Luke and Acts as Verification of God's Witnesses

A. God's Power in Lucan Thought

Now begins the examination of the war of *dynamis* with a description of God's power in Luke and Acts. As will be shown, *dynamis* is given, not self-generated, to God's witnesses, so an understanding of God's power in Luke and Acts will help lay a

⁵⁸ Pervo, *Acts a Commentary*, 287

⁵⁹ Haenchen, *Acts of the Apostles*, 375-375

⁶⁰ Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Anchor Bible: The Acts of the Apostles* (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 689

⁶¹ To read further on the work of the Spirit, see Gunkel, *The Influence of the Holy Spirit* and Levison, *Filled with the Holy Spirit*

foundation for this investigation of *dynamis* when given to God's witnesses in Luke and Acts. The ultimate power in Lucan thought belongs to God.⁶² This God is not holding onto power on some transcendent plane apart from humanity. God is actively using his power in the world. God uses His power to control the events of history, and he uses humans to accomplish His design.⁶³

There are several Greek words that emphasize God's directing of history. The prefix *pro*, on verbs, serves as a sign that the actions involved are ordained by God and his power. Several examples of this technique are found in the following: Acts 3:20, 22:14, and 26:16 use *procheiridzein*, Acts 10:41 uses *procheirpotonein*, and Acts 4:28 uses *prooridzein*.⁶⁴ Each of those Greek words' means "to be preordained."⁶⁵ When speaking of Acts 4:28, Richard Pervo writes, "Verse 28 affirms the belief of those praying that these events conform to God's foreordained plan."⁶⁶ Peter's speech at Pentecost reveals Luke's belief of God being the catalyst behind historical events (Acts 2:22-24, 2:29, 2:33-34).⁶⁷ Individuals, including rulers, are moved as pawns in the plan of God by his power, and "political and religious leaders ignore that at their peril."⁶⁸

⁶² Douglas R. Edwards, *Religion and Power* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 66-68

⁶³ John T. Squires, *The Plan of God in Luke-Acts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993)

⁶⁴ Edwards, *Religion and Power*, 66 and 174

⁶⁵ Wilhelm Michaelis "Procheiridzein" in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, eds. G. Kittel and G. Friedrich; trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley 10 Volumes (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964-76), 6.862. Michaelis agrees that *procheiridzein* does mean to appoint, but his view on the importance of the prefix "pro" is not as strong an indicator that the appointment was made as temporally early as Edwards, *Religion and Power*, 66 and 174. K. L. Schmidt, "Prooridzein" in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, eds. G. Kittel and G. Friedrich; trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley 10 Volumes (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964-76), 5.456

⁶⁶ Pervo, *Acts a Commentary*, 123

⁶⁷ Edwards, *Religion and Power*, 67

⁶⁸ Ibid 68

In Luke and Acts, God's power emanates from Jerusalem, spreads across the known world, and ends in Rome with a vision to spread universally.⁶⁹ It is God's desire to see his power and influence spread. As the apostles and disciples expand the movement of the gospel throughout the world,⁷⁰ they are providing opportunity for God to manifest himself throughout the world.⁷¹ With God causing the events to spread the gospel, it becomes clear that Luke wants to see God's power disseminated across the world.

In Luke and Acts, God's power is given to his followers to use as his witnesses in the world. Jesus, the apostles, and the disciples who use God's power are modeled after the Old Testament prophetic tradition.⁷² Jesus is the first in Luke and Acts to display divine power and does so through empowered speech and miracles (Luke 24:19), which astounds crowds and brings persecution. Jesus converts many, and they follow him because of his powerful deeds and speech. Persecution follows his acts of power, ending with his arrest and death, all of which are a part of God's plan (Acts 2:22-14).

This pattern continues with the apostles and disciples in Acts. They display God's power through empowered speech, miracles, and are persecuted for it.⁷³ Peter,⁷⁴ other

⁶⁹ Ibid 88

⁷⁰ Hans Conzelmann, *The Theology of St Luke*, Translated by Geoffrey Buswell (New York: Harper Brothers, 1960), 18-94

⁷¹ Edwards, *Religion and Power*, 89

⁷² Ibid 110-111

⁷³ Halvor Moxnes, "Patron-Client Relations and the New Community in Luke-Acts," in *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation* ed. J. Neyrey (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1991), 258-260

⁷⁴ Acts 2:14-38 empowered speech, 3:7 miracle, 4:1-21 persecution

apostles,⁷⁵ Stephen⁷⁶ and Paul⁷⁷ all follow a similar cycle of Jesus. Even though they face persecution, the agents of divine power in Luke and Acts amaze.⁷⁸ There are crowds,⁷⁹ Roman and Jewish officials, and even religious leaders who are all amazed.⁸⁰ Even an enemy of God, Simon Magus, a magician with his own *dynamis*, was amazed at the power displayed through Philip.⁸¹ It is clear that God's divine power, manifested through his witnesses, produces empowered speech, miracles, invites persecution, and amazes many.

The persecution flows out of a struggle between the power of God and the power of the Devil in Luke and Acts. It is not only God and his witnesses who possess and display *dynamis*; the Devil and his minions possess and display *dynamis*, as well. *Dynamis* plays an integral role in describing the struggle between God and the Devil, and it is through the superiority of God's *dynamis* that people can tell if an individual is an agent of God or the Devil. A witness of God is proved to be just that by defeating the *dynamis* of the Devil in a confrontation.

B. Demonic Force Posses *Dynamis*

The Devil and demons possess *dynamis*. In Luke 10:19, Jesus tells his disciples that he has given them authority over the *dynamis* of the enemy. The enemy in view in

⁷⁵ Acts 4:33 empowered speech, 5:12-16 miracle, 5:17-18 persecution

⁷⁶ Acts 6:10 and 7:2-53 empowered speech, 6:8 miracle, 7:54-60 persecution

⁷⁷ Paul delivers numerous empowered speeches in many cities across Rome during his missionary journeys beginning in Acts 13. Miracles are again mentioned in Acts 19:11-12, and again Paul faced persecution in many of the cities he visited.

⁷⁸ Edwards, *Religion and Power*, 113

⁷⁹ Luke 4:32, 11:14, Acts 2:7, 3:12

⁸⁰ Luke 2:47 Acts 4:13, 13:12

⁸¹ Acts 8

this verse is the Devil and other demonic forces.⁸² They are not weak enemies but are ones with power to oppress. For Luke, the enemy possesses a measure of *dynamis*, and the Devil is a powerful being.

The Devil's position of power is described rather remarkably in the temptation of Jesus. In Luke 4:6, the Devil states that he has the power to give authority (*exousia*) over the nations to whom he wills. This statement is not refuted by Jesus, but accepted as fact, solidifying in the theology of Luke that the Devil is the ruler of the inhabited world with tremendous power.⁸³ *Exousia* is the "ability to perform an action."⁸⁴ It speaks of the sphere of power⁸⁵ or where one exerts one's power, and the Devil's sphere of power, according to Luke, appears to be the whole earth. The Devil's power is mighty enough to work in the entire world.⁸⁶

The Devil uses his *exousia* and *dynamis* to oppress humankind through testing, accusations, and leading people astray from God.⁸⁷ The Devil has entire populations under his power. For Luke, this would include the Gentiles and, most likely unrepentant Jews.⁸⁸ There is a remnant of faithful to God, but large masses of people are led astray

⁸² Bovon, *Commentary on Luke*, 2.31

⁸³ Susan R. Garrett, *Demise of the Devil: Magic and the Demonic in Luke-Acts* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), 38

⁸⁴ Ibid p.681 and Werner Forrester, "*Exousia*" in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, eds. G. Kittel and G. Friedrich; trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley 10 Volumes (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964-76), 2.562

⁸⁵ Forrester, "*Exousia*" in *TDNT*, 2.562-570

⁸⁶ Schuyler Brown, "Apostasy and Perseverance in the Theology of Luke," in *Anelecta Biblica* 36 (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Press, 1969), 6-19

⁸⁷ Garrett, *Demise of the Devil*, 39

⁸⁸ Ibid 40

by the Devil, so that most of humanity resists the Spirit.⁸⁹ The idea that the majority of the peoples rejected God and his messengers is not unique to Luke.⁹⁰ This widespread rejection of God throughout the world is a testament of the might of the Devil and his agents.

C. Demonic Power Manifested

Satanic and demonic power manifests itself in three significant ways in Lucan theology. First, The Devil's power is manifested by leading humans toward unbelief. Bovon writes, "It is the goal of the Devil to prevent belief and salvation, that is, his own defeat."⁹¹ Luke 8:12 states that the Devil steals the word of God away before individuals can believe. Again, it is stated in Acts 26:18 that the work of the Devil can be seen in unbelief. This verse indicates those not living under the dominion of God are, in fact, living in darkness, in the dominion of the Devil under his authority and power.⁹² The Devil's use of temptation also shows Satan's desire and ability to lead people astray from God (Luke 4 and Luke 22). Second, there is demonic possession. Demons have the power to subjugate and control certain individuals. The final manifestation pertinent to this study is made clear in Luke 13:16. Jesus and a synagogue ruler are discussing a healing that Jesus performed on the Sabbath. When describing the woman's condition, Jesus states that the Devil had her bound for eighteen years, and her affliction was being crippled. Jesus connects this physical abnormality as a work of the Devil and his

⁸⁹ Ibid 40

⁹⁰ Nils A. Dahl, *Jesus in the Memory of the Early Church* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1976), 77 and Tiede, *Prophecy and History*, 58-59

⁹¹ Bovon, *Commentary on Luke*, 309

⁹² Richard Pervo, *Acts a Commentary*, 632-633

agents. This point is also proved through the similar language Luke uses for demonic possession and physical illness, denoting their close relationship (Luke 4:40-41, 7:21, 9:1, and Acts 10:38).⁹³ In Lucan theology, being crippled, blind, leprous, and the like find their source in the Devil's power. Demonic possession is the binding of one's soul, and illnesses are the binding of one's body by the power of the enemy. Garrett writes, "Satan controls individuals by means of sickness and demon possessions. He controls entire kingdoms, whose inhabitants live in the darkness of idolatry, worshipping Satan and giving him glory that is due God alone."⁹⁴ It is obvious that every demon possessed individual is being oppressed by satanic power, but with the Devil's authority over the peoples of the earth as stated in Luke 4:1ff, Luke 8:12, Acts 26:18, unbelieving nations are being oppressed by the power of the Devil, as well. Along with possessed individuals and unbelievers, people that face illness and disease are under the oppressive power of the Devil and the demonic.

When it is understood that unbelief, demonic possession, and illness are done through the power of the Devil in Lucan thought, the satanic conflict and this war of power between God and the Devil becomes a clear and dominant theme in Luke and Acts.

D. Magicians, Users of Satan's *Dynamis*

One aspect of the Devil's power is, like God, he can grant *dynamis* to his followers. Although many of Jesus' and the disciples' actions in miracle stories can find

⁹³ Garrett, *Demise of the Devil*, 129 n. 15

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, 43

correlations in Hellenistic magic stories,⁹⁵ it is clear that in the mind of Luke that all magic and practitioners of magic are considered followers of the Devil, thus receiving their power from him (Luke 11:15 and Acts 13:10).⁹⁶ In Lucan theology, there is a clear difference between magic and miracle. It is a difference of darkness and light, evil and good, the Devil and God. Magic is from the Devil, and miracles are from God. Magicians are described as having *dynamis* (Acts 8:10) and perform supernatural feats that amaze individuals. One of Luke's desires in Luke and Acts is to motivate people to end magical practices.⁹⁷

Simon 'Magus,' Bar-Jesus, and the seven sons of Sceva are all described as magicians or connected to magic by Luke. All of these magicians are, at least at the beginning of their stories, enemies of God and his followers. Simon is clearly portrayed as a satanic figure working against God.⁹⁸ Bar-Jesus is not only a magician, but he engages in false prophecy, too, leading people astray,⁹⁹ which has been shown earlier as a work of the Devil. The story of the seven sons of Sceva illustrates the conflict of magic verses religion (miracle).¹⁰⁰ The seven sons attempt to magically invoke the names of the Jesus and Paul for their own personal gain, instead of using religion.¹⁰¹ Just as God has his agents in the world manifesting His power, the Devil has his agents in the world manifesting his power. In the war of power in Luke and Acts, the Devil's army consists

⁹⁵ Garrett, *Demise of the Devil*, 19-36

⁹⁶ Ibid 35-36

⁹⁷ Pervo, *Acts*, 268

⁹⁸ Garrett, *Demise of the Devil*, 74-76

⁹⁹ Hans-Josef Klauck, *Magic and Paganism in Early Christianity: The World of the Acts of the Apostles* trans. Brian McNeil (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), 48

¹⁰⁰ Scot Shauf, *Theology as History, History as Theology: Paul in Ephesus in Acts 19* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2005), 107

¹⁰¹ Pervo, *Acts a Commentary*, 476-478

of himself, demons, and magicians. All members of this army are confronted by the power of God at some point.

E. God's *Dynamis* is Greater

Luke describes satanic power as an impressive force. He possesses authority over nations. He has a demonic army that can bind individuals through possession. He is the cause for physical illness, and on top of that, the Devil gives his power to individuals to perform remarkable feats. The three magicians named above were all quite successful in society, speaking to their power. Simon was described by the people as the great *dynamis* of God (Acts 8:10), revealing to the reader his exalted social status. Bar-Jesus was an associate to the Proconsul of Cyprus, Serguis Paulus (Acts 13:7). Luke portrays the seven sons of Sceva as exorcists with a high social status by referencing their lineage as sons of a high priest.¹⁰² The Devil not only has agents in the world, but these are agents with exalted social status.

As referenced earlier, the clear theme that runs through Luke and Acts regarding this impressive power of the Devil is that God's power is, without question, the superior force. There are several important confrontations to note between the power of God and the Devil. When the reader learns of the Devil's grand authority in the world in Luke 4, it is the Devil with all of his authority suffering a grand defeat at the hands of God's man, Jesus.¹⁰³ When God's witnesses find individuals possessed by demons, the

¹⁰² Ernst Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary* translated by Basil Blackwell (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1971), 565 and Pervo, *Acts a Commentary*, 477

¹⁰³ Garrett, *Demise of the Devil*, 43

demons are defeated and are exorcized. Some demons even express the surety of their defeat and their weakness compared to God's power, such as Legion in Luke 8:31 begging Jesus not to do his worst. People are converted from the Devil's side individually, in large crowds by the thousands, and across the world in Luke and Acts. Also, physical illness is healed, some by a word, some by touch, and others in seemingly inadvertent ways such as being in one's shadow (Acts 5:15) and by handkerchiefs touched by God's witness (Acts 19:12). This is what spurred Pervo to write, "the message is clear enough: human misery, the fruit of Satan's power, is being wiped off the face of the earth."¹⁰⁴ The impressive power of the Devil is nothing compared to the power of God.

Also, each of the magicians mentioned in Acts are confronted by God's witnesses: Simon Magus by Philip and later by Peter, Bar-Jesus by Paul, and the seven sons of Sceva by Paul. These confrontations by God's witnesses confirm the disdain by Luke for magic and its practitioners. Simon Magus becomes a convert on seeing the *dynamis* displayed through Philip (Acts 8:13). There is debate over Simon's conversion, whether or not it was sincere.¹⁰⁵ There is little evidence in the text for any significant change in Simon Magus's life.¹⁰⁶ His conversion, whether selfishly motivated or not, does show the superiority of the power of God over that of the Devil, because Simon bows to the more impressive power. Bar-Jesus, whose name means son of Jesus, is quite bluntly pointed out by Paul to be the opposite of his name's meaning, when he

¹⁰⁴ Pervo, *Acts a Commentary*, 473

¹⁰⁵ Klauck, *Magic and Paganism*, 17-23 and Garrett, *Demise of the Devil*, 71-74

¹⁰⁶ Garrett, *Demise of the Devil*, 72, Klauck, *Magic and Paganism*, 20-23, and Pervo, *Acts a Commentary*, 215-216

calls him a “son of the devil” and “enemy of all righteousness” in Acts 13:10. Bar-Jesus and his work as a magician are utterly against God.¹⁰⁷ Then, Paul strikes Bar-Jesus blind, and the Proconsul of Cyprus immediately converts. The seven sons of Sceva utterly fail in invoking the name of Jesus to perform an exorcism, which prompts many to burn their magical texts.

The Devil himself is defeated when confronted by God’s empowered witnesses. Demons are ordered out of individuals by God’s empowered witnesses, and illnesses are no match. The Devil’s influence is ended through conversion after conversion. The Devil’s agents look foolish when confronted by God’s empowered witnesses. The Devil does possess power in Lucan theology, but it is nothing compared to God’s power which he gives to his witnesses. These defeats verify God’s witnesses because it is God’s power that is superior, so when the Devil’s *dynamis* is defeated, God’s *dynamis* must have been used.

Section 3 – *Dynamis* that Defeats the Devil’s Works Comes from God

A. *Dynamis*: Miracle of Empowered Speech

Luke 1:17 “It is he who will go *as a forerunner* before Him in the spirit and power (*dynamis*) of Elijah, TO TURN THE HEARTS OF THE FATHERS BACK TO THE CHILDREN, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”

¹⁰⁷ Klauck, *Magic and Paganism*, 49

This turn of phrase, “power of Elijah” connects John the Baptist to the prophets of old.¹⁰⁸ As mentioned earlier, Luke models agents of God’s power after Old Testament characters of power. This verse is an obvious example of using an Old Testament character by name instead of only employing allusion.

Although Elijah was known in the Old Testament as a miracle worker,¹⁰⁹ John the Baptist does not perform a healing miracle or an exorcism in the text. John the Baptist is described as having the Spirit and the *dynamis* of Elijah to turn hearts and convert individuals to follow Jesus. John the Baptist uses rhetoric to convert hearts. Without a single exorcism or healing, the *dynamis* of Elijah must refer to his powerful speech.¹¹⁰ Also, the name Elijah being a prophet hints at powerful speech as well. Empowered speech is a miracle in the mind of Luke. This becomes obvious in the results of John the Baptist’s work as he preached to crowds (Luke 3:10). Upon hearing John the Baptist preaching, many desired conversion. This is expressed through the thrice asked question of “What should we do?”¹¹¹ Seeking John the Baptist’s answer to this question showed their faith in his words. This question being asked three times is important, because an event occurring three times establishes a pattern and conveys significance.¹¹² The fact that the people want to convert and accept John the Baptist’s

¹⁰⁸ Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Anchor Bible: The Gospel According to Luke 2 Volumes* (New York: Doubleday, 1981), 1.319

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid* 326-327

¹¹⁰ Max Turner, “The Spirit and the Power of Jesus’ Miracles in the Lucan Conception,” 124-152

¹¹¹ Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 1.469 n. 10

¹¹² Leland Ryken, James C. Wilhoit, and Tremper Longman III Eds., *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 866-867

message is certainly a noteworthy event, but it is also a common event, displaying the power of John the Baptist's preaching.

There are three groups specifically mentioned that seek conversion through this repeated question. There are the crowds (Luke 3:10), the tax collectors (Luke 3:12), and soldiers (3:14). The crowds denote the sheer number of people seeking to hear and respond to the preaching of John the Baptist, and the term "crowds" is plural. This reveals that it was not just one large group of people but many large groups, probably on multiple occasions. The tax collectors are regarded as traitors serving the Roman Empire and oppressors of the Jewish people due to their tendency of overtaxing to line their own pockets.¹¹³ The soldiers also served the Roman Empire, either by being in the employ of Herod Antipas¹¹⁴ or possibly, if Luke has future pagan congregations in view, Roman soldiers.¹¹⁵ John's preaching is indeed miraculous seeing so many convert from across various racial and socio-economic backgrounds.

Acts 4:33 "And with great power (*dynamis*) the apostles were giving testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and abundant grace was upon them all."

Acts 4:33 is part of a summary statement of apostolic activity¹¹⁶ that again shows God's witnesses using empowered speech. This apostolic preaching, emphasizing the resurrection,¹¹⁷ was delivered with *dynamis*. Again, it was not ordinary persuasive

¹¹³ J. D. Douglas and Merrill C. Tenney Eds., *New International Bible Dictionary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987), 726

¹¹⁴ Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 1.470 n. 14

¹¹⁵ Bovon, *Commentary on Luke*, 1.124

¹¹⁶ Pervo, *Acts a Commentary*, 126-27

¹¹⁷ Hans Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, Trans. James Limburg, A. Thomas Kraabel and Donald H. Juel (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1963), 36

speech.¹¹⁸ It was preaching that was “powerful, convincing speech”¹¹⁹ This preaching with *dynamis* in Acts 4:33 is an answer to the prayer in Acts 4:30 which the apostles pray for healings, signs, and wonders, again showing the close connection between *dynamis* and miracles.¹²⁰ The Spirit comes upon them in Acts 4:31, and they begin to speak God’s message, one that is continued in Acts 4:33 with *dynamis*. With the prayer for miracles in Acts 4:30, this speech with *dynamis* in Acts 4:33, shows that empowered speech is miraculous in the mind of Luke.

Leading people away from God is one of the activities of the Devil in this war of power, so each conversion is a direct defeat of the Devil’s power to lead people away from God. John the Baptist’s empowered speech led to numerous conversions, including those amongst the Roman soldiers and tax collectors, which are all seen by Luke as under the authority of the Devil as noted above. Apostolic preaching, too, saw many conversions, and these conversions defeat the Devil’s power to mislead, which verifies John the Baptist and the Apostles were God’s witness, wielding the very power of God.

B. *Dynamis*: Miracle of Healing

The most common miracle performed with *dynamis* in Luke and Acts is healing.

Luke 5:17 “One day He was teaching; and there were *some* Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting *there*, who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and *from*

¹¹⁸ Pervo, *Acts a Commentary*, 126-127

¹¹⁹ C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles Vol I*, J. A. Emerton, C. E. B. Cranfield, and G. N. Stanton Eds., (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), 254

¹²⁰ Haenchen, *Acts of the Apostles*, 227

Jerusalem; and the power (*dynamis*) of the Lord was *present* for Him to perform healing.”

Luke 9:1 – “And He called the twelve together, and gave them power (*dynamis*) and authority over all the demons and to heal diseases.”

These two verses are significant to see Luke’s use and understanding of *dynamis*. Luke 5:17ff is the story of the healing and forgiving of a paralyzed man, and Luke 9:1 is the commissioning of the twelve disciples. The synoptic counterparts to these stories¹²¹ do not use the word *dynamis* in their telling of these stories,¹²² so it is a Lucan addition. This reveals the close relationship between *dynamis* and the miracle of healing in the mind of Luke.¹²³ Jesus needed the *dynamis* of God to heal the paralyzed man, and Jesus gave the disciples *dynamis* prior to sending them out on a mission, so they could heal, combat evil, and be successful on their mission.¹²⁴ When Luke thinks of a paralyzed man being made to walk or a healing in general, he thinks of the *dynamis* of God.

Luke 6:19 – “And all the people were trying to touch Him, for power (*dynamis*) was coming from Him and healing *them* all.”

Luke 8:46 – “But Jesus said, ‘Someone did touch Me, for I was aware that power (*dynamis*) had gone out of Me.’”

Acts 19:11-12 – “God was performing extraordinary miracles (*dynamis*) by the hands of Paul, so that handkerchiefs or aprons were even carried from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out.”

These three healing stories are similar because the healing *dynamis* exudes from God’s witness and the healings occur at just a touch, sometimes of God’s witness or a

¹²¹ Mark 2:1-12 and Matthew 9:1-8 for the healing of the paralytic and Mark 6:6-13 and Matthew 10:1-4 for the commissioning of the twelve disciples

¹²² Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 1.578

¹²³ Bovon, *Commentary on Luke*, 1.181

¹²⁴ *Ibid* 1.344

cloth that has contacted God's witness.¹²⁵ Although Acts 19:11 uses *dynamis* in the plural to mean a miracle, its meaning differs slightly, the similarities to Luke 6:19 and 8:46 warrant their discussion to be united. These three stories have led to numerous theories on *dynamis*.¹²⁶ Some argue that these pericopes show Hellenistic magic's influence on Luke's use of *dynamis* and miracle,¹²⁷ but with Luke's obvious disdain for magic, as shown earlier, this seems unlikely.¹²⁸ There may be similarities between early Christian miracle workers and Hellenistic magicians. For example, there are striking similarities to the handkerchiefs and aprons, in Acts 19:11, to magical talismans in Hellenistic magic¹²⁹ but Luke's theology clearly views magic as against God and his followers. Luke 19:11, distances these miracles, using cloths, from magic by referencing God as the source of power to perform the miracles and not the cloths themselves.¹³⁰ Luke also distances miracle and magic in the book of Acts with the rejection of payment for miracles as a seemingly fundamental difference between miracle and magic.¹³¹ These stories cannot, in the mind and theology of Luke, connect miracles to Hellenistic magic.

¹²⁵ Ibid 1.213-214, and 1.338

¹²⁶ For further exploration of these theories see Haenchen, *Acts of the Apostles*, 561-563

¹²⁷ J. M. Hull, *Hellenistic Magic and the Synoptic Tradition* (London: SCM, 1974), 87-115

¹²⁸ For a description of the difficulty of defining "miracle" and "magic" in the time of the New Testament see Andy M. Reimer, *Miracle and Magic: A Study in the Acts of the Apostles and the Life of Apollonius of Tyana* (New York: Sheffeld, 2002), chapter 1 especially 3-14

¹²⁹ F. F. Bruce, *New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Book of Acts*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 410 argues that it wasn't the cloths, but the faith of the recipient that instigated the healing. Ben Witherington III, *History, Literature and Society in the Book of Acts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 578 points out that there is no textual evidence to show that Paul initiated or was involved in this practice.

¹³⁰ Klauck, *Magic and Paganism*, 98 and Theodore Zahn, *Introduction to the New Testament* trans. and ed. Christopher S. Thayer (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1909), 681-682

¹³¹ Klauck, *Magic and Paganism*, 98

These three stories serve to show the greatness of the healing *dynamis* of God manifested through his witnesses. Luke is showing the miracle workers of God to be greater than their magician counterparts.¹³² In Luke 6:19 and Luke 8:46, crowds were seeking Jesus and healing *dynamis*. Word has obviously spread of Jesus' work as a healer, and his healing work was of such renown that the people believed they only had to touch him to be healed. These passages prove the people correct that the *dynamis* manifested by Jesus was that strong. In Acts 19:11-12, the people believe so much in the healing *dynamis* manifested through Paul, they take the logic used in Luke 6:19 and 8:46 one step further and only desire to touch an object touched by Paul. They ,too, are healed, thus showing the extent of God's *dynamis* manifested through his witnesses. The Acts 19:11-12 passage is juxtaposed to the failure of the seven sons of Sceva (Acts 19:13-20). Paul heals with little to no effort. The seven sons of Sceva fail even though there are seven men working together with a priestly bloodline. This concurrence shows that the *dynamis* of God is greater than the *dynamis* of magicians.¹³³ This display of *dynamis* in Acts 19:11-12 is so amazing Pervo calls this the "high point of Paul's mission to the gentiles."¹³⁴

Acts 10:38 – "You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power (*dynamis*), and *how* He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him."

In this verse Peter summarizes the work of Jesus to Cornelius. Those "who were oppressed by the Devil" may have in view both physical illness and demonic

¹³² Reimer, *Miracle and Magic*, 93-94

¹³³ Garrett, *Demise of the Devil*, 91

¹³⁴ Pervo, *Acts a Commentary*, 472

possession,¹³⁵ but Luke constantly names *dynamis* as the power to heal along with his blaming the Devil for physical illness. It is safe to conclude that healings are absolutely in view here as the oppression of the Devil, possibly including exorcisms as well. Also, there are some grammatical questions and issues surrounding this text,¹³⁶ so firm conclusions concerning *dynamis*'s relationship with exorcisms are difficult from this verse alone.

The Devil is the cause of physical illness, so each of these physical healings is again a direct defeat of the Devil's power. Each healing proves that the *dynamis* of the miracle worker is superior to that of the Devil. When a witness can defeat the power of the Devil, he is shown to be a witness for God in the mind of Luke because God is the superior power.

C. *Dynamis*: As Miraculous Deeds

Dynamis appears in the plural (*dynameis*) in Luke and Acts, and when it does it refers to the miracle itself,¹³⁷ not just the power involved in performing the miraculous. This occurs in Luke 10:13, 19:37, Acts 2:22, 8:13, and 19:11. Each of these five passages involves an opportunity for salvation which is either seized or lost by an individual or crowd. Luke 10:13 was discussed earlier to show that Luke views the use of *dynamis* as evidence to verify God's witnesses and their message, and these towns were not

¹³⁵ For the argument that both healing and exorcisms are in view here see Barrett, *Acts of the Apostles*, 1.525

¹³⁶ Pervo, *Acts a Commentary*, 279-280 and Barrett, *Acts of the Apostles*, 1.521

¹³⁷ Bovon, *Commentary on Luke*, 3.9 n. 36

convinced to convert. Jesus pronounced woes upon them for seeing and not believing, but the opportunity for conversion was there, just not accepted.

The other four instances of *dynameis* do in fact lead people to conversion. Jesus' Triumphal Entry in Luke 19:37 relates a multitude following Jesus and praising God for the *dynameis* they have witnessed.¹³⁸ Acts 2:22 is Peter's speech at Pentecost where he uses *dynameis* in this manner. Peter tells that they have knowledge of these miracles, and at the end three thousand received the salvation of God.¹³⁹ In Acts 8:13, when Simon Magus, described by some as the *dynamis* of God, sees true *dynameis* performed through Philip, he converts immediately.¹⁴⁰ Lastly, in Acts 19:11, when the crowds compare the miraculous acts done through Paul with the deeds performed, or more accurately not performed, by the seven sons of Sceva, the crowds burn their magic texts in favor of the message of Paul.¹⁴¹

Dynamis occurs in the plural referring to miracles five times in Luke and Acts, and in four of those references, the audiences receive the salvation offered by God. In one, this salvation is rejected, and those that rejected have woes pronounced upon them by Jesus. It is clear, in the mind of Luke, that these miraculous deeds are proof that should lead one toward salvation. Only if one is as famously wicked or more so than Tyre and Sidon would one reject the evidence of *dynameis*. As stated in regard to

¹³⁸ Bovon, *Commentary on Luke*, 3.9

¹³⁹ Haenchen, *Acts of the Apostles*, 181

¹⁴⁰ Klauck, *Magic and Paganism*, 17-23 and Garrett, *Demise of the Devil*, 71-74

¹⁴¹ Scot Shauf, *Theology as History, History as Theology: Paul in Ephesus in Acts 19* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2005), 107

empowered speech, each conversion is a defeat of the Devil's power to mislead, verifying that the ones performing these miracles are in fact God's witnesses.

D. *Dynamis*: And Exorcism

Luke 4:36 – “And amazement came upon them all, and they *began* talking with one another saying, ‘hat is this message? For with authority (*exousia*) and power (*dynamis*) He commands the unclean spirits and they come out.”

Luke 9:1 – “And He called the twelve together, and gave them power (*dynamis*) and authority (*exousia*) over all the demons and to heal diseases.”

Acts 10:38 – “*You know of* Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power (*dynamis*), and *how* He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.”

Exorcisms are clearly more related to *exousia* than *dynamis* in Lucan theology,¹⁴² but *dynamis* does appear in texts that involve exorcisms. The connection of *dynamis* and exorcisms is hard to discern, because there is not a strong distinction in the mind of Luke between a healing and an exorcism.¹⁴³ *Dynamis* appears to play, at best, a small role in exorcisms in these three verses. Luke 9:1 has *dynamis* and *exousia* being connected to exorcisms and healings. This passage uses a simple chiasmic structure that is connecting *dynamis* with healings and *exousia* with exorcisms,¹⁴⁴ which could exclude *dynamis* completely from the exorcisms mentioned in this verse. As stated earlier, Acts 10:38 may or may not have exorcisms in view, but it is unfortunately unclear.

This leaves Luke 4:36, which clearly give both *exousia* and *dynamis* a role in the exorcism. Here, it is the crowd speaking, and a crowd can be incorrect when it comes to

¹⁴² Bovon, *Commentary on Luke*, 1.344

¹⁴³ Haenchen, *Acts of the Apostles*, 217

¹⁴⁴ Bovon, *Commentary on Luke*, 1.344

attributing *dynamis*, such as with naming Simon Magus the *dynamis* of God in Acts 8:6. Luke was quick to point out the mistake of the crowd in Acts 8 by having a true witness and power of God confront Simon Magus in Philip. There is no such correction of the crowd here in Luke 4, so it is safe to conclude that the crowd is correct and *dynamis* can play a role in exorcisms. Todd Klutz describes this relationship when discussing Luke 4:36 when he writes that the *exousia* given to Jesus is evidenced in this exorcism, because he gives an order to the demon. Therefore, the *dynamis* given to Jesus is evident in this exorcism, because of the demon's obedience to the order.¹⁴⁵ This explanation fits well into Hans Conzelmann's differentiations of *dynamis* being "actual power" and *exousia* being "delegated authority" as mentioned earlier.¹⁴⁶ With this relationship between *exousia* and *dynamis*, it is possible that *dynamis* is involved in exorcisms as the awesome might that causes demons to obey the commands to leave individuals.

Where it becomes clearer that *dynamis* and exorcisms are related is in the previously discussed five uses of *dynamis*, where *dynamis* is used in the plural to mean "miracles."¹⁴⁷ The five uses are summaries of the ministries of Jesus (utilized twice in this manner), the seventy, Philip, and Paul. We know that Jesus performed not only healings, but exorcisms as well (Luke 4:33-36, 8:26-39, 9:37-43). When his miracles are summarized in Luke 19:37 and Acts 2:22, certainly both healings and exorcisms are in

¹⁴⁵ Todd Klutz, *The Exorcism Stories in Luke-Acts: A Sociostylistic Reading* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 48-49

¹⁴⁶ Conzelmann, *Theology of Luke*, 181

¹⁴⁷ Luke 10:13, 19:37, Acts 2:22, 8:13, and 19:11

view.¹⁴⁸ It would be odd for Peter to summarize the great miracles of Jesus in Acts 2:22 and only mean Jesus' healings, while excluding exorcisms. The same is true in Acts 8 when Simon Magus chooses to follow Philip everywhere and is amazed at the acts of *dynameis* performed through him (Acts 8:13). Just a few verses earlier in Acts 8:7, Luke gives specific details of Philip's miracles. Luke lists exorcisms and the lame being made to walk as examples of Philip's miracle work in Samaria. It would be odd just a few lines later to give a summary of Philip's miracles using *dynameis* in the plural referring only to the healings and leaving out the exorcisms. *Dynamis* in the plural is rightly translated "miracles" rather than "healings" because the texts would become oddly disjointed if leaving out the exorcisms.

Exousia is the more important term when it comes to exorcisms in the mind of Luke, but exorcisms are still regarded as acts of *dynamis*, as well. Most certainly this is true in regards to *dynameis*. Demonic possession is a work of the Devil and demons, and each exorcism is a defeat of the power of God's enemies. A witness is proven to be God's witness by defeating the Devil's power through exorcisms.

E. *Dynamis*: Pattern to Defeat Satan

Each healing, exorcism, and conversion that is brought about through God's *dynamis* is a direct defeat of the Devil, in fact of the twenty-five uses of *dynamis* in Luke and Acts sixteen¹⁴⁹ are direct defeats of the Devil through a healing, exorcism, or

¹⁴⁸ Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 2.1250

¹⁴⁹ Acts 4:33 probably assumes converts to the empowered preaching, but since no converts are explicitly mentioned, it was not counted.

conversion. With 16 of the 25 uses of *dynamis* being direct defeats of the Devil, this becomes the most common pattern thematically for *dynamis*. *Dynamis* is power from the Spirit to defeat the devil. The following chart shows each of these sixteen uses and how it defeats the Devil:

Healings	Exorcisms	Conversion/Salvation
Luke 5:17, 6:19, 8:46, 9:1, 10:13, 19:37, Acts 2:22, 3:12, 4:7, 6:8, 8:13, 10:38, and 19:11	Luke 4:36, 10:13, 19:37, Acts 2:22, 6:8?, 8:13, 10:38? ¹⁵⁰ and 19:11	Luke 1:17, 19:37, 21:26-27, Acts 2:22, 4:33? 8:13, and 19:11 which are seen in Acts 19:17ff

Many of the uses of *dynamis* can fit into multiple categories of defeating the Devil, and *dynamis* is the tool that God’s witnesses use in these confrontations. When a witness defeats the Devil, he or she is established to be God’s witness, because God’s power is superior to that of the Devil. Defeating the Devil marks the one utilizing this greater *dynamis* as God’s witness.

Section 4 – *Dynamis* is Given and not Self-Generated, Verifying the Witness as from God

A. *Dynamis*: Given and Promised

Luke 4:14 – “And Jesus returned to Galilee in the power (*dynamis*) of the Spirit, and news about Him spread through all the surrounding district.”

Luke 9:1 – “And He called the twelve together, and gave them power (*dynamis*) and authority over all the demons and to heal diseases.”

¹⁵⁰ Those marked with a “?” could fit into its appropriated category, but it is not definite.

Luke 24:49 – “And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power (*dynamis*) from on high.””

Acts 1:8 – “but you will receive power (*dynamis*) when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”

Luke makes it abundantly clear that the one performing acts of *dynamis* is not the one generating the *dynamis*. *Dynamis* is something that is given to the individual. Even Jesus is given the *dynamis* for him to work miracles. Luke 4:14 connects the Spirit as the source of *dynamis* which was given to Jesus during his baptism and temptation. This idea that the Spirit is upon/a part of Jesus and his work is repeated four times. Concerning this Bovon writes, “These repetitions are anything but literary clumsiness. Luke is trying to say that, in Jesus, God’s power and justice have become active...”¹⁵¹ Luke is emphasizing that this power is God’s, not Jesus’ own self-generated power. This, as discussed earlier, is also evident in Luke 5:17 where the “*dynamis* of the Lord” is present for Jesus to heal. The obvious assumption is if the Lord’s *dynamis* was not with Jesus, he would be unable to perform the healing miracles.

Luke 9:1 Jesus gives his disciples a share of the power given to him.¹⁵² The disciples are preparing to go into Galilee and perform both healings and exorcisms. Luke takes the time to insert an introduction to these miracles to make sure the reader realizes again that *dynamis* is bestowed upon them. Again, as with the healing in Luke

¹⁵¹ Bovon, *Commentary on Luke*, 1.151

¹⁵² Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 1.752

5:17, this mission of the disciples would not be possible without the receiving of God's *dynamis*.¹⁵³

Luke 24:49, Jesus promises to clothe the disciples in power from on high, and in Acts 1:8, this promise is repeated. The disciples will receive power when they receive the Spirit. Luke also warns them in Luke 24:49 and Acts 1:4 to not leave Jerusalem until this promise has been fulfilled. This warning makes it clear that the gospel ministry is not a task that can be done by one's own power, but it takes a greater power¹⁵⁴ that cannot be generated by individuals.

A. The Miracle Worker is Not the Source of *Dynamis*

Luke has a clear pattern to inform his reader that the miracle worker is not the source of *dynamis*, but rather it comes from God. Luke 5:17 and 9:1 show that the one performing the miracle is not the source of *dynamis* in their own ministry. Jesus received his *dynamis* from God.¹⁵⁵ Then, Jesus gives *dynamis*, which he received from God to the twelve disciples.¹⁵⁶ This makes clear that the source of the *dynamis* is not the miracle worker. It shows that the one performing the miracle is an instrument of God's power. This points the reader toward God and distances the miracle from Hellenistic magic.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵³ Bovon, *Commentary on Luke*, 1.344

¹⁵⁴ Bovon, *Commentary on Luke*, 3.397

¹⁵⁵ Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 1.582 and Bovon, *Commentary on Luke*, 1.181 and 1.344

¹⁵⁶ Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 1.752 and Bovon, *Commentary on Luke*, 1.181 n. 23

¹⁵⁷ Klauck, *Magic and Paganism*, 98

One of Luke's proofs that Simon Magus was an evil magician and not a miracle worker was his apparent acceptance of people stating he is the power of God (Acts 8:10). This is a claim that Jesus never accepts,¹⁵⁸ and it is one the disciples are quick to state as false (Acts 3:12ff, 4:8ff, 8:20). As stated earlier, in an effort to distance the cloths from magical talismans, Acts 19:11 follows this pattern very clearly and states that it was God performing the miracles through Paul. The healings in Acts 10:38 also designate a source outside of the miracle worker for the source of *dynamis*.

Acts 3:12 – “But when Peter saw *this*, he replied to the people, ‘Men of Israel, why are you amazed at this, or why do you gaze at us, as if by our own power (*dynamis*) or piety we had made him walk?’”

Acts 4:7 – “When they had placed them in the center, they *began to* inquire, ‘By what power (*dynamis*), or in what name, have you done this?’”

Luke uses these two reactions to a healing of a lame man, one by a crowd and the other by leading opponents of Jesus' followers, as an opportunity to restate this important fact for Luke that miracles are not performed by the miracle worker's own *dynamis*. Peter stresses that the healing was an act of God.¹⁵⁹ Further he declares that it is by faith in the name of Jesus that the man was healed.¹⁶⁰ As stated earlier, this distances acts of *dynamis* by God's witnesses from magic,¹⁶¹ and gives evidence that the miracle worker is an instrument of God.

¹⁵⁸ Garrett, *Demise of the Devil*, 66-67

¹⁵⁹ Haenchen, *Acts of the Apostles*, 205

¹⁶⁰ For discussion on the meaning of the idea of faith in the name of Jesus, see Pervo, *Acts a Commentary*, 106 and Bruce Metzger, *Textual Commentary* (New York: American Bible Society), 270-272

¹⁶¹ Hans Conzelmann, *A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, Eds. Eldon Jay Epp and Christopher R. Matthews, Trans. James Limburg, A. Thomas Krabel, and Donald H. Juel (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 28

Section 5 – *Dynamis* Appears with New Witnesses for God and When a New Economy is Established

A. A New Witnesses Joins the Mission

Jesus is the central figure in the Luke and Acts narrative, and Jesus is connected to *dynamis* before his birth as Luke’s verification of Jesus as the Son of God begins.

Luke 1:35 “The angel answered and said to her, ‘the Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power (*dynamis*) of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God.’”

In this verse, the Spirit and *dynamis* are parallels, similar to that of Hebrew poetry.¹⁶² It is through the Spirit and *dynamis* that Mary becomes pregnant with Jesus, he who will be God’s son in a sense that no king or follower of God could claim.¹⁶³ This act is not one that is sexual in nature, but it is an act that uses the creative power of God.¹⁶⁴ Similar language is used when Luke speaks of the disciples receiving the Spirit in Acts 1:8.¹⁶⁵ The Immaculate Conception is a miracle worked with the Spirit and *dynamis* of God that Luke uses to show that Jesus is unique; Fitzmyer writes, “The origin of God’s Messiah is the effect of his creative Spirit on Mary.”¹⁶⁶ This miraculous birth that involves both the Spirit and *dynamis* sets Jesus apart. Later, upon Jesus’ return from the temptation and the beginning of his public ministry (Luke 4:14), Luke writes of the Spirit of *dynamis* that has been given to Jesus. Both when Jesus is born and at the birth of his

¹⁶² Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 1.350-351

¹⁶³ Bovon, *Commentary on Luke*, 1:52

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid* 1.52

¹⁶⁵ Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 1.351

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid* 1.351

public ministry, Luke presents Jesus as being verified with *dynamis* to establish him as God's witness. This will be further emphasized with Jesus' acts of *dynamis* throughout his ministry, such as the healings and exorcisms that directly defeated the Devil mentioned earlier.

Jesus is not the only witness of God to be verified early in ministry through the utilization of *dynamis*. Luke 9:1 is the third appearance of the twelve disciples in Luke, but this is the first appearance in which they actively participate in the mission of Jesus.¹⁶⁷ Before they depart Jesus to begin their work, Jesus gives the disciples *dynamis*. The disciples then travel to various towns proclaiming the gospel. How were the people hearing the gospel to know that the disciples were truly from God? The disciples did not just preach. Their preaching was accompanied by healings, and these acts of *dynamis* were the evidence to establish the disciples as true witnesses of God.

Luke 10, there is a similar story in the sending out of the seventy. There are seventy others sent out to participate in Jesus' mission and to begin their work for the kingdom of God because the harvest is so plentiful.¹⁶⁸ The same pattern appears in Luke 9 and 10. The seventy travel from town to town proclaiming the gospel, and they heal the sick. As mentioned in Section 1B, Jesus pronounces woes on three towns that do not believe because the seventy's message was clearly verified by acts of *dynamis* (Luke 10:13).

¹⁶⁷ Bovon, *Commentary on Luke*, 1.344

¹⁶⁸ Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 2.842-843

Acts 1:8 details the followers of Jesus being given the promise that they would receive the Spirit and *dynamis*; then, they will be Jesus' witnesses in the world.¹⁶⁹ As Jesus exits the book of Acts, Luke begins by verifying a new group of witnesses with the presence of the Spirit and *dynamis* before they begin their ministries in Acts. The group receiving the promise of *dynamis* in Acts 1:8 would include Peter, John, and the apostles. In Acts 6, the seven are chosen to serve. The story follows is Stephen and he begins to work miracles through *dynamis*.¹⁷⁰ Philip, another of the seven, was verified as a witness of God by performing *dynamis* (Acts 8:13), which amazed Simon Magus.¹⁷¹ Next, in Acts 19:11, Paul is also verified through acts of *dynamis* amazingly done through handkerchiefs and aprons.

Paul does not have *dynamis* attributed to his work until later in his mission work, which is much later into his ministry than the other major characters of Acts. It is important to note here that early in Paul's first missionary journey while in Cyprus, Paul does perform the miracle of the blinding of Bar Jesus. This miracle led to the belief of the proconsul,¹⁷² so Paul was verified early in his ministry with a miraculous act. Then, later Paul is also verified through *dynamis* in Acts 19:11.

These major characters are all verified through *dynamis*. When a new witness for God comes on the stage in Luke or Acts to partake in God's/Jesus' mission they are proven to be a witness through *dynamis*.

¹⁶⁹ Haenchen, *Acts of the Apostles*, 144

¹⁷⁰ Pervo, *Acts a Commentary*, 165

¹⁷¹ *Ibid*, 210

¹⁷² Haenchen, *Acts of the Apostles*, 400

B. New Economy Being Established

Dynamis also appears in Luke and Acts when a new economy is instituted by Jesus and later the disciples. When Jesus and/or his followers change long held beliefs or practices of the Judaism of their day, an act of *dynamis* is often present. This begins in Luke 5:17ff when seeing a lame man, Jesus pronounces that his sins are forgiven. This is a shocking revelation by Jesus, since the Judaism of the day would have had a path in place to receive forgiveness,¹⁷³ and Jesus' words would be a direct attack on the Judaism practices of the day. This fact did not go unnoticed by the religious leaders present, as they become angered. This claim by Jesus to have the authority to forgive sins could be viewed as putting himself on par with Yahweh.¹⁷⁴ Whether Jesus was claiming to be Yahweh or not, the forgiving of sins is a more significant act than the miracle of healing in this same passage.¹⁷⁵ The *dynamis* is utilized to give visual evidence to the truth of Jesus' statement that he can forgive sins.

The sermon on the plain (Luke 6:20-7:1) is the first great discourse of Jesus in Luke. Prior to this sermon, Jesus spoke in short sayings. The sermon on the plain is where Jesus lays the foundation for his movement which focuses on love. This sermon takes the Old Testament idea of loving one's neighbor and intensifies it by including enemies as one's neighbors.¹⁷⁶ These words are starkly against the ancient view of enmity.¹⁷⁷ Again, Jesus is radically changing the beliefs of the day, insisting that one's enemy is also

¹⁷³ Bovon, *Commentary on Luke*, 1.182

¹⁷⁴ Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 1.584

¹⁷⁵ Bovon, *Commentary on Luke*, 1.183

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid*, 1.234

¹⁷⁷ Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 1.637-638

one's neighbor whom to whom should be shown love. This new, radical teaching, along with the other themes of the sermon on the plain, were all introduced by Jesus healing many in the crowd through *dynamis*. The healing performed with *dynamis* verified Jesus' message as truth from God.

In Luke 8:40ff, Jesus once again goes against the convention of the day in the treatment of a woman with a bloody discharge. The woman has been dealing with this issue for twelve years. Leviticus 15:25-31 states the woman would have been ritually unclean, and as such, should not be entering a crowd. Anyone she touches would by ritual law also be unclean.¹⁷⁸ This crowd would have been thick with people (Luke 8:44), and the woman would have made contact with many before reaching Jesus. Luke, significantly, mentions that she touched Jesus, which by law would have made him unclean. When Jesus confronts the woman, one would expect a chastisement in accord with ritual law for making so many in the crowd, including himself, unclean, but Jesus commends her for her faith. This woman would have lived a segregated life dealing with this issue for so long,¹⁷⁹ but Jesus blessed her. This reaction by Jesus would again be seen as a criticism of the ritual law.¹⁸⁰ This critique of the law and acceptance of an unclean woman by Jesus was verified by *dynamis* and the healing of the woman.

Luke 21:26-27 – “men fainting from fear and the expectation of the things which are coming upon the world; for the powers (*dynamis*) of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see THE SON OF MAN COMING IN A CLOUD with power (*dynamis*) and great glory.”

¹⁷⁸ Bovon, *Commentary on Luke*, 1.337-338

¹⁷⁹ Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 1.746

¹⁸⁰ Bovon, *Commentary on Luke*, 1.338

Luke 22:69 – “But from now on THE SON OF MAN WILL BE SEATED AT THE RIGHT HAND of the power (*dynamis*) OF GOD.”

Both of these verses use *dynamis* with a heavenly focus, which is one of the definitions of Barrett shared in Section 1A. These verses also institute a new economy. Luke 21:26-27 speaks of the second coming of Jesus that will usher in the eschaton. Luke is far less eschatological when it comes to *dynamis* as his synoptic counterparts,¹⁸¹ but Luke does not completely separate *dynamis* from the *parousia*. Luke 21:26-27 describes the second coming of Jesus as filled with great and dreadful *dynamis*. The heavens, visible and invisible, will be shaken.¹⁸² This will bring much fear, but then Jesus will come and deliver his followers from these terrible events.¹⁸³ The *dynamis* of the heavens being shaken is often viewed as an allusion to Isaiah 34:4.¹⁸⁴ In Isaiah 34, God’s enemies are depicted as a host of heaven,¹⁸⁵ and they will be defeated on this day. The institution of the eschaton is verified as a certain future event through the use of *dynamis*.

Luke 22:69 has an exalted Jesus seated in heaven on God’s right.¹⁸⁶ God’s right hand is described as *dynamis*, which makes the phrase “right hand of the power (*dynamis*) of God” redundant since the right hand is also an expression of power.¹⁸⁷ This

¹⁸¹ Conzelmann, *Theology of Luke*, 77 and 183, to see a specific passage in Luke remove eschatological phrases from the other synoptic see Bovon, *Commentary on Luke*, 3.245

¹⁸² Bovon, *Commentary on Luke*, 3.117 and for more on the visible and invisible powers see Walter Wink, *The Powers that Be: Theology for a New Millennium* (New York: Galilee Book Doubleday Publishing, 1999), 15-16, 24, 182-183

¹⁸³ Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 2.1348

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid*, 2.1350

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid*, 2.1350

¹⁸⁶ Joel B. Green, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997), 794-795

¹⁸⁷ Louw and Nida, *Greek English Lexicon*, 681

emphasizes the greatness of God's power. This verse speaks of Jesus' "heavenly destiny,"¹⁸⁸ sharing his state after the ascension. After leaving the earth, Jesus will begin a new work that takes place in heaven, and this new economy is established with God's *dynamis*.

In Acts 3:12ff and 4:7ff, Peter preaches salvation through Jesus once to a crowd at Solomon's Colonnade (Acts 3) and later to Jewish leadership (Acts 4). Peter tells both crowds that salvation is found in Jesus,¹⁸⁹ the promised messiah. This is a new economy to find salvation in Jesus. Acts 3 is full of Christological imagery attempting to change the crowd's view of Jesus.¹⁹⁰ The act of *dynamis*, which is the healing of the lame man, serves as verification of Peter's preaching.¹⁹¹ The speech found in Acts 4 is a shorter version of the speech found in Acts 3.¹⁹² The message found in both proclamations by Peter is verified by the *dynamis* displayed in the healing of the lame man.

Finally, in Acts 19, which has been discussed at length as magic verses miracle (religion), Paul juxtaposed to the seven sons of Sceva, is a story to show that Christianity is far superior to the popular magic of Luke's day. This idea began with acts of *dynamis* performed through the various cloths that came in contact with Paul, proving the superiority of Christianity over magic.

¹⁸⁸ Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 2.1462

¹⁸⁹ Haenchen, *Acts of the Apostles*, 217

¹⁹⁰ Pervo, *Acts a Commentary*, 103

¹⁹¹ Marion L. Soards, *The Speeches in Acts: Their Content, Context, and Concerns* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994), 41

¹⁹² *Ibid*, 44

Each of the new ideas: Jesus can forgive sins, one's enemy is one's neighbor, faith is superior to ritual cleanliness, salvation through Jesus, and Christianity being superior to magic, have an act of *dynamis* to accompany their installation. The *dynamis* displayed established these new ideas as truth and verifies them as messages from God.

Section 6 – The Spirit, *Dynamis*, Miracle, Signs and Wonders as a Pattern of

Verification

A. Signs and Wonders

Signs and wonders, like miracles¹⁹³ and the Spirit¹⁹⁴, are connected thematically to *dynamis*.¹⁹⁵ *Semeion* (sign) is a "(visable) *sign* by which a person is recognized."¹⁹⁶ *Teras* (wonder) occurs sixteen times in the New Testament, always in the plural (*terata*), and always with *semeion*.¹⁹⁷ Signs and wonders is a phrase from the LXX,¹⁹⁸ which follows the Old Testament's usage of this phrase quite closely.¹⁹⁹ This phrase is used often in Exodus to describe God's work among the people.²⁰⁰ The work of signs and wonders is miraculous deeds.²⁰¹ This phrase is used nine times in the book of Acts,

¹⁹³ Section 1A

¹⁹⁴ Section 1C

¹⁹⁵ Otto Betz, "*Semeion*" in *EDNT*, eds. Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1990) 3.240 and Karl Heinrich Rengstorf, "*Semeion*" in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, eds. G. Kittel and G. Friedrich; trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley 10 Volumes (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964-76), 124-125

¹⁹⁶ Otto Betz, "*Semeion*" in *EDNT*, 3.239

¹⁹⁷ Horst Balz, "*teras*" in *EDNT*, eds. Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1990) 3.350

¹⁹⁸ Karl Heinrich Rengstorf, "*Semeion*" in *TDNT*, 8.221

¹⁹⁹ Balz, "*teras*" in *EDNT* 3.350

²⁰⁰ *Ibid*, 350

²⁰¹ Balz, "*teras*" in *EDNT* 3.350, Otto Betz, "*Semeion*" in *EDNT*, 3.239, and ²⁰¹ Karl Heinrich Rengstorf, "*Semeion*" in *TDNT*, 8.119-123

which accounts for over half the uses in the New Testament.²⁰² It is also important to note the signs and wonders are not the work of the one performing the sign or wonder, but it is God working through an individual and amongst the people.²⁰³ The phrase “signs and wonders” serves to “attest” and to “legitimize” Jesus.²⁰⁴ Karl Heinrich Rengstorf writes of signs and wonders in Acts stating that they serve “as a pledge of certainty of eschatological occurrence.”²⁰⁵ Leo O’Reilly pens signs and wonders serve as “prophetic credentials.”²⁰⁶ Scholarship agrees that the primary function of signs and wonders is to authenticate or verify.

Luke does verify many of his major characters through the mention of their utilization of signs and wonders. Jesus (Acts 2:22), the apostles (Acts 2:43, 4:30, and 5:12), Stephen (Acts 6:8), Philip (8:6) and Paul and Barnabas (Acts 14:3 and 15:12) are all verified as God’s witness through the use of signs and/or wonders. It is simple to see the similarities between signs and wonders and *dynamis*. Both perform the miraculous. Both find their source in God, and both serve to legitimize the witness of God and his message, but the connection between signs and wonders and *dynamis* goes beyond being similar.

²⁰² Acts 2:19, 2:22, 2:43, 4:30, 5:12, 6:8, 7:36, 14:3, and 15:12, Sometimes verses use the order “wonder and signs.”

²⁰³ Horst Balz, “*teras*” in *EDNT* 3.350

²⁰⁴ Otto Betz, “*Semeion*” in *EDNT*, 3.240

²⁰⁵ Karl Heinrich Rengstorf, “*Semeion*” in *TDNT*, 8:241

²⁰⁶ O’Reilly, *Word and Sign*, 178-182

Just as *dynamis* is the power to perform miracles, it is the power to perform signs and wonders, as well (Acts 6:8).²⁰⁷ Twice in Acts, verses 2:22 and 6:8, *dynamis* and signs and wonders appear together. Acts 2:22 shows that *dynamis*, signs, and wonders were used to verify Jesus is from God.²⁰⁸ *Dynamis*, signs, and wonders are further connected in Acts 4. In Acts 4:29-30, the congregation prays that their preaching be accompanied by confirming signs and wonders.²⁰⁹ This prayer is answered by an outpouring of *dynamis* speech in Acts 4:33.²¹⁰ The Spirit,²¹¹ *dynamis*, miracles, signs, and wonders all form the foundation of evidence that a witness and his or her message is from God.

B. The Spirit, *Dynamis*, Miracles, Signs and Wonders Working Together to Verify God's Witness

Through his two volume work, Luke “communicates theological views by showing rather than telling, through story rather than through expression.”²¹² The Spirit is a central theme to Luke and Acts.²¹³ The Spirit is the “guiding force of Christian disciples and witnesses.”²¹⁴ The Spirit in Luke and Acts fulfills the promises of the Old Testament, as the “Spirit is given to the people of God as a whole.”²¹⁵ It is the mark that

²⁰⁷ Ibid, 270

²⁰⁸ Ibid, 180

²⁰⁹ Pervo, *Acts a Commentary*, 123

²¹⁰ Haenchen, 231

²¹¹ The Spirit has other functions in Luke and Acts, but the Spirit, as shown in Section 1C, serves to prove that God is working through the individuals indwelt by the Spirit.

²¹² Pervo, *Acts a Commentary*, 43

²¹³ Ibid, 43

²¹⁴ Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 1.230

²¹⁵ Ibid, 1.230

makes undeniable that an individual is of God (Acts 10:44). Luke, with his desire to show and not tell, proves the presence of the Spirit in a witness's life by the witness's use of *dynamis* to perform a miracle, sign, and/or wonder, which are visible acts.

Dynamis is a crucial step that proves the presence of the Spirit, because it comes from the Spirit, and thusly proves that the witness and his message is from God. This pattern of the Spirit's presence upon an individual, *dynamis* being given, and then *dynamis* being displayed through a visible miracle, sign, and/or wonder is repeated throughout Luke and Acts with many major characters as seen in the following chart:

Name	The Spirit Present	<i>Dynamis</i> Utilized	Miracle, Sign, and/or Wonder Seen
Jesus	Luke 1:35, 3:22, and 4:14	Acts 2:22, 10:38	Luke 4:30, 4:38-41, 5:1-11, 5:12-16, 5:17-26, 6:6-11, 6:19, 7:1-10, 7:11-17, 7:21-22, 8:22-25, 8:43-48, 8:49-56, 9:10-17, 13:10-17, 13:22, 14:1-6, 17:11-19, 18:35-43, 19:37, 22:49-51 Acts 2:22, and 10:38
John the Baptist	Luke 1:17	Luke 1:17	Luke 3:7-18
The Twelve/Apostles	Acts 2:4	Luke 9:1, Acts 1:8, 2:43, 4:33, 5:12	Luke 9:6, Acts 4:33
The Seventy		Luke 10:13	Luke 10:9, 10:13, and 10:17

Peter	Acts 2:4	Acts 1:8, 2:43, 3:12, 4:7, 4:33, 5:12	Acts 3:1-10, 4:33, 5:15-16, 9:32-35, and 9:36-43
Stephen	Acts 6:3 and 6:5	Acts 6:8	Acts 6:8
Philip	Acts 6:3	Acts 8:13	Acts 8:6, and 8:13
Barnabas	Acts 11:24 and 11:28		Acts 14:3
Paul	Acts 9:17 and 11:28	Acts 19:11	Acts 13:9-11, 14:3, 14:7-10, 16:16-18 19:11-12, 20:7-12, 28:7-8, and 28:9

This pattern repeats throughout Luke and Acts with numerous individuals. How are people to know that Jesus has the Spirit upon him? It is because Jesus employs *dynamis* to work visible miracles. How does one know that the apostles, Paul, and others took up the mission of Jesus? It is because they, too are verified by the visible miracles, performed with *dynamis* that comes from the Spirit.

Conclusion

Dynamis in Luke and Acts performs the task of an arrow. *Dynamis* points to a person or a message. *Dynamis* makes it clear that the person or the message that it is pointing to comes from God. *Dynamis* is used by Luke as evidence to support a witness and/or a message as from God. The following chart shows the person and/or the message that *dynamis* is attesting to in the passage.

<i>Dynamis Used</i>	Verifies	<i>Dynamis Used</i>	Verifies	<i>Dynamis Used</i>	Verifies
Luke 1:17	John the Baptist	Luke 9:1	The 12	Acts 3:12 and 4:7	Peter, John, and the message that salvation is through Jesus
Luke 1:35	Jesus	Luke 10:13	The 70	Acts 4:33	The apostles and their message that Jesus was resurrected
Luke 4:14	Jesus in the beginning of public ministry	Luke 19:37	Jesus in Jerusalem	Acts 6:8	Stephen and his speech to Sanhedrin
Luke 4:26	Jesus	Luke 21:26-27	The certainty of the eschaton	Acts 8:13	Philip
Luke 5:17	Message: Jesus can forgive sin	Luke 24:49	The disciples	Acts 10:38	Jesus to Gentiles
Luke 6:16	Message: Sermon on the Plain	Acts 1:8	The apostles	Acts 19:11	Paul and his message that Christianity is superior to magic
Luke 8:46	Message: Acceptance of unclean	Acts 2:22	Jesus to a crowd		

Dynamis is most often used by Luke to reference a miraculous action. Miracles, signs and wonders are visible evidence for Luke. The Spirit is the source of *dynamis*; therefore, *dynamis* serves as evidence of the presence of the Spirit in an individual's life. Luke himself describes the attesting work of *dynamis* explicitly in Acts 2:22 and Luke 10:13.

There is a war of power taking place between God and the Devil throughout Luke and Acts. The Devil has considerable power that allows him to lead people astray, to possess some individuals, and to inflict physical illness. The scope of the Devil's power is also quite broad, but the Devil's power is nothing compared to the power of God who in, Luke and Acts moves kings like pawns. God's witnesses are verified because the *dynamis* they utilize defeats the Devil and his followers when there is a confrontation. Each time a person heals the infirmed, exorcizes a demon, or converts another, it is a direct defeat of the Devil, thus proving that the person is a witness from God.

Dynamis is present at the beginning of individuals joining the mission of God, providing evidence that they are from God. *Dynamis* is also present often to prove a new economy being established as truth from God. *Dynamis* provides the foundation upon which witnesses and new economies can stand.

Lastly, *dynamis* is part of a reoccurring pattern to verify God's witness that is based on visual proof. For Luke, salvation and belief are built on seeing as much as hearing. The Spirit's presence is validated through the use of *dynamis*, which causes a visible miracle, sign and/or wonder to take place. This pattern is used to verify John the

Baptist, Jesus, the disciples, the apostles, Stephen, Philip, and Paul. *Dynamis* is the force that causes the visible evidence to be given through miracles, so when *dynamis* is used in Luke and Acts, Luke wants his reader to realize that this is God's witness.

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