modified the narrative ending with Mark 16:8 and chose to conclude with a missionary endeavor to all the world.

Chapter 5

Miracle and Mission:
The Expectation of Signs to Authenticate the Kerygma

γενέα πονηρά καὶ μοιχαλις στις ὑπερανέβαινε.1

A. Introduction

Previous chapters have discussed the Longer Ending’s relation to the NT Gospels and other early Christian writings, as well as its origin, date, occasion and literary features. This chapter focuses on the portrayal of miracles in the second half of the passage, especially in vv. 17a and 20bc:

15 καὶ εἶδεν αὐτὸς, ἀπεστάλεγεν εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἀπάντα ἑαυτοῦ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, καὶ ἐφάνη τῷ Ἰησοῦ, καὶ ἠκούσαν ἐκ τῆς ἡγεσίας, παρὰ τούτων, πάντων, τῷ παρακλητῷ τῷ υἱῷ τοῦ θεοῦ, παρακλητῷ καὶ ἐκείνῳ τῷ καθ᾽ ἑαυτὸν ἄνθρωπῳ, καὶ ἐκείνῳ τῷ καθ᾽ ἑαυτὸν ἀνθρωπωπεύοντι, καὶ ἐκείνῳ τῷ καθ᾽ ἑαυτὸν ἀνθρωπωπεύοντι, καὶ ἐκείνῳ τῷ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἀποστόλῳ, καὶ ἐκείνῳ τῷ καθ᾽ ἑαυτὸν ἀνθρωπωπεύοντι, καὶ ἐκείνῳ τῷ καθ᾽ ἑαυτὸν ἀνθρωπωπεύοντι, καὶ ἐκείνῳ τῷ καθ᾽ ἑαυτὸν ἀνθρωπωπεύοντι, καὶ ἐκεί

At two different, but related, points the LE states that occurrences of miraculous signs constitute an important part of the church’s life and mission. First, Jesus’ commissioning to “preach the gospel to all creation” (16:15) culminates in the promise that “those who believe” (16:17a) will perform the miracles listed in vv. 17b—18. Second, when the disciples embark on a mission, miracles are also said to figure prominently. As they depart and preach everywhere (16:20a), the risen Lord works with them and confirms the word through the accompanying signs (16:20bc).

The primary purpose of this chapter is to place the LE in relation to other texts which touch upon both miracles and missionary activity. 2 With regard to secondary literature on this subject, in a discussion of the apostle Paul's opponents in 2 Corinthians, Dieter Georgi compares Mark 16:17—18 with Luke 10:17—20, noting that the LE reflects a "similar" christological idea of "Jesus as a superior miracle worker" and its corollary of the disciples as wonder-workers. 3 In light of the two points described in the previous paragraph, one may add that in the LE such a depiction is taken a step further — Jesus, the wonder-worker par excellence, continues to work through those who carry out the post-Easter mission. The investigation to be offered here will discuss in turn passages in the NT, certain apocryphal acts of the apostles and, finally, the early Christian apologists. 4 Of particular interest here is the LE's expectation that believers in general (τοὺς πιστεύοντας, 16:17a), and not just one or more apostolic figures, will perform signs, as compared with presentations of miracles in other early Christian writings.

Moreover, in his classic study, Le problème du miracle dans le christianisme primitif, Anton Friedrichsen mentions Mark 16:17 and 20 in connection with the naïve elation inspired by miracles that is preserved in the missionary traditions of early Christianity. 5 The only detailed exploration of the LE's promise of miracles was undertaken some decades ago by Eugen Helzel, who focuses primarily on other NT passages and characterizes the promise of signs in Mark 16:17 as "eine Veräußerlichung gegenüber der sonstigen ntl. Botschaft." 6 Helzel's thesis of the LE's discontinuity relative to NT portrayals of the disciples as miracle-workers will be evaluated in the course of this discussion. Moreover, Ferdinand Hahn, 7 and more recently Bernd Kollmann, 8 have argued that the LE's expectations concerning miracles,


6 That is, "an externalization in comparison with the usual message of the New Testament." (Hegi Helzel, Der Schluß des Markusevangeliums [Mi 16, 9—20], p. 109; see also V. Krauss, "Verklärte: das Evangelium," pp. 253—256 ("gibt es im NT keine direkten Parallelen," p. 253)).

7 F. Hahn, Mission in the New Testament, pp. 64—65. When comparing the LE's commissioning with Matt 28:18—20, Hahn argues that Matt 28:12—18 should be considered "on the whole an independent and comparatively ancient witness" (p. 64). His argument that this part of the LE is pre-Matthean does not persuade because it rests solely on the LE's similarities to Mark 14:49 and Matthew's final commissioning (Matt 28:18—20), on the one hand, and on the absence of Matthean christological emphasis in the LE, on the other (pp. 64—65). As discussed in chapter 2, any later imitator of those (and other) passages in Matthew and Mark could compose such a commissioning which resembled certain features of both texts.

8 B. Kollmann, Jesus und die Christen als Wunderträger, pp. 326—339. In his treatment of Mark 16:9—20, Kollmann is primarily interested in the sources behind the commissioning and miracle list in Mark 16:15, 17—18. In spite of the LE's comparatively late attestation in Irenaeus and "presumably (vermutlich)" also Justin Martyr, Kollmann is optimistic about the possibility of finding earlier traditions in certain parts of the LE. "Dieses recht späte Datum spricht nicht gegen ein hohes Alter einzelner in Mk 16:9—20 versuchte Traditionen" (p. 337). Although verses 9—14 are an "excerpted compilation" from the ends of Luke and John, verses 15—20 show a literary variation on Matt 28:19—20, and, "mit dem Fehler eines triásischen Taufkonflikt" sophisticated in its Mtt 28:19, sein könnte" (pp. 337—338). Kollmann also argues that Luke 16:17b, 19 and Mark 17:17—18 point to a common, pre-Lukan tradition: "Mk 16:17 יְהוָה יִתֵּן נְפָרָה לְךָ לְעֵצִיךָ שֵׁבֶטֶל יָדוֹנִים... וְאַל-אָנָיו כִּבָּדָאָמָךְ וְאַל-יִרְצֶה מְנוֹלֶךְ... וְאַל-יִטְעֹל מִשְׁמוֹ... וְאַל-תִּשְׁפָּט בְּעֵדֹתָךְ... יְהוָה יִתֵּן נְפָרָה לְךָ לְעֵצִיךָ שֵׁבֶטֶל יָדוֹנִים... וְאַל-אָנָיו כִּבָּדָאָמָךְ וְאַל-יִרְצֶה מְנוֹלֶךְ... וְאַל-יִטְעֹל מִשְׁמוֹ... וְאַל-תִּשְׁפָּט בְּעֵדֹתָךְ... YHWH יִתֵּן נְפָרָה לְךָ לְעֵצִיךָ שֵׁבֶטֶל יָדוֹנִים... וְאַל-אָנָיו כִּבָּדָאָמָךְ וְאַל-יִרְצֶה מְנוֹלֶךְ... וְאַל-יִטְעֹל מִשְׁמוֹ... וְאַל-תִּשְׁפָּט בְּעֵדֹתָךְ... יְהוָה יִתֵּן נְפָרָה LK 10,17b קְרָאָה... וְאַל-נָבְדָאָמָךְ... יְהוָה יִתֵּן נְפָרָה... וְאַל-נָבְדָאָמָךְ... יְהוָה יִתֵּן NUN 28 [1991] 133—163. The LE's expectations concerning miracles,
although preserved by a second-century author, reflect a much earlier formulation which may even predate the Gospels of Matthew and Luke.

The first thesis to be defended here is that a connection between miracle and mission cannot be used as a basis for dating the LE, because both very early traditions (for example, Mark 6:6b—13, "Q"/Luke 10:1—24) and numerous later apocryphal acts entertain this theme. Nevertheless, inasmuch as the tradition about the disciples as miracle-workers is alive at most every stage of the tradition, examining the LE in relation to the NT, to apocryphal acts and related literature, and to numerous passages of the second- and third-century apologists, will help place Mark 16:17—20 in relation to analogous formulations. As mentioned above, of particular interest to this chapter is whether one or more apostles is said to perform miracles or, as in the LE, the extent to which this activity is predicated of others in the believing community. Such an expectation is particularly evident in the Fourth Gospel (John 14:12—14) and in the writings of the apologists, which, unlike most NT passages and the apocryphal acts, typically do not refer to the apostles as miracle-workers. Accordingly, it will be argued that the LE's expectation that ordinary Christians will perform miracles finds its closest analogies in John 14:12—14 and in the writings of certain Christian apologists.

B. New Testament

As Ferdinand Hahn notes, "Notwithstanding certain constant elements, the earliest Christian view of mission is by no means homogeneous, and is not easy to grasp in its historical and practical differentiation. Thus, the interpretation of biblical missionary pronouncements is very varied." NT portrayals of miracles in connection with missionary activity are also, to use Hahn's words, "very varied." This section discusses in turn relevant passages in the Synoptic Gospels, John, Acts, Paul and Hebrews.

I. The Synoptic Gospels

In the Synoptic Gospels, the two earliest traditions for the commissioning and/or mission of the disciples during the life of Jesus are Mark 6:6b—13 and "Q"/Luke 10:1—24. The author of Luke incorporates most of the Markan passage in Luke 9:1—6 and draws upon "Q" when reporting the mission of the seventy in Luke 10:1—24. For his part, Matthew combines elements of Mark 6 and "Q" and presents the mission of the twelve in a single, extended passage (Matt 9:35—11:1). The previous chapter touched upon certain aspects of these passages in connection with the LE's literary features. This


According to the Markan passage, Jesus sends the disciples out in six teams of two and gives them "authority over the unclean spirits," most probably a
The Expectation of Signs to Authenticate the Kerygma

reference to exorcisms (Mark 6:7). The twelve are instructed to take only what is necessary for the journey, to stay in a single home while in a certain city, and to depart if a certain place does not receive them (6:8—11). Although acts of preaching or teaching, as well as of casting out demons, seem to be implied in verses 7—11, these brief missionary instructions do not highlight the twelve as miracle-workers. Only at the end of the pericope in the summary of the disciples’ deeds does one learn that the twelve “preached in order that they would repent,” “cast out many demons” and “healed many sick people” (vv. 12—13).

Although one could argue that Mark 6:6b—13 should be read as a whole rather than with an eye to its parts (vv. 6b—11 and 12—13), the difference in the amount of emphasis placed upon the miraculous is noteworthy. The narrative before verse 12 makes only a passing reference to possessing authority over unclean spirits (v. 7b) and focuses instead on other aspects of the mission. But in the summary of the mission, miracles figure prominently, constituting two of the three activities highlighted in vv. 12—13.10

In addition, Luke’s use of this Markan passage reveals a distinct reductional tendency concerning the miraculous in the mission of the twelve. Perhaps observing that the agenda of the disciples is somewhat unclear in Mark 6:7—11, Luke expanded Mark’s initial allusion to exorcisms (ἐξορίζειν σώματα δύσην καὶ ἐνοχλεῖν τὰ ἀσάτη καὶ ἄσβεστα, Luke 9:1) to include also an explicit reference to healing the sick (καὶ νάσους ἑρεπατεῖν, 9:1c). Continuing in the same vein, Luke 9:2 is somewhat repetitive of 9:1 in clarifying that the purpose of the mission is “to preach the kingdom of God and to heal.” Thus, whereas Mark 6:6b only mentions briefly that the disciples would have “authority over evil spirits,” Luke adds a reference to healing diseases (Luke 9:1c) and explicitly states the missionary purpose of preaching and healing (9:2).

In view of the increased interest in miracles at the beginning of the Lukan passage, one might expect the same in this evangelist’s concluding summary of the mission (Luke 9:6; cf. Mark 6:12—15). On the contrary, the remainder of the Lukian account not only is shorter, but also omits the Markan reference to exorcisms (Mark 6:13a), taking over from Mark only the acts of proclamation and healing (ἐγγίζειν δεινοθέτηται καὶ ἑρεπατεῖν τὰς πανταχοῦ, Luke 9:6). Thus, while the author of Luke highlights miracles more than Mark in Luke 9:1—2, he does not continue the same tendency in 9:6.

The two shifts in emphasis from Mark to Luke discussed above may be summarized as follows:

10 The author of Mark may have augmented his source’s presentation of the miraculous with his own summary in the first two verses. It is also possible, however, that Mark condensed his source (vv. 6b—11) and summarized one or more other traditions in vv. 12—13.

Believers as Miracle-Workers in the New Testament

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<td>• v. 7: The disciples are given ἐξορίζειν τῶν νεκρομαυτόν τῶν διασπασθέντων. [No mention of healing.]</td>
<td>• v. 1: Jesus gives his disciples ἔξορευσιν καὶ ὑποτάσσεις καὶ πάντα τὰ δωμάτια καὶ ταῖς νέοις ἱδρυματικαῖς.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• (No parallel in Mark for miracles in the mission change.)</td>
<td>• (No parallel in Luke.)</td>
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| • Summary statement of vv. 12—13: the disciples preached, exercised demons and healed | • Summary statement of v. 6: the disciples proclaimed the good news and healed. [No mention of exorcisms.] | Two observations support a plausible motive for the changes in emphasis in Luke. First, at the beginning of this passage the author simply takes over without much augmentation the Markan reference to exorcisms (Mark 6:7b) and supplements it with mention of proclamation and healing. If Luke had wanted to make the Markan reference to “authority over the unclean spirits” a more explicit charge to exercise demons, he could have done so.11 Second, it is probably not a coincidence that the two items added in Luke 9:2 (preaching and healing) are repeated in 9:6. Thus, for Luke the mission of the twelve primarily entails preaching the gospel and performing healings rather than exorcisms.

The question then arises: if Mark had already set a precedent in referring twice to casting out demons (Mark 6:7b and 13a), why does Luke not consistently repeat the tradition and mention exorcisms also in 9:6? The most likely answer is reflected in how Luke chose to make use of another source, namely “Q.” Luke, who knew well his written traditions (Mark and “Q”), recognized that in the “Q” tradition the disciples return from the mission and express amazement at their success in subduing the demons: κύρε, καὶ τὰ θάνατα ὑπονοοῦσαν ἦμεν ἐν τῷ σώματι σου (Luke 10:17b). It thus stands to reason that in Luke 9:6 the evangelist deliberately omits Mark’s more explicit reference to exorcism (Mark 6:13a; cf. 6:7), in order to highlight the seventy disciples as exorcists at a later point in Luke 10:17. For Luke, then, the development of Jesus’ followers into more and more accomplished miracle-workers occurs in stages: the twelve are first known primarily as preachers and healers (Luke 9:1—6), but during the mission of the seventy a new trick of the trade is learned, and Jesus’ second group of emissaries are surprised to find themselves accomplished exorcists (Luke 10:1—24).

This analysis of Mark 6:6b—13 and the Lukian parallel in Luke 9:1—6 indicates that each evangelist reflects editorial interests in the presentation of the disciples as miracle-workers. On the one hand, the Markan summary of

11 Instead, the Markan reference to “authority over the unclean spirits” (Mark 6:7b) is reflected as “authority over all the demons” (Luke 9:1b), a roughly equivalent expression. Contrast Matt 10:1 (ἐξορίζειν τῶν νεκρομαυτόν διασπασθέντων ἡδονα ἔδωκαν αὐτοῖς). See the discussion below of the Markean mission discourse.


The preceding discussion mentioned only one aspect of the “Q” passage, exorcisms. Now it remains to consider the passage as a whole before examining the Matthean combination of Mark and “Q.” The tradition preserved in Luke 10 and Matthew 10 shares a number of features in common with the commissioning of Mark 6. The emissaries are first sent out in groups of two (Luke 10:1; cf. Mark 6:7), and then receive instructions for the mission (Luke 10:4—11; cf. Mark 6:8—11). Among these instructions is the charge to “heal the sick” (εὐάλουσεν τούς ἐν αὐτῷ δαιμόνισιν, Luke 10:9a; cf. Matt 10:8a: εὐάλουσεν τούς ἑαυτοῖς, a command not present in the Markan account but similar to Luke 9:2 (καὶ ἔστησεν οὐς ἐν αὐτῷ ... ὑάται)). 12

A daunting question then arises: does Luke 9:2 reflect an expansion of the Markan account in light of “Q,” or do both Luke 9:2 and Luke 10:9a reflect additions from the hand of Luke? Regardless of how this problem might be resolved, 13 in the “Q” tradition as preserved by Luke, the disciples are sent both to heal the sick and to announce that “the kingdom of God has come” (Luke 10:9). The healings are to authenticate the announcement of eschatological fulfillment in that the two activities go hand in hand (εὐάλουσεν ... καὶ λέγετε αὐτοῖς, ἡ ἡμείς ἐν ὑμῖν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ, Luke 10:9).

12 Comparing Mark 6:6b—13 with the “Q” tradition of Luke 10:1—12, B. Kellmann considers the miracle instruction of Mark 6:6b—7 secondary to “Q,” and argues that the following four elements make up the oldest kernel of the tradition of sending out: “a) instruction concerning the equipment, b) instruction for behavior in a house, c) authorization for miracles and proclamation, as well as d) regulation of behavior in the case of refusal” (Wunderlicher, pp. 195–196).

13 In light of the fact that Matthew preserves this tradition as a grammatically parallel miracle list (αὐτοί δὲ εὐάλουσαν τοὺς ἑαυτοῖς, νεκροὺς ἐγέρσατο, λείποντα καθολικῶς, βασιλείαν ἐφέσσατο ἐκείνων ἐκλέκτων, διδαχήν δέδωκεν, Matt 10:8a), the reconstruction of “Q” at this point is a rather daunting task. Nonetheless, given the common reference to healing in Luke and Matthew, it is likely that both evangelists are working with an earlier “Q” tradition. On this and related points see David R. Cathepole, “The Mission Champs in Q,” Semiose 55 (1991) 147—174.

The “Q” tradition also perplexes because, as mentioned above, although Jesus’ followers are sent out to heal, they return as joyful and triumphant exorcists: ὑπέστησαν δὲ ὑπὸ ἑβασίματον [δύο] μετὰ χαρᾶς λέγοντες, Κύριε, καὶ τὰ δαιμόνια ὑποτάσσονται ἡμῖν ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ σου (Luke 10:17). Jesus’ response places the casting out of demons within the larger context of a cosmic battle, in which Satan’s fall from heaven preceded the disciples’ present “authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and all the authority of the enemy” (Luke 10:18—19).

Moreover, the “Q” tradition also expects that miracles should lead to repentance:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Luke 10:13</th>
<th>Matt 11:20—21</th>
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<tr>
<td>ὑπέστησαν δὲ ἑβασίματον τῷ πάλαι σε ἐν αὐτῶν λείποντος καθολικῶς</td>
<td>τίτις ἤρετο δικαιοκρίνειν τό πάλαι σε ἐν αὐτῶν λείποντος ἑβασίματος, δόκοι ὅτι σε μετενέπτησεν.</td>
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In Luke this woe occurs after the instructions about the seventy. In this context, σε μετενέπτησε is to be understood as a reference to the disciples’ miracles, which did not result in the repentance of others. The only Lukan embellishment of this tradition appears to be the addition of καθολικῶς before μετενέπτησεν. In Matthew, however, the woe occurs after the mission discourse (Matt 9:35—11:1), and the introduction mentioning σε μετενέπτησεν αὐτοῦ (Matt 11:20) makes an explicit reference to Jesus’ own miracles rather than those of the disciples. Accordingly, Luke, unlike Matthew, associates the miracles of the seventy with Jesus’ own pronouncement of judgment.

To summarize, in the “Q” tradition according to Luke 10:1—24, the disciples figure prominently as miracle-workers, but one does not find as much redactional organization as in Mark 6 and Luke 9. The missionaries are sent out to perform healings, which will confirm the eschatological message (Luke 10:9). When they come back from the mission, however, there is mention neither of healing the sick nor of proclamation. Instead, they return as exorcists who need further teaching concerning their own activities (Luke 10:17—19). Finally, although both Luke 10:13 and Matt 11:20—21 stipulate that miracles should lead others to repentance, only the Lukan version of this “Q” tradition implies that not responding in faith to the disciples’ miracles is a cause for condemnation at the final judgment.

c) The Matthean Combination of Mark and “Q”

Matt 9:35—11:1 comprises an extended mission discourse, which incorporates much from the depictions of the disciples’ mission in Mark 6
and “Q,” as well as from other parts of Mark and the Sayings Source. The majority of the passage (Matt 10:5b—42) consists of sayings of Jesus, a number of which—for example, “peace vs. a sword,” 10:34—39; teaching on rewards, 10:40—42—at some earlier point in the tradition could have occurred in contexts other than a mission discourse.

Matthew’s summary of Jesus’ commissioning begins, “Then Jesus summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness” (Matt 10:1). In the phrase ἄγωγοι τῶν νεκρῶν ἁπάντων, Matthew follows Mark 6:7 closely, but adds the additional clarification, ὅτε ἐκδιδάσκων αὐτῶ, thus leaving no doubt that Mark’s “authority over unclean spirits” refers to the casting out of demons. In addition, curing “every disease and every sickness” (θεραπεύειν πάναν νόσου καὶ πάναν μακάριαν) heightens the command of “Q”/Luke 10:9 to “heal the sick (θεραπεύετε τοὺς... δρέπανος).” As in “Q,” the Matthean disciples are to proclaim that “the kingdom of heaven has come near” (Matt 10:7b; cf. Luke 10:9), but whereas Luke 10:9 states that healing alone will accompany this proclamation, Matt 10:8a offers a list of four different miracles that the twelve are commanded to perform: ἄγωγοι τῶν νεκρῶν, ἱεροτροποῦσα, λεπροὺς καθαρίζετε, ἐκδίδασκον άμαρτίαν. The first and last items—healing the sick and casting out demons—have been mentioned earlier in this passage (cf. Matt 10:1) and correspond to Mark 6, as well as to Luke 9 and 10. By contrast, the expectation that the disciples will raise the dead and cleanse lepers has no parallel in the Synoptic Gospels. These two additional acts in Matt 10:8a thus point to a growth in the tradition of the disciples as miracle-workers.

In the remainder of the Matthean mission instruction (10:9—15), miracles are not mentioned again. Moreover, after Matt 10:16 the mission proper consists of sight completely, giving way to teachings, for example, on persecutions and true rewards (10:17—42). In fact, the concluding verse of this section presents Jesus—rather than the twelve—as the one who departed “to teach and proclaim his [own] message” after he “had finished instructing his twelve disciples” (Matt 11:1). Despite the variety of interests reflected in the Matthean mission discourse, it may be inferred that, among the Synoptic Gospels, the Matthean mission discourse offers the most comprehensive and explicitly optimistic presentation of the disciples as workers of wonders. The twelve not only enjoy complete success as miracle-workers (Matt 10:8), but also have the most extensive repertoire of wonders to perform (Matt 10:8). Therefore, of the four Synoptic passages discussed thus far, Matt 10:1—15 presents the closest approximation to the expectation of Mark 16:17—18, which lists five signs that will accompany those who believe. Both commissionings are completely optimistic with regard to the ability of Jesus’ followers to perform miracles (Matt 10:1; Mark 16:17a) and offer a miracle list summarizing the wonders (Matt 10:8; Mark 16:17—18).

In comparing the LE with the Matthean mission discourse, however, one should also be aware of differences between the two passages, as well as the portrayal of the disciples at the end of the First Gospel. Of the four miracles mentioned in Matt 10:8—healing the sick, raising the dead, cleansing lepers and casting out demons—only the first and last correspond to two of the five signs in Mark 16:17—18. Furthermore, the LE contrasts with the final Matthean commissioning (Matt 28:18—20) in that the latter, unlike Matt 10:1—8 and Mark 16:15—18, contains no reference to miracles, and mentions instead the acts of making disciples, teaching and baptizing. Perhaps the author of Matt 28:18—20 assumed his readers would infer that the earlier references to the disciples’ miracles (Matt 10:1—8) would also apply to the post-resurrection mission. Regardless of Matthew’s intent, the similarities of Mark 16:15—18 to Matt 10:1—8 leave open the possibility that the author of the Longer Ending supplemented Matthew’s Great Commission (Matt 28:18—20) with a portrayal of the miraculous very much like that in Matt 10:1—8.

d) John’s Followers and the Miracles of Jesus’ Disciples (Matt 11:2—6)

In Matthew, miracles also receive mention immediately after Matt 9:35—11:1, when two of John the Baptist’s disciples visit Jesus (Matt 11:2—6). These disciples ask whether Jesus is “the one who is to come,” and Jesus responds with a list of miracles: “Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have the good news brought to them.”

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16 In Romans writes concerning the disciples in Matt 10:8, “Jesus empowers them not only to cast out unclean spirits (thus also Mark 6:7; Luke 9:11, "demons") but also to "heal every disease and every sickness” (Matt 10:1). Indeed, to perform virtually every miracle ascribed to Jesus in Matthew 8:4—10:8 ("Miracles [NT]", p. 883).

17 Cfr. Matt 11:2—6 on the question of John the Baptist’s disciples whether Jesus is the coming one and Jesus’ response. It is possible that Matthew has added the two novel signs (raising the dead and cleansing lepers) in light of this “Q”-anecdote.
(Matt 11:4—5; cf. 10:8). Given the likelihood that Matthew, in contrast with Luke 7:18—23 and probably also "Q," has placed the narrative concerning John’s disciples after the mission of the twelve, it would follow that Matt 11:4—5 calls attention to the miracles of both Jesus and the disciples. The miracles of Jesus’ followers, like those performed by Jesus himself, confirm that Jesus is “the one who is to come.”

Somewhat paradoxically, then, the tendencies of Matthew and Luke are different in each pair (Matt 11:2—6 and Luke 7:18—23; Matt 11:20—21 and Luke 10:13). While Matt 11:2—6 (but not Luke 7:18—23) points to the disciples’ wonders in connection with John’s disciples, Luke 10:13 (but not Matt 11:20—21) draws a related conclusion concerning the judgment of those who did not respond to the disciples’ preaching and miracles. Such differences in emphasis in parallel passages of these Gospels support the thesis argued above that, of the Synoptic evangelists, Matthew offers the most optimistic picture of the disciples as miracle-workers. For the author of Matthew, wonders performed by the twelve should play a role in persuading John’s disciples (Matt 11:4—5), and there is no mention of any failure on the part of the twelve to prompt repentance in Matt 11:20—21. The author of Luke, who, presumably, followed “Q” more closely than Matthew did, refers only to Jesus’ miracles in response to the Baptist’s emissaries (Luke 7:18—25) and is more interested in the judgment to be visited upon those who ignore the mission of the seventy (Luke 10:13).

e) The Exorcised Boy (Mark 9:14—29 par.)

Two other passages illustrate further the ways in which the Synoptic evangelists depict the disciples as miracle-workers. The first occurs in each of the Synoptics and recounts a point where the disciples were unsuccessful exorcists. Although the pericope does not explicitly place Jesus’ followers in a missionary setting, there are points of contact, most notably in the Matthean version, with the expectations of Mark 16:17—20.18 Responding to the situation of the demon-possessed boy whom the disciples were unable to help (Mark 9:14—29, Matt 17:14—20, Luke 9:33—43), Jesus expresses dismay at the “unbelieving generation” before performing the exorcism himself. Of greatest interest here is Jesus’ response to the disciples’ question

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>διὰ τὴν ἡμέραν ἡμῶν ἔθελεν ἡγάλαυεν αὐτὸν</td>
<td>(no parallel in Luke; cf. Mark 6:23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>εἶπεν ἐν αὐτῷ</td>
<td>(no parallel in Mark or Luke)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ἐλευθερώσατο αὐτὸν</td>
<td>(no parallel in Luke or Mark)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Luke this saying appears in response to a request from the apostles that Jesus “strengthen” their faith (προσέβει ἡμῖν πίστιν, Luke 17:5). Only in Matthew is the “Q” material used to highlight the expectation that Jesus’ disciples are to work miracles not on their own power but by faith.20 Therefore, of the three Synoptic accounts of the exorcised boy (Mark 9:14—29 par.), that in Matthew is distinctive for turning the disciples’ failure to help a single possessed boy (Matt 17:16; cf. Mark 9:18b, Luke 9:40) into a promise that nothing of this sort will be impossible for those who have the smallest amount of trust. Although the disciples’ insufficient faith rendered them unable to cast out a single demon on a certain occasion — a shortcoming that Mark and Luke were content to let stand without further comment or explanation — Matthew ends with an assurance of future success if Jesus’ followers make the slightest improvement on what happened in the case of this boy. By placing the “Q”/Luke 17:6 saying within this miracle story, Matthew has thus changed the emphasis of the Markan (and Lukan) pericope from a pronouncement against “this generation” to an exhortation that the disciples should aim to increase their faith in order to ensure the success of the next time they attempt to perform such a miracle. Accordingly, as noted above

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18 Mark 9:14—19: καὶ ἔλευθε τὸ ἅμα τοῦ μαθητῆς εἶδον ἡγάλαυεν τοὺς περὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ τραυματίες συγκεκονότος πρὸς αὐτοὺς. 15 καὶ ὡς πέρα ἐκ ἡγάλαυτος αὐτῶν ἔπεσεν καὶ προέρχετο ἐπὶ τοῦ αὐτοῦ. 16 καὶ ἐπέμενεν αὐτοῖς. ἦσαν δὲ ἤματα πρὸς αὐτούς. 17 καὶ ἐπέστη αὐτὸς ἐκ τοῦ ἡγάλαυτος. ἦν δὲ ἡμέραν ἡμῶν ἐκείνην ἡμᾶς αὐτὸν ἀπεκρίνετο καὶ ἐρευνώντος καὶ εἰσελθοντος συνέκαλον καὶ οὐκ ἠγάλαυεν αὐτόν. 18 καὶ ἤκουν ἐκ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἰκτίσματα αὐτὸς καὶ ἀφελές καὶ τετέλεσθε τοῖς δόμοις καὶ ἔτρεχεν καὶ ἐπέρα τὸν μαθητής σου ἐν αὐτῷ ἀπεκρίνετο καὶ οὐκ ἠγάλαυεν αὐτόν. 19 ὃς δὲ ἀπερήπτυκτος οὐκ ἠγάλαυεν αὐτόν. ὃς δὲ ἠγάλαυεν τοὺς ἄνθρωπος ἤκουσεν ἀνθρώποι ὃς δὲ ἠγάλαυεν τοὺς ἄνθρωπος ἄνθρωποι.

19 Rather, in the remainder of the pericope Luke is interested only in the healing of the boy and the astonishment of the crowd (Luke 9:41—43).

with regard to the Matthean mission discourse and Matt 11:2—6, this evangelist remains consistent in offering the most optimistic depiction of the disciples as competent miracle-workers like those depicted in Mark 16:17—20.


Especially in the Markan version, another saying of Jesus reflects an unrestrained element of optimism toward the miraculous like that in the LE. In response to the disciple John's statement about another person (v 15) who was casting out demons in Jesus' name, Mark 9:38 and Luke 9:49 instruct that the disciples should not stop such people:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mark 9:38—40</th>
<th>Luke 9:49—50</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ηται αυτοι ο θεωνς, ανακαλεσει, ειδομεν τινα εν τω ουναμετ σου εκβαλλοντα δαιμονια, και εκαλοιμανεν αυτοιν, ότι σως ηκολουηθη ημεν.</td>
<td>ἀποκεφαλεσε τε λεγων δε λεγων εἶπεν, ἔστωσα, εἴδας τινα εν τῷ θεῷ σου εκβαλλοντα δαιμονια και ἐκάλοιμανεν αὐτοῖς, ὅτι σως ἠκολούθησαν μας ἡμῖν.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39 δὲ γὰρ ήταν εἶχεν, μή καλεδέτε αὐτοῖς.</td>
<td>50 οὖν ἔστω δε πρὸς αὐτὸν τὴν θησει. μή καλοῦτες</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>οὐκέτι γὰρ έστιν δε ποιήσεις δύναμιν ἐπὶ τῷ θεῷ μου καὶ δύνηται τοιῷ κακολογησθαι μὲν</td>
<td>οὖν γὰρ σως έστιν καὶ θανὸν, ὑπὲρ θανὸν ἔστιν.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although the individual appealing to the power of Jesus' name does not "follow" the disciples (ὅτι σως ἠκολούθησαν μας ἡμῖν), such a person is nonetheless to be acknowledged as a co-beligerent and allowed to continue with his or her work.

The view that any miracle-worker — in this case, an exorcist — not opposing the disciples is in fact on their side (Mark 9:39b, Luke 9:50b) reflects the opposite perspective of Matt 7:21—23 (especially vv. 22—23).

The Matthean saying acknowledges certain prophets and miracle-workers, whom Jesus does not "know" because they do not do the will of his "Father in heaven."

οὕς παρὰ δὲ λέγων μου, κύριε κύριε, εἰσελεύσεται εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν αἰωνίων, ἀλλὰ δέ ποιον τὸ θέλημα τοῦ καιροῦ μου τοῦ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ, 22 πολλοὶ φεύγουσιν ἐν ἑκείνι τῆς θησεί. Κύριε κύριε, οὐ τῷ σῷ οὖν άσπρων ἐπορευομαι καὶ τῷ σῷ οὖν άσπρω δαιμόνιον ἐκβάλλω, καὶ τῷ σῷ οὖν δαιμόνιον δυναμεὶς πολλοὶ ἐγνώσαμεν 23 καὶ τῶν οὐρανῶν τοιῶν οὖν οὐδείς. ἔγενεν δὲ εξοροσάςτην εἰς θάνατον δὲ ἀφεθήκεν τῷ αὐτοῖς ἔνδοικεν ἕναν (Matt 7:21—23)

The problem highlighted in Matt 7:22—23 may well account for Matthew's omission of the pericope preserved in Mark 9:38—40 and selectively reproduced in Luke 9:49—50. Presumably, those mentioned in the Matthean saying, who perform exorcisms or other miracles in Jesus' name, would think of themselves as doing the Father's will. According to Matt 7:22—23, however, living in accordance with the will of the Father is demonstrated by following a certain interpretation of the Law or some analogous ethical issue.

In this connection one should also note a related saying in Matt 12:20, which reflects a striking adaptation of Mark 9:39b and Luke 9:50:

οὐ γὰρ ἐν φερετί ίματι κατὰ ίματι ἔστιν, καὶ οὐ δεξαμενοι μετὰ ίματι σκοτείζει.

The one who is not with me is against me, and the one who does not gather with me scatters. (Matt 12:20)

Considered in light of Matt 7:22—23, Matt 12:20 constitutes a rejection of the perspective toward the miraculous in Mark 9:39b and Luke 9:50. In the pericope of the foreign exorcist, Mark and Luke — like, perhaps, the author of the LE, but in contrast with Matthew — reflect a general attitude of trust toward wonder-workers who may not be associated with one's own community. Such confidence is even more profound in Mark, who alone states that "no one who performs a miracle in my name will soon be able to revile me." The assumption of this Matthew saying — not reproduced in Luke and explicitly challenged in Matt 7:22—23 and 12:20 — is that those who perform miracles in Jesus' name will, at least in the near future, be on the side of his followers. It stands to reason that the author of the LE would give a nod of approval to the Markan statement and might also remove the cautious τοῦτο. This inference seems justified because, according to Matt 16:9—20, occurrences of signs from heaven constitute a distinctive characteristic of those who believe.

As argued above, the Matthean omission of this saying may be understood in light of an opposing perspective, reflected in Matt 7:22—23, which maintains that "many" who prophesy and exercise demons in Jesus' name are, nonetheless, not to be counted among those whom the Lord "knows."

Such a shift in emphasis from Mark — and, to a lesser extent, Luke — on the one hand, to Matthew, on the other, may be understood in light of the growing diversity one would expect in Christian communities over time. Once someone like the author of Matthew perceives a threat from contentious miracle-workers, a switch from the teaching of Mark 9:38—40 to the more defensive stance of Matt 7:22—23 could well become a matter of necessity. In light of this change in Matthew, one must acknowledge the possibility that this evangelist's choice to highlight Jesus' own disciples as miracle-workers

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22 Compare Mark 9:39—40; οὐκέτι γας ἔστιν δε ποιήσεις δύναμιν ἐπὶ τῷ οὖν άσπρῳ καὶ συνήκειται τοιῷ κακολογησθαι μὲ, διὰ γὰρ σως ἔστιν καὶ θανὸν, ὑπὲρ θανὸν ἔστιν.
more than Mark (and Luke) may have come in response to the rival miracle-workers acknowledged in Matt 7:21—23.

With regard to the interpretation of the LE, this comparative study has arrived at a paradox, for this second-century addition to Mark (ca. 120—150 CE) has its greatest similarities to the earlier tradition of Mark 9:38—40, rather than to the more cautious version of this passage in Luke 9:49—50, or to the reversal predicated in Matt 7:22—23 and 12:20. One can only wonder how the statements of Mark 16:17—20 concerning the miraculous were, historically speaking, tenable in the first half of the second century. Without any evidence to the contrary, it must be acknowledged that the depictions of the miraculous in Mark’s Longer Ending could possibly have roots in traditions which are earlier than those contained in the Synoptic Gospels but were not preserved in other early Christian writings. Later sections in this chapter will return to these problems in an effort to place the LE in relation to other writings of the first, second and later centuries.

g) Summary of the Disciples as Miracle-Workers in the Synoptic Gospels

The portrayal of miracles in a missionary setting is not a new development in Mark 16:15—20. All four of the pre-Easter commissionings in Matthew, Mark and Luke present the disciples as miracle-workers, acknowledging, if not highlighting, their role as exorcists and agents of healing. With regard to the LE’s distinctive features, the fact that Matthew, writing before the LE’s author, offers a list of the disciples’ miracles (Matt 10:8a) shows that Mark 16:17—18 is novel neither in its expectation nor in its literary form — the miracle list — used to convey this expectation. Nevertheless, in comparison with Mark 6, Luke 9 and 10, and Matthew 10 — not to mention the commissionings in Matthew 28, Luke 24 and Acts 1, which do not even refer to the miraculous — two elements in the LE are without parallel in the Synoptics: the explicit connection of proclamation and miracles in a post-resurrection missionary setting, and the presumably larger number of “those who believe” who will perform the miracles.

In addition, Matthew offers the most optimistic portrayal of the disciples as successful workers of the greatest variety of miracles (especially Matt 10:8). This tendency within Matthew is also evident in the response to John the Baptist’s disciples (Matt 11:2—6), Matthew’s adaptation of the anecdote about the boy whom the disciples could not exorcise (Matt 17:14—20), and this author’s silence concerning the inability of the disciples to bring forth repentance through their preaching and the miracles they performed (Matt 11:20—21; contrast Luke 10:13). The point at which this emphasis in Matthew is not continued is the pericope of the foreign exorcist (Mark 9:38—40, Luke 9:49—50). Instead of acknowledging, with Mark 9:39b, that “no one who performs a miracle in my name will soon be able to revile me,” Matt 12:20 makes the opposite claim, and Matt 7:22—23 expresses concern about certain other prophets and exorcists, whom Jesus himself does not even ‘know.’

Furthermore, this tendency in Matt 10:8a, 11:2—6, 11:20—21 and 17:14—20 can be understood within a larger context of competition among rival wonder-working missionaries for acknowledgment from Christian congregations. Compared with Matthew, the presentation of believers as miracle-workers in the LE is rather one-sided in that Mark 16:17—20 emphasizes only the positive work of the missionaries, whose preaching is accompanied by signs from the risen Lord, but does not contain a warning analogous to Matt 7:22—23 or 12:20. Although the context of the LE does not suggest the social setting tentatively offered here for Matthew’s presentation of the disciples, this possibility in the case of Mark 16:17—20 cannot be ruled out on a priori grounds.

2. The Gospel of John

Unlike the Synoptics, the Fourth Gospel does not mention a mission of the disciples during the life of Jesus. The end of John (20:30—31) is also distinctive in that, as opposed to Matthew 28 and Acts 1, there is no commissioning of Jesus’ followers. Furthermore, John never portrays Jesus’ followers as miracle-workers. Nevertheless, it would be premature to overlook the many times John refers to Jesus’ own signs, which inspire faith on the part of those who behold them. This Gospel also contains a promise that the one who believes will do even greater works than Jesus (John 14:12—14), a promise that needs to be understood in light of John’s overall presentation of the miraculous.

It is widely recognized that seven extended miracle narratives play a significant role in the first half of the Fourth Gospel (chaps. 1—12). Of

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23 Note, however, that, although the time of the commissioning’s fulfillment is not specified, John 4:35—38 implies a sending of the disciples by Jesus to do missionary work (cf. John 15:1—7).

24 One should not, of course, overlook similar passages in the Synoptic Gospels. See, e.g., Mark 1:28—38, 32—34, 45; cf. A. Friedrich’s discussion of miracle and faith in the Synoptic Gospels (The Problem of Miracle in Primitive Christianity, pp. 77—84). The point here is that this distinct purpose of signs comes more to the forefront in the Fourth Gospel.

25 They are: 1) turning water into wine (2:1—11); 2) healing an official’s son (4:46—54); 3) healing of a paralytic at Bethesda (5:1—19); 4) feeding of a multitude (6:1—14); 5) walking on water (6:16—21); 6) healing of a blind man (9:1—41); 7) raising of Lazarus (11:1—44; cf. 6:21). Cf. R. M. Grant, Gods and the One God (Library of Early Christianity I, gen. ed. Wayne A. Meeks; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986) 98—97; H. Rams, "Miracle (NT)", pp. 865—866; R. T. France, "Signs/Semeia Sources," ABQ, 6:18—22.
particular interest are this author’s frequent references to a “sign” (σημάδιον, 2:18; 4:54, 6:14, 30, 10:41, 12:18) or “signs” (σημαδία, 2:11, 23b, 3:2, 6-2, 8, 7:31, 9:16, 11:47, 12:37, 20:30) to designate Jesus’ miracles.26 The thesis to be argued here is that the LE’s expectation of signs to be performed by believers is strikingly similar to the relationship between Jesus’ signs and the faith of others in certain, but not all, references to miracles in the Fourth Gospel.27 Of equal importance is the observation that the expectations concerning miracles after Jesus’ return to the Father (John 14:11-14) also shed light on Mark 16:17-20.

At certain points the Fourth Gospel states that Jesus’ miracles lead people to faith. For example, in John 2:23b παλαιόν ἑπιστεύων εἰς τὸ ἄνωμα αὐτοῦ ὕποπτον τοῦ σημαδία τε ἑτοίμα (cf. John 6:14, 7:31 and especially 20:30-31). Crowds also are attracted to Jesus because of the signs (6:2, 12:18; cf. Nicodemus in 3:2). At other points there is the request that Jesus give a sign in order to authenticate himself εἰς τὸν ἄνωμα αὐτοῦ (John 6:30; cf. 2:18, 9:16). The common assumption in these passages is that people were attracted to Jesus, and ultimately to faith in him, because of the miracles he performed. Nowhere is this understanding of miracles more explicit than in John 10:37-38, a passage, like many others in John (7:3, 21, 9:2-4, 10:25, 32, 14:10-11, 12, 15:24), that refers to Jesus’ miracles as “works.” Jesus states,

εἰ ό νῦν καὶ ό πιστεύει τὸ ἔργον καὶ ό υπὸ τοῦ ἄνωμα αὐτοῦ εἰσήκουσαν τὴν θυσίαν οἵτινες εἰς τὸν πατέρα καὶ εἰς τὸν υἱὸν των σωζόντων (John 10:25-26)

Displaying great confidence in Jesus’ works, this saying implies that outsiders would be justified in their disbelief if Jesus did not perform miracles (10:37). In addition, belief in the “works” can be a preliminary step leading the outsider toward an understanding of Jesus’ relationship to the Father (10:38).

26 As argued in chapter 3, it is not coincidental that the author of the LE chose to use the term σημάδιον, which occurs only sparsely elsewhere in other Christian writings before 190 CE, in Mark 16:17a and 20c. Moreover, John M. Hull observes in a related discussion, “It should be noted that our observations on Luke 2.34; 11.16, 29ff. are supported by Luke 23:38. This is the only occasion in the synoptics where the miracles are specifically called ‘signs.’” (New Testament Magic and the Synoptic Tradition [Studies in Biblical Theology 2.28; London: SCM Press, 1974] 118).

27 The Fourth Gospel is by no means unique in this expectation. Similar portrayals are evident, e.g., the NT book of Acts and the apocryphal acts (Acts of Thomas, etc.). Only John and Acts, however, predicate the LE and thus could have influenced its author. Accordingly, the presentation of miracles in John receives special attention here.

Believers as Miracle-Workers in the New Testament

Such a portrayal of signs as playing a role in converting others shares much in common with the mission of the LE, in which preaching and miracles granted by the ascended Lord represent the sum total of the enterprise of evangelization.28 Other depictions of signs in the Fourth Gospel contrast with the LE, however.29 For example, despite the fact that many people had come to believe in Jesus “when they beheld the signs he did” (John 2:23), “he did not enthrust himself to them.” (2:24). This passage strikingly indicates a difference between persons who believed because of the miracles (cf. ἐπιστεύων εἰς τὸ ἄνωμα αὐτοῦ θεοροῦντες τὴν θυσίαν) and those whom Jesus trusted! Another passage, John 6:26, occurs after the feeding of the five thousand (6:1-15) and records Jesus’ statement that it was not the signs but rather the "bread" which convinced the crowd to come after him (ὁρεύετε με οὐκ ὁτι εἴδετε σημαδίαν, ἀλλ' ὁτι ἐοτέρει ἐκ τῶν σωσίων καὶ ἐκ τῆς ζωῆς). John 6:26). In addition, when Jesus is asked to state openly if he is the Messiah (10:24), he responds,

εἰς τὸν γενός καὶ ό πιστεύετε τὸ ἔργον καὶ ό υπὸ τοῦ ἄνωμα αὐτοῦ εἰσήκουσαν τὴν θυσίαν καὶ ἐκ τῆς ζωῆς παρακαλοῦντος τοῦ πατέρα (John 10:32-35).

In this last passage, a rather deterministic perspective arises in that miraculous ‘works’ would not have any effect in convincing this particular vision because (ὅτι) you are not of my sheep.” On a similar note, John 12:37-40 states that disbelief in Jesus’ signs occurred in fulfillment of prophecies in Isaiah. As a result, unlike in John 2:23b, 6:14, 7:31 and 20:30-41, a more reserved attitude toward the efficacy of the signs occurs in John 2:23-24, 6:26, 10:24-26 and 12:37-40.30 The LE shares much in common with the


29 So also H. Ramus, “Miracle (NT),” p. 866.

30 On this point see H. Ramus, “Miracle (NT),” p. 866.
former, but not the latter, group of Johannean texts. Consequently, because of the variety of perspectives reflected in the Fourth Gospel, no single passage like the LE could be touted as reflecting the “Johannine view of signs.

Despite his acknowledgment in certain passages that miracles do not always produce inquirers and converts, the author of John ends on an optimistic note with regard to the continuing effects that Jesus’ miracles can have on those who read or hear this Gospel:

πολλὰ μὲν εἶναι καὶ ἄλλα σημάτητα ἐσώτερον ἡ Ἰουσσαφυς ἀνέφερεν τῶν πατέρων ἡμῶν (καυστο), ἢ ἣν κατὰ γεγραμμέναν εἰς τὰ βιβλία τῶν ναῶν εἶχε δὲ ἐγγραφήσει οἱ πατερεῖς; δε μὴν ἐστιν ἡ Ἰουσσαφυς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ οὐ ποιεῖται ζωὴν σωτήριον αὐτῷ (John 20:20—21)

The statement that “Jesus performed many other signs before his disciples” is somewhat curious, since, with the exception of John 2:11, this author refers consistently to miracles in connection with the reactions of people other than Jesus’ followers.31 Despite this incongruity, in John 20:30—31 the past deeds of Jesus should lead John’s audience to faith in Jesus as the Messiah. In this respect one can distinguish between John 20:30—31 and Mark 16:15—20 concerning the explicit connection of gaining followers by virtue of performing miracles either by Jesus (John) or believers (LE). Nevertheless, the connection between miracle and belief in certain Johannine passages suggests the possibility that these passages influenced the LE’s author to highlight a similar connection in Mark 16:15—20.

Were it not for one other saying in the Fourth Gospel, John 14:12, the conclusion would be warranted that this evangelist did not have some conception of a post-resurrection mission, let alone one accompanied by the signs of Jesus’ followers. On the contrary, Jesus’ final instructions include a statement about the miracles — referred to as ἔργα — that the believer (ὁ πιστεύων) will perform:

Truly I say to you, the one who believes in me, that person will also do the works which I do, and do greater works than these (ὅσα πιστεύει εἰς ἐμὲ τὸ ζωόν δὲ ἐμὸν ποιῶ καίεται πνεῦμα καὶ μείζων τῶν πνευμάτων ὑπερετήσεως, ὅτι γέγραπται τὸν πατέρα ποιεῖται). And whatever you ask in my name I will do in order that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name I will do it.32

31 On this point see above discussion. H. Remus also notes, “Once Jesus departs to the Father, his working of signs is at an end. Except for 20:31, they are not mentioned after chapt. 12. The subsequent chapters prepare for his departure and glorification on the cross, for which the σάλοις and the glory they revealed were a prelude. For readers of the gospel, the faith that is required and is pronounced blessed is that which does not need visible verifications before believing (20:29)” (“Miracle [NT],” p. 867).

32 As mentioned above, the same designation for Jesus’ miracles occurs also in John 7:3, 21, 9:3—4, 10:25, 32, 37:58, 14:10—11, 15:24.

33 John 14:12—14. This saying could be interpreted in light of John 4:31—38 and John 15:1—17, which imply a later missionary work of the disciples, but nothing in John 14

Moreover, the Paraclete, who is to be sent after Jesus has departed (John 16:7), shall be “with” them (John 14:16—17). The saying in 14:12—14 is distinctive as compared with the other Johannean references to signs. According to this statement, believers will do “even greater” works than Jesus did (14:12). Because John never presents the disciples of the earthly Jesus as miracle-workers, the context within which these “works” are to occur is open to conjecture. This author thus may not have envisioned these miracles to occur in a missionary setting, as is reflected in certain Synoptic passages and in the LE.

There are also two important points of contact between this Johannine saying and the LE’s portrayal of mission. First, and unlike the Synoptics, the promise of performing miracles is not limited to either John 14 or the LE to those who followed the earthly Jesus, but is open to anyone who believes (ὁ πιστεύων, John 14:12a, τοῖς πιστεύσασιν, Mark 16:17a). Second, and equally significant, is John’s connection of the believer’s imminent ability to perform miracles with the departure of Jesus. In 14:12b this expectation is expressed in the Johannine language of Jesus’ return to the Father (ὅτι ἐγὼ πρὸς τὸν πατέρα ποιεῖται). In the LE the concept is related in the Lukan language of the ascension (ἀνέλημφθη εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν, Mark 16:19b; cf. Acts 1:11, 1:22), after which point the exalted Lord participates actively from heaven in the mission on earth (Mark 16:20b). Although the words for Jesus’ departure in John and the LE are different, the depictions of the disciples as miracle-workers are strikingly similar: after Jesus leaves this world, the disciples will have power from their master. The Fourth Gospel expresses this expectation through the assurance of answered prayer directed toward Jesus, which he himself will answer (ἤδη τι αἰτήσῃ με . . . ποιησώ, John 14:13—14), while in the LE the ascended Lord works actively with the missionaries and confirms their message (συνεργάζοντας καὶ τὸν λόγον βεβαιῶσιν, Mark 16:20bc).

According to John, then, the promise that believers will work miracles anticipates an important step in the unfolding of salvation history. First, Jesus performs signs which attract some (6:2 and 12:18) and persuade others (2:23b, 6:14, 7:31 and 20:30—31), but at times are met with rejection or disbelief (2:23—24, 6:26, 10:24—26 and 12:37—40). John 14:12—14 states that, after Jesus’ return to the Father, the disciples will perform “even greater” miracles than Jesus himself did. Although this author never touches upon the effects of the believers’ miracles, they presumably would receive a somewhat mixed reaction, just as those performed by Jesus did. As argued in chapter 5, the author of the Longer Ending imitated various Synoptic portrayals of the earthly Jesus’ disciples as miracle-workers (especially Mark.

compels the supplying of a missionary context for this promise of ‘greater’ works to follow the one who believes.
The Expectation of Signs toAuthenticate the Kerygma

6:12—13; cf. Matt 10:8a). Mark 16:9—20 thus does not follow John’s chronological arrangement of the believer as a miracle-worker only after the departure of Jesus. Nonetheless, the importance of Jesus’ departure to the wonder-working potential of all believers figures prominently in both John 14 and the LE:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>John 14:12—17</th>
<th>Mark 16:15—20</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[no Johannine parallel]</td>
<td>Commissioning (v. 15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promise of doing “greater” works (v. 12a)</td>
<td>Promise of signs (vv. 17—18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explanation: “because I am going to the Father” (v. 12b)</td>
<td>Assumption/session at God’s right hand (v. 19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promise of answered prayer (vv. 13—14)</td>
<td>The assistance of the risen Lord (v. 20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and assurance of the Paraclete’s presence (vv. 15—17)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Consequently, neither in emphasizing the departure of Jesus nor in pointing to believers in general as miracle-workers does the LE’s author offer a completely novel expectation.

3. Acts

Having observed the variety of ways in which the NT Gospels portray the followers of Jesus as miracle-workers, it remains to consider the same topic in the NT book of Acts. As in the previous sections, the focus of this study remains on the expectation that Christians would perform miracles and on the effects of miracles in a missionary context. Since new languages figure prominently in Acts and the LE but are not typically associated with other wonders, this phenomenon will be discussed separately before considering miracles in the rest of Acts.

a) Acts 2 and the LE on Tongues of Fire and the Godhead

As noted in chapter 4, Jesus’ final instructions in Acts before being taken up to heaven contain no explicit reference to the miraculous: the earliest community is to wait in Jerusalem, where they will “receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon” them (Acts 1:8). The familiar narrative of Pentecost (Acts 2:1—13) and Peter’s speech given that day (2:14—36) reflect the fulfillment and interpretation of Acts 1:8. Similarities of the LE’s second sign (γλώσσαις λαλήσασιν καιναίς, Mark 16:17b) to the portrayals of glossolalia in Acts 2:4 (καὶ ἔρχεται λαλῶν ἐπί χάριν γλώσσαις) and 2:11 (εἰς ὄλλους λαλοῦντος αὐτῶν ταῖς ἥμετεραις γλώσσαις) have been discussed in earlier chapters. According to Acts 2, the proclamation in various languages initially gains the attention of outsiders, of whom some three thousand convert and join the fledgling group comprising 120 individuals

(Acts 2:41; cf. 1:15). With regard to the phenomenon of glossolalia—mentioned in Acts and 1 Corinthians 12 and 14—Eugen Helze notes “the positive evaluation” of the new languages in Acts in contrast with “the critical position of Paul.”

It follows that the more “positive” stance of Acts is closer to the expectation of this phenomenon in the LE than the Pauline assessments of popular abuses and misconceptions.

Of particular relevance to the interpretation of Mark 16:19—20 is the connection drawn in Peter’s Pentecost sermon between Christ’s resurrection and ascension and the phenomenon of Pentecost. The apostle explains that Jesus, who was raised and “exalted to God’s right hand,” is the one who “received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit” and “poured out what you see and hear.”

As in the LE’s final verse, the exalted Christ is active among the believing community in the pouring out the Holy Spirit, which is manifested in the tongues of fire and other phenomena, to inspire that others will hear the good news.

A simple identification of the significance attached to new languages in Acts 2 and in the LE, however, would distort the distinct emphases of each passage. Whereas Luke calls attention to the activity of the Holy Spirit in the manifestation of the tongues of fire (especially Acts 2:4, 17, 32—33; cf. 1:2, 1:8), throughout Mark 16:9—20 there is mention of only one divine agent, the risen Lord. When one considers that the LE’s author also omitted the trinitarian statement from Matthew’s final commissioning saying, it is evident that he chose to pass over in silence occurrences of θεὸς τοῦ πνεύματος (Matt 28:19b) and, presumably, of τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ άγίου (Acts 2:33) in passages which he otherwise esteemed. The silence of the LE’s author on these parts of Matthew 28 and Acts 2 suggests that he, unlike

34 Acts 2:8, 11: “How is it that we hear, each of us in our own native language . . . then speaking about God’s deeds of power?” Indeed, immediately following the Pentecost narrative, Luke can summarize that “As we came upon everyone, because of the promise of the Holy Spirit were being done by the apostles” (Acts 2:43) before relating a single miracle account. Note also the interpolation of “signs (σημεῖα)” into the LXX of Joel 3:1—5, which is cited in connection with the fulfillment at Pentecost (Acts 2:17—21, esp. v. 19).


Luke, calls attention to the work of the risen Lord to the exclusion of the Spirit.38

A related observation concerns the unusual active participle διακονεῖ at the beginning of the LE (Mark 16:9a), which indicates that Christ "rose," perhaps on his own power, and departs from the traditional affirmation that he "was raised" by the Father.39 This formulation of v. 9a, like those of vv. 17b and 20bc, could reflect a consistent interest in Jesus alone to the exclusion of other members of the Godhead, a position consistent with the tenets of both monism and modalism. Although these small details from so short a passage cannot characterize definitively the author of the Longer Ending, they do point to an author who, perhaps consciously, distanced himself from the comparatively more trinitarian expressions of Matthew 28 and Acts 2.40 These observations also suggest that, after Mark 16:9-20 had been added to the Second Gospel, if subsequent generations had suspected the LE of reflecting monistic or modalistic, rather than trinitarian, views, the passage might then have been deemed heretical and, as a result, excluded as a legitimate ending to Mark. Moreover, were the authenticity of the LE not to be questioned, Mark itself might perhaps have been excluded from the canon.

b) Miracles in the Rest of Acts

As noted above, the various miracles portrayed by Luke (for example, Acts 3:1-10, 9:32-35, 9:36-43, 14:8-18, 28:1-10) have received significant attention from a number of scholars and will thus not be discussed in detail here.41 At present it suffices to note that at a number of points Acts 3-28 reflects the kind of conversions due to the miraculous that are expected in the LE. In fact, as Jacob Jervell observes, Luke refers to every significant Christian leader — Peter, Stephen (6:8), Philip (8:4-7), Barnabas and

38 See also J. Hug, who calls attention to the "notable absence ... of the Spirit" in the LE (La finale de l'Évangile de Marc, p. 125); already E. Heid, "Der Schluß des Markusevangeliums [Mc 16, 9-20]" p. 42; cf. B. Kolmann, Wunderälter, pp. 337-338).

39 On this point see the discussion of διακονεῖ in chapter 2.

40 The category "modalism" is used by scholars to describe one aspect of the variety in early Christian doctrine. See Henry Chadwick, The Early Church (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1987) 87-90. Furthermore, I use the term "monism" as an additional possibility for describing these tendencies in Mark 16:9-20.


43 Acts 14:8-18. Note, however, Dieter Geں's comment on Acts 14:18: "This polytheistic view of God is rejected. But the concluding phrase of 14:18 ... nevertheless serves ad maiorem gloriam apostolorum. Polytheism is indeed strongly rejected, but not the concept of θεος δεινος (Opponents, p. 169).

44 For further discussion of Acts 28:1-10 in chapter 6 on Mark 16:18a (διηνέμει δύναμιν)
In the second half of Acts, two of this author's primary concerns include presenting Paul as a genuine leader and narrating the completion of Paul's journey to Rome. In the former endeavor Luke again appeals to miracles when presenting Paul as an important missionary called by God. In Acts, the summary statements of Acts 5:12—16 and 19:11—12 illustrate this perspective most clearly. The former passage refers to the collective ministry of the twelve apostles during the early chapters of Acts, and states that all those who were sick or tormented by unclean spirits were healed:

Now many signs and wonders (σημεῖα καὶ θέρασα) were done among the people through the apostles. And they were all together in Solomon's Portico. 13 None of the rest dared to join them, but the people held them in high esteem. 14 Yet more than ever believers were added to the Lord, great numbers of both men and women, 15 so that they even carried the sick into the streets, and laid them on cots and mats, in order that Peter's shadow might fall on some of them as he passed by (δόθη καὶ εἶς τῶν πλατειῶν έκπέπτειν τοὺς ἀσθενείς καὶ τῆς κλήρους, καὶ προεξέθη, τινὰ ἐσχαμανίαν Πέτρου εὗρεν η τῆς ἑμνεῖσθαι τίνι αὕτη). 16 A great number of people would also gather from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all cured. (Acts 5:12—16)

In Acts 19:11—12, Luke, who depicts the twelve apostles as wonder-workers (Acts 5:12—16), also relates a similar account of miracles in the ministry of Paul:

God was working no ordinary miracles (σωματικὰ τε οὖν τὰς τοιχῶσας) through the hands of Paul, so that when the handkerchiefs or aprons (σωματικὰ τε οὖν τοιχῶσας) that had touched his skin were brought to the sick, their diseases left them, and the evil spirits came out of them. (Acts 19:11—12)

These two characterizations intend to demonstrate that the miracles performed by Paul were equally, if not even more, amazing than those ascribed to the twelve earlier in Acts. Peter's shadow had efficacious healing effects on those laid in his path (5:15), but Paul transferred miraculous power to even more remote places simply by touching cloths or aprons (19:12) that were carried to the sick and demon-possessed. Accordingly, the performing of miracles is a defining characteristic of the apostles in Acts 5:12—16 and of Paul in 19:11—12. In fact, by this criterion Luke supports apologetically the legitimacy of Paul's calling and ministry in the latter passage.

In making such a comparison between Paul and the twelve, the author of Acts reveals a presupposition concerning the miraculous that both compares and contrasts with the position taken in the LE. Mark 16:15—20 envisions additional in other to the apostles — "those who believe," 16:17a — as miracle-workers, a position that might call into question the argument of Acts 19:11—12. That is to say, the legitimacy of Paul as a missionary called by God could not be defended on these grounds if, as predicated in Mark 16:17a, many others in addition to apostolic figures were also regarded as miracle-workers. Nevertheless, Luke and the author of the LE share in common the principle of defining divinely-approved missionaries by signs occurring in the midst of their ministry. The author of Acts thus highlights a number of portrayals of miraculous events to which the author of the LE would give approval: signs and wonders are important to the spread of the Christian movement (Acts 2, 3:1—10, 9:32—35, 9:36—43) and are the standard by which Paul merits recognition equal to that of the twelve apostles (19:11—12; cf. 5:12—16, 14:3, 15:12). It also follows that such a miraculous portrayal of missionaries is a greater concern to Luke in Acts than in the Third Gospel.

4. The Writings of Paul

Having touched upon the portrayal of Paul as a worker of wonders in Acts, the discussion turns now to the ways in which the apostle himself writes about miracles. With regard to the sometimes complementary portrayals of miracles in Acts and Paul's writings, Anton H. Frederiksen notes, "The fundamental idea is the same — the miracles manifest that divine power which sustains the mission, acts through it, and has created all things new in the ethical and material realms. The missionary is the intermediary whom God uses in order to act..."43 The discussion to follow will evaluate Frederiksen's thesis that the presentations of Acts and of the letters of Paul are "the same" and at certain points will offer exceptions to it. The passages reflecting most clearly the apostle's own conceptions of the miraculous, and especially of his own miracles, are 1 Thess 1:5, 1 Cor 2:4—5, Gal 3:1—5, 2 Cor 12:11—12, Rom 15:18—19 and 1 Cor 12:9—10.

a. Allusions to Miracles: 1 Thess 1:5 and 1 Cor 2:4—5

In what is probably Paul's earliest surviving letter, the apostle states that the Thessalonians' reception of the gospel "was not in word only, but also with power and the Holy Spirit."44 The mention of "full conviction (πλήρης εμπιστοσύνης)" seems to imply that the proclamation (ἐν λόγῳ) of

43 This same issue arises in Paul's own writings. On this point see the following section.

44 See the discussion above of the disciples as miracle-workers in the Synoptics and compare Luke with the greater extent to which this tendency is reflected in Mark. 


46 1 Thess 1:4—5; εἰς ὅποιον ἐπηρεάσθησαν ἐπ' ἑπτὰς, τὴν ἐκκλησίαν ὑμῶν, ἵνα τοῦ παλατίου ἐπηρεάσθησαν ἐπ' ἑπτὰς καὶ τὸν παλατίον καὶ ἐπὶ τοὺς ἄνδρας καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν ἑκκλησίαν ποιήσαι, καθὼς ὅσα αὐτοὶ ἐγνώσαντο ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τούτῳ.
Paul and others was confirmed by some kind of miraculous manifestation (ἐν δυνάμεις) that occurred through the activity of the Holy Spirit. Moreover, comparison with passages like Rom 15:18—19 warrants interpreting ἐν δυνάμεις as a reference to miracles. Regardless of how the reference to ‘power’ in 1 Thess 1:5 may be understood, Paul clearly distinguishes between preaching without authentication, on the one hand, and proclamation ἐν δυνάμεις καὶ ἐν πνεύματι ἅγιω καὶ ἐν πληροφορίᾳ πολλῇ, on the other.

Somewhat more vividly than in 1 Thessalonians, in 1 Cor 2:4 Paul contrasts between artful, persuasive speech and his own preaching with “a demonstration of Spirit and of power.” Although the apostle does not mention explicitly what miracles he performed, he once again distinguishes between the wise words of some and the power that accompanied his own initial visit to the Corinthians.

One question meriting exploration concerns why Paul does not state more explicitly what he means by “a demonstration of Spirit and of power,” since mention of such he seeks in 1 Cor 1:21—2:5 to distinguish himself from both the expectations and the proclamation of others. Presumably, Paul’s addressees knew to what he was referring and thus would not need a detailed clarification on this point. Another likely reason Paul only offers an allusion to the miraculous here is that he mentions pejoratively certain Jews who “demand signs (σημεῖα)” (1 Cor 1:21a). Accordingly, although the apostle seeks to distance himself from those whom he criticizes in 1 Cor 1:21a, he nevertheless finds a general allusion to miracles useful in distinguishing his own preaching from that of other rhetoricians who appeal simply to “persuasive words of wisdom” (2 Cor 2:4). Paul responds here to certain Corinthians’ preference for other leaders, who were better orators, and defends himself by admitting that his preaching was not eloquent, rhetorically speaking, and by claiming that it was superior because it was confirmed by the Spirit’s power. Such an argument stemming from divine confirmation shares much in common with the LE.

b) Paul’s ‘Proof from Experience’ and the Galatian Controversy (Gal 3:1—5)

More explicit yet in Paul’s references to the miraculous is his recounting of his preaching to the Galatians during which, to cite Jervell’s paraphrase, “the


54 As H. D. Betz observes, “Paul, in a case of self-ironic exaggeration, makes use of this topos, reminding the Galatians of his initial efforts to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ [the crucified] (Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς ἡμῶν) to them” (Galatians: A Commentary on Paul’s Letter to the Churches in Galatia [Hermeneia: Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979] on Gal 3:1, pp. 131—132).

55 Betz also notes, “‘Miracles’ (ἐνέπνευμα) can be named as evidence for the fact that the Spirit is ‘at work’ (ἐνέπνευμα) among them. Consequently, God must now be at work among them” (Galatians, on Gal 3:5, p. 135).

56 Cf. the NRSV translation of 3:5, which, as would follow from the argument offered above, inaccurately offers God as the subject of the sentence: “Well then, does God supply you with the Spirit and work miracles among you...?”

57 Rom 8:34: τις δὲ καταπελτάζεις Χριστὸς (Ἰησοῦς) δ ἀφοσίαν, μᾶλλον δὲ ἐγκράτεια, δὲ καὶ ἐνεργεῖται ὑπὲρ τῶν.
Spirit to authenticate the Galatians' initial conversion experience with the apostle, but also continues to grant miracles. Such wonders should serve as a reminder that the Pauline gospel still has validity in the face of the law-oriented alternative that the apostle seeks to dismiss in Galatians.

c) Paul, His Opponents and the Corinthians on Miracles in 2 Corinthians

Although in a different type of controversy from the one addressed in Galatians, in 2 Corinthians 10—13 Paul again defends his ministry and apostleship.58

I have become a fool, but you forced me. Indeed, I should have been commanded by you, for, compared with the super-apostles, I am not lacking in any way: the signs of an apostle (τὰ... σημεῖα τοῦ διστόλου) were performed among you with all endurance—signs and wonders and miracles. (2 Cor 12:11–12)

When Paul claims that "the signs of a [genuine] apostle were performed among the Corinthians," he acknowledges that he lives up to the criterion offered by the rival apostles and apparently accepted also by many of the Corinthians. Such broad acceptance of this standard suggests that the phrase τὰ σημεῖα τοῦ διστόλου was "a slogan" of Paul's opponents and that the criticism of 2 Cor 12:12a did not originate with the apostle himself.59

Responding to the situation in Corinth, Paul makes known his intent to "remove the occasion of those who want an opportunity to be recognized as our equals in what they boast about." (2 Cor 11:12b). In this last statement, Paul acknowledges that the opponents boast of their ability to perform miracles, for, while the apostle states that he worked miracles among the Corinthians (ἐν ὑμῖν, 2 Cor 12:12), he also admits the same of the so-called super-apostles (2 Cor 12:11).

Paul also identifies his opponents as "Hebrews" (2 Cor 11:22), and it is commonly alleged that they denied Paul's ability to work miracles.60 More to the point is Jervell's suggestion that Paul's capability as a wonder-worker was called into question because of "the peculiar circumstance that he is an acting miracle-worker, an acting miraculous healer."61 Apparently responding to such an accusation, Paul offers the dual affirmation that, while he did perform the signs expected of a true apostle (2 Cor 12:11—12), the same δύναμις τοῦ Χριστοῦ was with him in his affliction (2 Cor 12:9; cf. 11:16—12:10). Paul's response thus centers upon the twofold claim that his status as a divinely-approved apostle is confirmed not only by the miracles but also in the endurance Christ granted him in the midst of afflictions.62

Although the super-apostles would be prepared to accept the former criterion, they apparently rejected the latter, and it was such an objection that comprises much of Paul's response in 2 Corinthians 10—13.

With regard to the position of the LE's author, one could perhaps draw a connection between Paul's opponents and the author of Mark 16:9—20. Because so little is known about the latter individual, such a connection remains only a possible hypothesis.63 It can, however, be inferred that the LE's author, along with Paul's opponents in 2 Corinthians, would also accept the standard of the true, miracle-working apostle. One cannot say, however, whether the author of Mark 16:9—20 would also have approved of Paul's self-deprecation in 2 Cor 11:16—12:10.

d) Reflection on His Own Ministry: Rom 15:18—19

Toward the end of his letter to the churches in Rome, Paul states that his working of miracles finds its purpose in "the obedience of the gentiles."64 According to Paul, his own preaching was accompanied by "signs and wonders" wherever he went.65 This miraculous assistance resulted in (δόθη) his fulfilling his mission up until the time that he wrote to the congregations of Rome.

Such a declaration may come as a surprise, since miracles receive relatively little emphasis in the Pauline corpus, and "the author of the Pastoral let

58 On this point see H. D. Betz, Galatians, pp. 1—9 and the discussion below; cf. D. Georgi, Opponents, pp. 27—82.
60 See 2 Cor 10:1, 10; 11:5; cf. S. Kollmann, Wundtztiber, p. 332; D. Georgi, Opponents, pp. 274—279.
61 J. Jervell, "The Signs of an Apostle," p. 94, emphasizes added. Jervell also observes, "The problem lies in convincing the Corinthians of the fact that it is also and precisely his weakness which belongs to the true life and mark of an apostle. Concreteness, this means that the divine miraculous power is expressed in the weakness of the silling apostle (3 Cor 12:8)."
62 On this point see J. Jervell, "Der schwache Christus", pp. 194—198.
63 See the Epilogue for a summary of what we know about the author of the LE.
65 As J. Jervell observes, "This activity in 'word and deed' is further interpreted as the ἀποστολή τοῦ Χριστοῦ ('gospel of Christ'), and is carried out from Jerusalem to Illyricum—thus wherever Paul preached. This can scarcely be construed other than as proclamation, which is regularly accompanied by miraculous deeds." ("The Signs of an Apostle," p. 93, emphasis added).
ters...does not describe Paul as a miracle-worker."66 Necessary, then is an explanation why Paul would offer such a self-portrait (Rom 15:18—19) but not mention the miraculous more often in either this or his other writings. The attention devoted to Paul's own miracles tends to occur in proportion to the extent to which the apostle needed to defend himself. For example, in the exhortations of 1 Thess 1:5 and 1 Cor 2:4, Paul simply alludes to supernatural "power" and the Spirit and can assume a common understanding with his audience. In these passages he thus does not need to defend or explain exactly to what he is referring. In a letter to the Philippian, written to acknowledge their gift to the imprisoned apostle (Phil 4:10), there is no need to mention the miraculous at all. Likewise, in 1 Cor 12:31—13:12 Paul can hold up love (διακρίνειν) as the greatest ideal to be sought by the believer.67 When Paul must address the problem of "a different gospel" (Gal 1:6), however, in the first in a series of counter-arguments concerns the wonder-working power of Christ, who confirmed the apostle's preaching and continues to "work miracles among them."68

At another point, when the apostle confronts the charge that a sickly, miracle-producing apostle constitutes a contradiction in terms,69 Paul affirms that he meets the criterion of others—in that he does, indeed, perform τά σημεία τοῦ Υἱοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ (2 Cor 12:12a)—and argues that he was able to endure sufferings by the same power of Christ. He offers such a statement before he is to visit the Corinthians for a third time (cf. 2 Cor 12:14, 13:1) with the hope that they will recognize him as much more of an authoritative figure than his opponents were willing to concede. Likewise, in Rom 15:18—19 Paul writes the churches of Rome, whom he has never met, and affirms that "signs and wonders" and the "power of the Spirit" have always accompanied his ministry. With this last claim in Romans, he appeals to a standard accepted by himself, his opponents, and the Corinthians in

66 J. Jarrell, "The Signs of an Apostle," p. 78. In the case of the Pastoral, Paul is remembered primarily as a teacher rather than a miracle-worker, a point of interest to the history of dogma and the development of Christian theology.
67 With A. Frölich, The Problem of Miracle in Primitive Christianity, pp. 137—147. Paul states that διακρίνειν, rather than, e.g., manifestations of prophecy, is the greatest ideal for those charismatically-inclined Corinthians, as well as for other believers.
69 It is thus ironic that the second-century Christian apologist Marcianus Aristides of Athens levels a somewhat similar accusation against the god Asclepius: "Now if Asclepius, although he was a god, was unable to render aid to himself when struck by the thunderbolt, how shall he succor others?" (M. Aristides, Apology 10, 5—6; cited in E. J. Holefstein and L. E. J. Rhind, Asclepius: A Collection and Interpretation of the Testimonies [2 Vols.; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1945; reprint, 1998] LII [Testimony 194]).

2 Cor 12:11—12 that a legitimate apostle receives authentication from Christ, who is also the subject of the apostle's preaching.

e) Comparison of Paul as a Miracle-Worker in His Own Writings and in Acts

The preceding discussion of Paul as a miracle-worker according to Luke in Acts and according to the apostle's own writings observed that both authors highlight the miraculous in Paul's ministry. Because Paul performs miracles, he is to be recognized as a divinely-appointed leader and missionary. Each author, however, draws a somewhat different conclusion based on these portrayals. Although Paul presents himself as an apostle on the same level as the Twelve and others, the author of Luke-Acts, while recognizing Paul's important role in the Christian movement, does not define him as an apostle in the same way the Twelve were apostles. According to Luke, leaders like Paul and Barnabas are apostles only in the sense that they are commissioned and sent by local congregations, whereas the original twelve were commissioned by the risen Lord before his ascension (Acts 1:1—8). In light of Paul's affirmation in 2 Corinthians that, because he performed miracles, he is in no way inferior to the super-apostles (2 Cor 12:11—12), it follows that Paul would also reject Luke's distinction between Paul's status relative to that of the twelve apostles. The recognition of such a subtle, but nonetheless significant difference between these two authors would thus call into question at least part of A. Frölich's statement that "the fundamental idea" according to Luke and Paul concerning miracles "is the same."70

This difference between the presentations of miracles in the Acts of the Apostles and in Paul's own writings allows for at least one important point of comparison between Luke and the LE's author. For his part, Luke appeals to the miraculous in order to support the legitimacy of a divinely-appointed leader whom he nevertheless did not regard as one of the Twelve, a number which he, more than Paul, regarded as possessing enduring significance.71 Thus, the author of Luke-Acts portrays the Twelve as having an authoritative role and tends to limit the term "apostle" to this group. As is evident with the depictions of Paul, Stephen, Philip and Barnabas, however, this author does not limit miracle-working in the context of mission to the first apostles. To the extent that this tendency in Acts, like the mission of the seventy in Luke 10:1—24 (especially v. 17), points to a broadening of a miraculously-endowed mission beyond that of the first twelve apostles (cf. Luke 9:1—6),

70 A. Frölich, The Problem of Miracle in Primitive Christianity, p. 11 (cited earlier in this chapter).
71 Compare Acts 1:15—26 with Paul's acknowledgment of "follow apostles" in Gal 1:17 (τοὺς δὲ διάκονους ἀποστόλους καὶ ὁμοῦ τοὺς διηκονομοῦντας) and his ironic reference to ἡ δυνάμει τῆς ἀγαθετικῆς γνώσεως εἰς τὰς παντὶς ἔργον (Gal 2:9). Moreover, although Paul mentions an appearance τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ (2 Cor 12:9), he asserts his own apostleship on a level equal to that of the Twelve.
Mark 16:17—18 may be viewed as many steps beyond the probings of Luke in this direction.

With regard to the relevance of Paul’s own understanding of miracles to the interpretation of Mark 16:15—20, two points follow. First, the author of the LE would agree wholeheartedly with Paul, as he would with the author of Luke-Acts, that miraculous signs will accompany divinely-appointed missionaries. Second, Paul’s emphasis in these passages on himself as a wonder-working apostle — in contrast with (most) other members of the Christian community whom he addresses in the letters — would seem, at least on the surface, to differ with the expectation of Mark 16:17a that miracles will accompany those who believe. That is to say, it is only the apostles, including the super-apostles of 2 Cor 12:11, who are recognized as such because they perform “the signs of an apostle.” If Paul himself did not maintain such understanding of miracles, not only his argument in Gal 3:1—5 but also that of his opponents as reflected in 2 Corinthians 10—13 could be open to cross-examination, for both assume that miracles constitute a sign of an individual apostle’s authority. A related point concerns the fact that Paul draws upon this assumption with regard to the miraculous in different ways in Galatians and 2 Corinthians. In Gal 3:1—5, the apostle’s miraculously-endowed gospel stands in contrast with the “other” gospel (cf. Gal 1:6), which, presumably, is not accompanied by miracles. Perhaps ironically, a similar, if not the same, argument is employed against Paul by the opponents addressed in 2 Corinthians 10—13, who cannot fathom that an ordinary apostle would also be able to perform miracles. In the latter context, it would follow that, if Paul did not perform signs, his legitimacy as an apostle, unlike theirs, would be dismissed. In the response of 2 Corinthians 10—13, Paul addresses both parts of the charge leveled against him, affirming (as in Galatians) that he did in fact perform miracles, but maintaining (differently from Galatians) that endurance in the face of affliction also authenticates his apostleship. His appeal to the latter criterion of long suffering is intended to temper his opponents’ exclusive resort to the former qualification.

f) Paul on Miracle-Workers in the Corinthian Community: 1 Cor 12:9—10

In understanding Paul’s different statements on miracles, moreover, one must also take into account 1 Cor 12:9—10 (cf. 12:27—31), which, like the LE, mentions ordinary believers performing healings (χαράζοντας ἵωσιν) and other miracles (ἐνεργημάτα δυνάμεων), as well as speaking in other languages (γενεῖ γлагολούν) and their interpretation (ἐρμηνεύει γлагολούν). Yet with the acknowledgment that ordinary believers also perform miracles, the author of LE and the Paul of 1 Corinthians 12 would presumably have difficulty in responding to the challenge of diversity in early Christianity: when two or more Christian leaders holding different convictions are both nonetheless recognized as wonder-workers, the appeal to miracle becomes a moot point if one’s opponent can also claim the same confirmation from heaven. That is to say, the expectations of 1 Cor 12:9—10, John 14:12 and Mark 16:17a have no recourse for troublesome or heretical miracle-workers — like those whom Paul (2 Cor 12:11—12) and, as is discussed below, Justin Martyr and Ireneus, address — except perhaps an appeal to bland statements along the lines of Matt 7:22—23 that only some miracle-workers truly “know” the Lord. As a result, Paul’s response to a particular problem in 1 Corinthians 12 stands in tension with the apostle’s presuppositions concerning the miraculous and his own authority in 1 Thess 1:5, 1 Cor 2:4—5, Gal 3:1—5, 2 Cor 12:11—12 and Rom 15:18—19.

Consequently, it stands to reason that Paul, when under pressure from rival Christian leaders, would oppose an unqualified reference to Mark 16:17a because it, like John 14:12 and 1 Cor 12:9—10, would render the authentication of his own apostleship by his own miracles defenseless from attacks by rival charismatics or their supporters. Such a profound difference between many of Paul’s statements and the author of Mark’s Longer Ending concerning the prevalence of miracle-workers in the Christian community should probably not be regarded as unique to either individual. As is discussed in the remainder of this chapter, similar difficulties in associating truth claims with miraculous phenomena occur repeatedly in many other later Christian writings and are probably greater than any single person in antiquity fully appreciated.

5. Hebrews

The author of Hebrews, like Paul and the author of Acts, acknowledges the importance of miracles to the formation of the faith of those to whom he writes. In particular, this author states that “signs, wonders and various miracles” accompanied the proclamation, which first led to the conversion of the epistle’s recipients.⁷² According to this account of Christian origins, Jesus’ followers were not necessarily persuaded by his miracles, but are portrayed simply as having “heard” (δοκοῦσα) his word (λόγος). These disciplines in turn related to the recipients of this writing, the same message, which was accompanied by a variety of miracles: στοιχείον καὶ τέρατα ποιήσαντας δύναμιν. As in Mark 16:20b, a genitive absolute describes the circumstances under which such supernatural confirmation took place (συνεπεικονύμητον τοῦ θεοῦ στοιχείου κατά, Heb 2:4). This

⁷² Heb 2:2—4: 1) γαρ δι' ἀγίων καλλαγῆς λόγους σημαίνει λόγους βίβλου καὶ πάσα παραδόσεις καὶ παραπομπούσης εἰκόνας καὶ παραπαράβασις καὶ παραπομπὴς ἐλεοντικῆς εἰκόνος καθὼς καὶ συνεπεικονύμητον τοῦ θεοῦ στοιχείου καὶ τεράτον καὶ ποιήσαντας δύναμιν κατά τὴν ἀνάστασιν.
indicates that neither the concept of confirmation by power from above nor the genitive absolute in the LE's final verse is a novel formation. There are two important differences between the scenarios envisioned in Hebrews 2 and the LE, however. First, as in Acts 2:32 and Matt 28:19b, the Holy Spirit figures prominently in connection with miracles in Heb 2:2—4. Second, the one who grants confirmation through “signs, wonders and various miracles” is God (τὸς κυρίου, Heb 2:4a), who is distinguished from the Lord [Jesus] (τὸν κυρίου, Heb 2:3b; contrast Mark 16:19—20).22 The absence of any reference to God or the Spirit in the LE further illustrates the distinctiveness of this passage as compared with Matthew 28, Acts 2 and Hebrews 2.


This first main section of chapter 5 has compared the miracle traditions of Mark 16:15—20 with a number of NT writings and focused specifically on who performs the miracles and the ways in which signs are portrayed in a missionary context. In the Synoptic Gospels the earliest traditions of Mark 6:6b—13 and “Q” (Luke 10:1—24 portray the earthly Jesus’ disciples as healers and exorcists. While the portrayal of the disciples as miracle-workers receives redactional attention from each of the Synoptic evangelists, Matthew expands the traditions known to him more than Mark and Luke do. By contrast, the author of the Fourth Gospel presents the Twelve as neither miracle-workers nor explicitly as missionaries. Such a lacuna in his presentation of the disciples makes it difficult to ascertain whether a missionary context is envisioned for John 14:12—14, where Jesus promises that “the one who believes (ὁ πιστεύων, 14:12a) will perform even greater works than Jesus himself did.

Acts 2 highlights how the exalted Jesus poured out the Spirit on those who subsequently spoke in other languages, a spectacle which is said to have resulted in the conversion of three thousand people to the fledgling group of Christians. In contrast with passages like Acts 2:32, Matt 28:19b and Heb 2:4, the omission of mentioning the Father and the Spirit in Mark 16:19a, 17b and 20bc may reflect a monistic or modalistic understanding of the Godhead rather than a trinitarian one.

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73 P. J. Achtemeier, “Jesus and the Disciples as Miracle Workers in the Apocryphal New Testament,” in Aspects of Religious Propaganda in Judaism and Early Christianity (ed. Elisabeth Schilsler-Florensa; University of Notre Dame Center for the Study of Judaism and Christianity in Antiquity 2; Notre Dame, London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1976) 149—186. Achtemeier argues that “[t]he basic tendency . . . of the traditions about miracles of the mature Jesus in the second century and beyond, including the material subsumed under the general heading ‘apocryphal New Testament,’ is to ignore Jesus as a miracle worker . . . . When we turn from the figure of Jesus and the apocryphal gospels, to the apostles and the apocryphal acts, the situation is reversed. We have many such accounts of Jesus’ disciples, and they are replete with miracles entirely independent of those told in the canonical Acts of the Apostles” (p. 162, emphasis added).
importance of miracles to the spread of the Christian faith and discusses this motif in numerous texts of the first through fourth centuries. There is much to be said for MacMullen’s discussions, which in many respects constitute a resurrection of Adolf von Harnack’s thesis concerning the mission and expansion of early Christianity.

Reflecting a more sound critical methodology in an article on conversion in the apocryphal acts, Eugene Gallagher calls attention to the ways in which each of the authors of the apocryphal acts presents a well-developed understanding of conversion. His discussion of such tendencies is a significant step forward with regard to evaluating the presentation of miracles and ascertaining what, if any, historical situation(s) these writings may depict. In addition, François Bovon discusses miracles in relation to other recurring themes in the apocryphal acts: the apostles’ preaching, the sacraments and martyrdom.

The analysis to follow will focus on miracles in the apocryphal acts with an eye to other recurring themes in these writings. The first concerns portrayals of sexual continence (ἐκτρεπτικής) in relation to, and sometimes to the exclusion of, references to the miraculous. The second theme concerns whether the miracles of the apostles are portrayed as resulting in large numbers of conversions or if they are said to have been performed for other reasons. This discussion will also call attention to the great variety of ways in which miracles function in these writings of the second, third and later centuries. The resulting question, then, is which miracle traditions in these apocryphal acts correspond most closely to the missionary situation envisioned in Mark 16:15—20. An analysis of writings that bear certain parallels to the five main apocryphal acts will proceed a discussion of the portrayals of the miracles performed by the apostles Andrew, John, Paul, Peter and Thomas.

1. Miracles in Literature Similar in Genre to the Five Main Apocryphal Acts

Among the many extracanonical writings detailing the work of the apostles, only a few of the more significant parallels with the LE can be mentioned in this section, namely those occurring in the Abgar Legend, the Acts of Peter and the Twelve Apostles, The Letter of Peter to Philip, the Martyrdom of Fructuosus and Companions and The Interpretation of Knowledge.

a) The Abgar Legend

The Abgar Legend, which was known and cited by Eusebius of Caesarea, reports that King Abgar, having heard about Jesus’ own miracles, wrote to Jesus that he has to be taken up to his heavenly Father, but promises to send a disciple in his place: “And when I am taken up, I will send to you one of my disciples, that he may heal your affliction and give life to you and those who are with you.” After Jesus’ ascension, “Judas, who is also called Thomas,” sends the apostle Thaddaeus to the region. King Abgar, having heard about the disciple, who “began in the power of God to heal every disease and infirmity so that all were amazed,” summons him to his court (Hist. eccl. 1.13.11—13). The disciple says he will go, “since I have been sent with power to him.” This narrative is significant because of the explicit connection it draws between the miracles of Jesus and those of his followers: just as the Lord performed healings, so can his followers be sent out and expected to do the same after the ascension (cf. Mark 16:19—20).


77 Two drawbacks to MacMullen’s approach, however, should also be mentioned. First, his treatment of the primary sources does not consistently distinguish between different kinds of literary evidence. That is to say, the historian must assess the relative value of the various ways miracles are presented by, e.g., an outsider like Celsus, an apologist like Justin, or the authors of literary fictions like the apocryphal acts. Moreover, MacMullen is often too eager to regard the report of a miracle in, for example, the apocryphal acts as if it reflects an actual historical situation. On these and other points see William S. Babcock, “MacMullen on Conversion: A Response,” See: Cent. 5 (1985—1986) 82—89; Mark D. Jordan, “Philosophic ‘Conversion’ and Christian Conversion: A Gloss on Professor MacMullen,” See: Cent. 5 (1985—1986) 90—96. See also the discussion later in this chapter of A. von Harnack, Die Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten (Leipzig: Hinrich, 1902) 96.

78 Eugene V. Gallagher, “Conversion and Salvation in the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles,” See: Cent. 8 (1991) 13—29. Gallagher contends that in the five main apocryphal acts miracles only lead people toward conversion but are not the primary cause of personal transformation. As will be discussed below, Gallagher’s generalization receives support from certain passages but does not apply to others that portray a direct cause-and-effect relationship between miracle and conversion.

79 François Bovon, “Miracles, magic, and guerisons dans les Actes apocryphes des apôtres,” JECS 3 (1995) 245—259. Although Bovon’s discussion of miracles in relation to proclamation — the latter being an integral part of missionary literature — is fruitful, the emphasis he places on the importance of the sacraments and martyrdom in these writings is, in my view, somewhat exaggerated.


81 Eusebius claims to be aware of the existence of a Syriac original behind his Greek translation (Hist. eccl. 1.13.20).

82 Hist. eccl. 1.13.10. The text cited appears in NTApo, 1.497—500.
b) The Acts of Peter and the Twelve Apostles

Two Nag Hammadi writings, the Acts of Peter and the Twelve Apostles and the Epistle of Peter to Philip, share a number of elements in common: in a post-resurrection setting, the risen Lord commissions the apostles to heal believers. Both texts, like the LE, reflect expectations of miracles without narrating them.

The fragmentary beginning of the Acts of Peter and the Twelve Apostles points to a context of mission for the first disciples: “And in our hearts we were united. We agreed to fulfill the ministry to which the Lord appointed us. And we made a covenant with each other.” Of interest here is the point at which “Lithargool” (= Christ) reveals his true identity to Peter (9, 1—19). After this revelation the narrator relates, “We prostrated ourselves on the ground and worshipped him. We comprised eleven disciples” (9, 19—21). This context of an appearance of the risen Jesus to the eleven has certain similarities to Matt 28:16—17, Luke 24:9 and Mark 16:14.

A distinctive commissioning then follows: Jesus gives them “the unguent box” and commands in 9, 20—10, 13 that they

1) return to “the city from which you came,” (cf. Acts 1:4); 2) “teach all those who have believed in my name that I have endured hardships for the faith;” 3) “to the poor of that city give what they need in order to live until I give them what is better.”

Jesus also charges them to “heal all the sick of the city who believe [in my name]” (10, 33 — 11, 1). Such an instruction to teach and heal only believers is different from not only the commissions of the NT Gospels, but also the use of miracles in numerous other apocryphal acts. Moreover, when the disciple John asks “how” they, who are not trained as physicians, will heal others (11, 6—14), Jesus speaks of healing both the physical and the spiritual or psychological wounds of the believing community:

Heal the bodies first, therefore, so that through the real powers of healing for their bodies, without medicine of the world, they may believe in you, that you have the power to heal the illnesses of the heart also. (11, 19—26)

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83 Acts of Peter and the Twelve Apostles VI 11, 9—13. The title of this writing, which appears at the end of the MS, refers to a single act of Peter (1, 30 — 5, 5) and one act of the apostles (5, 5 — 12, 19). This writing is typically dated to the late-second or the early-third century. The ET cited appears in NHL, pp. 429—434; another ET appears in NTAp, 2,420—424; cf. B. Kollmanns, Wunderschriften, pp. 330—340.

84 Translated as “medicine chest” in NTAp, 2,423; rendered literally, “the box of the physician’s craft” (NTAp, 2,425 n. 17).

The narrative ends with the disciples agreeing to begin such a mission and with their departure. Accordingly, this author also assumes a connection between a miracle and belief, but in the Acts of Peter and the Twelve Apostles the specific application is different from anything observed heretofore in this study. Use of the medicine chest will demonstrate to those already converted (cf. 9, 20 — 10, 13) that the disciples can “heal the sicknesses of the heart also.”

c) The Letter of Peter to Philip

A number of passages toward the end of The Letter of Peter to Philip also highlight the expectation that the apostles will perform miracles in the post-Easter mission. After an extended section in which the apostles receive Christ’s answers to their questions, they are said to have taught and “healed [a] multitude” in the temple (139, 5—9). The narrator records no response of belief on the part of the people, however. Instead, Peter offers a speech about the suffering and crucifixion of Jesus (139, 9—30; cf. Acts 2:24—36), and then prays, “[O Lord Jesus] Christ, author of our rest, give us a spirit of understanding in order that we also may perform wonders” (140,1—7). The lines that follow indicate that his prayer was answered:

Then Peter and the other apostles saw him and they were filled with a holy spirit. And each one performed healings. And they parted in order to preach the Lord Jesus. And they came together and greeted each other saying, ‘Amen.’ (140, 7—13)

After a final appearance on the Mount of Olives, Jesus divides up the world into missionary fields for each of the twelve apostles, promising “joy, grace and power” to those about to depart before they separate to the four corners of the earth:

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85 “They prostrated themselves on the ground and worshipped him. He caused them to stand and departed from them in peace. Amen” (Acts of Peter and the Twelve Apostles VI 12, 16—19).

86 In this letter Peter is presented as the leader of the brethren. The only other apostle mentioned is Philip, who submits to Peter’s authority. ET: Frederic Wisse, NHL, pp. 436—437; cf. Hans-Gebhard Bechtge’s translation in NTAp, 1,345—353.

87 As noted in chapter 4, F. Wisse’s conjecture concerning what the apostles saw (i.e., the Lord), although possible, is not certain (NHL, p. 436; contrast H.-G. Bechtge’s translation in NTAp, 2,551). It is equally possible, as Bechtge indicates, that “him” should not be supplied in the translation. According to this interpretation, the disciples saw that they were endowed with power from the Spirit and were thus emboldened to perform healings and to preach.
Then Jesus appeared to them, 'Peace to you all' and with everyone who believes in my name. And when you depart, joy be to you and grace and power. And be not afraid; behold, I am with you for ever.' Then the apostles parted from each other into the four words88 in order to preach. And they went in the power of Jesus, in peace. (140, 15—27)

The twofold allusion to ‘power’ at the end of The Letter of Peter to Philip refers to the earlier prayer of Peter, in which the apostle explicitly asks for the ability to perform miracles. Furthermore, the apostles depart with the expectation of power from Jesus to ‘work miracles.’ As in the Acts of Peter and the Twelve Apostles and the LE, but unlike the NT book of Acts and many of the apocryphal acts discussed below, no miracle story is narrated in this text. The distinctive emphasis here and in Mark 16:20 is the expectation that the apostles will depart and work miracles in the mission that they are about to commence.

d) The Martyrdom of Fructuosus and Companions

In addition, the so-called “Acts of the Christian Martyrs” include a miracle story stemming from the deaths of Fructuosus and others, who were killed under the emperor Valerian’s second edict in 259 CE.89 After these martyrdoms are narrated, there are two allusions to miracles (magnalia). The specific miracles related — one vision of heaven and one post-mortem appearance of a martyr — are less important for this study than the significance attributed to them. In the first, two brethren have a vision of the opened heavens and see “Fructuosus together with his deacons” rising crowned in heaven (Martyrdom of Fructuosus and Companions 5). The introduction to this narrative, moreover, assumes that the occurrence of such phenomena is not surprising: “After this the usual miracles (polia . . . magnalia) of the Lord were not lacking.” At a later point, when certain believers went to collect the ashes of the martyrs’ bodies, the author states that “here too the miracles of our Lord and Savior were not wanting to increase the faith of believers and to set an example to the young.”90 Thus in this writing, as in the Acts of Peter and the Twelve Apostles, there is an internal focus on how miracles strengthen the faith of those already converted.

88 Cf. H.-O. Bentsen’s comment (NTApo, I.353 n. 41): “So far as there is no textual corruption, this could be a circumlocution for the four points of the compass. ‘The four words’ would then be ‘east’, ‘west’, ‘north’, and ‘south’.”


90 Martyrdom of Fructuosus and Companions 5. The Christians who collected his ashes never expected Fructuosus himself to appear to them. For his part, Fructuosus asks that the ashes taken from his body be restored.

e) The Interpretation of Knowledge

In the very fragmentary beginning of The Interpretation of Knowledge survives an interesting reference to miracles:

[ . . . they came to believe by means of [signs and] wonders [and fabrications. The likelihood] that came to be through [them followed] him, but through [reproaches] and humiliations [before they received the appreciation] of a vision [they fled without having] heard [that the Christ] had been crucified.91

Unfortunately, the author does not develop this idea further. Nonetheless, it seems that this author — perhaps somewhat like the pagan critic Celsius, who is discussed below — was antagonistic toward, but nevertheless acknowledged, the persuasive power of miracles, presumably those performed by Jesus.

2. Miracles in the Five Main Apocryphal Acts

It is widely acknowledged that the five main Christian apocryphal acts — the Acts of Andrew, Acts of John, Acts of Paul, Acts of Peter and Acts of Thomas — in varying degrees reflect common and related interests in the role of a certain apostle, miracles and sexual continence (enkratia). These writings — dating from approximately the mid-second century to the mid-third century — were first collected by Manicheans in the third century and enjoyed an independent circulation both before and after that time. Some of these writings, most notably the Acts of Paul and the Acts of Thomas, are composite works. Accordingly, each document reflects distinct issues and emphasis on these and other points. Even within the same writing, the various traditions compiled and adapted by these authors can reflect differing, and sometimes conflicting, presentations of the miraculous.

a) The Acts of Andrew

Only a single miracle receives prominence toward the beginning of the document typically referred to as the Acts of Andrew. According to this narrative, the apostle performs an exorcism on Stratoce’s slave Alcmeon.92 Afterward, the apostle succeeds in converting both Stratoce, who is “moved by what has happened” (p. 335), and Alcmeon (pp. 335—336). Soon afterward Maximilla, a devout believer, learns that her husband, namely the

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proconsul Aegates and the brother of Stratocles, has returned home (p. 337; cf. p. 352).

The remainder of the narrative is concerned with the aftermath of the conversion of Maximilla, whom therefore refuses to have sexual relations with her pagan husband. For his part, Andrew predicts accurately that "tomorrow Aegates will lead me over to be crucified" and is soon thereafter arrested. Even while being crucified, Andrew continues to teach from the cross for three days and nights, emphasizing to the onlookers the necessity of conducting a pure life (p. 350). In essence, this author portrays conversion in terms of adopting the moral code he preaches and exemplifies, and it is nowhere implied that a miracle is necessary to bring the individual to such a decision. As a result of Andrew's example of perseverance and moral exhortations, "all the crowd declares that they are converted and want to "become philosophers" (p. 351). In the end, Aegates never succeeds with any of his overtures to Maximilla and eventually commits suicide (p. 352).

Accordingly, in the majority of the surviving Acts of Andrew, miracles play no role in either Maximilla's adherence to sexual continence or the apostle's persuading the crowd to adopt a new way of life. Similarly, a related writing in Codex Vaticanus 808 seems to be based on the "Martyrdom of the Holy and Glorious First-Called Andrew the Apostle" and never mentions the miraculous (ET: NTAp 2:128—134).

Before discounting the association of miracles with the figure of Andrew, however, one should consider Gregory of Tours' (ca. 538—594 CE) collection of this apostle's miracles, as well as the excerpted lines of the Acts of Andrew contained in the Copitc Papyrus Utrecht 1. Both documents, in contrast with the two writings mentioned above, portray Andrew as a miracle-worker. In particular, Gregory makes explicit and repeated connections between Andrew's miracles and the conversions of others in most every city where he enters. Examples correspond to the places the apostle is said to have visited:

- In Amasea, through the raising of a dead boy (c. 3); in Nicea, by performing an exorcism (c. 6); in Thessalonica, through the healing of a crippled man (c. 13) and the raising of a young man killed by a demon (c. 14); in Philippi, by healing a crippled son (c. 15), healing of Niccolai's daughter (c. 16) and performing one other exorcism (c. 17); and in Italy, where Andrew exorcises a demon, Steanoës himself is converted (c. 34).

In this connection W. Schneemelcher notes that "These conversions from preaching and miracles are repeated in stereotyped fashion by Gregory." Such a contrasting picture of the relative significance of miracles in Andrew's ministry gives rise to the question whether someone may have discounted the miraculous in the writing first discussed above in order to highlight the ordeal of Maximilla and her example of enfraitia and perseverance in the face of oppression. Even though the Acts of Andrew does not emphasize Andrew as a miracle-worker, there is evidence from other traditions that he was nonetheless remembered elsewhere for such deeds.

b) The Acts of John

Compared with the surviving portions of the Acts of Andrew, the Acts of John presents a markedly different understanding of enfraitia and of the miracle. For example, in the raising of Lycomedes, who was present in Ephesus, and of his wife Cleopatra, two points are of interest here (Acta Ioannis 19—25). First, before raising Cleopatra, John prays to Christ, the "physician who heals for nothing (λατρεῖ διορέσει λοιπόν),$ the "calling attention to the Lord’s continuing work in granting miracles." Second, once Cleopatra is raised, the apostle instructs her to "speak with a loud voice to your husband and say, ‘Rise up and glorify the name of God, since to the dead he gives [back] the dead’" (Acta Ioannis 24). There is, however, no mention of the conversion of others as a result of these miracles.

In addition, in the account of John’s healing of some fifty-six Ephesian women, the apostle states explicitly his intent to convert the whole city through the miraculous spectacle (Acta Ioannis 30—36). The women are
described as suffering from a variety of maladies: paralysis, deafness, arthritic and other diseases (Acta Ioannis 30). Having gathered these women and others from the city into the theater, John offers the following invitation: “Come tomorrow into the theater, all you who wish to see the power of God!” (Acta Ioannis 31). The following day, with an even larger crowd assembled, the apostle announces that

Jesus Christ whom I preach, being merciful and kind, is converting you all (τις δὲ ἔλαχος ἐπιστήρεσθαι, you who are held fast in unbelief and enslaved by shameful desires; and through me he will deliver you from your error, and by his power I will convert even your parents’ disobedience by making up these women before you (οὐ διόνυσι ... ἐλέγετο τῇ δισκύρῃ ἡμῶν κατακεκλεισόνος δινοῦσθαι) — you see what a state and what sicknesses they are in. (Acta Ioannis 33)

Unfortunately, the text that follows is somewhat incomplete, and the end of this narrative is lost. Nonetheless, the extant portions indicate that, because John expects healings to result in the conversion of citizens of Ephesus, he assembles the people in a public forum in order to give them the very confirmation they need in order to believe.

Elsewhere in the Acts of John, this emphasis on the miraculous again comes to the fore both in the destruction of the temple of Artemis, which results — apparently for the second time in this narrative — in the conversion of the Ephesians (Acta Ioannis 37—45; cf. 30—36) and in the raising of the priest of Artemis (Acta Ioannis 46—47). Unlike others in Ephesus, who had dressed in white for “the dedication-festival of the idol-temple” of Artemis, John wore black and was subsequently seized by the crowd. He then lectures the crowd, who, although they have seen him perform “many miracles (παραστάσεις) and cures of diseases (ἰδεῖς νόσους),” is “blinded” by its devotion to “ancient rituals” (Acta Ioannis 39). He challenges them to a contest of miracles reminiscent of that between the Hebrew prophet Elijah and the prophets of Baal in 1 Samuel 18—19. The Ephesian priests will first pray for Artemis to kill him, after which point John will “call upon my own God and because of your unbelief I will put you all to death” (Acta Ioannis 40). Fearful of John’s ability to do miracles, the crowd declines such a confrontation, but the apostle insists (Acta Ioannis 40). John then prays for “the demon that is here (to) take flight at (God’s) name” and for “mercy” upon those who “have been led astray” (Acta Ioannis 41). According to Acta Ioannis 42, this petition was efficacious, for while he was still speaking “the altar of Artemis split into

many pieces, the offerings fell on the floor, cultic images were shattered,” and “half the temple fell down,” killing the priest. Perhaps most significantly, the Ephesians cry out,

λέγει δὲ έν τῷ ναῷ τις τά θεία αύτοίν ἡμῶν, διώκει τούτο θεός, καὶ ἐνεπηρετήσεις διόνυσιν τούτον τὸ θεῖον τῆς λατρείας τῶν θεόν τούτον τὸ θεῖον [There is but] one God, the God of John, who has mercy on us, for you alone are God! We have now converted, because we have seen your marvelous works. Have mercy on us!109

By means of such a public display of power, the people are persuaded to turn (ἐπιστήρεσθαι) and follow John’s God.101

Moreover, in the account of the raising of the priest who had been killed in the partial destruction of the temple (Acta Ioannis 46—47), performing miracles is once again not restricted to apostles like John. The author also affirms the importance of the apostle John in this transaction. Akinsman of the deceased priest brings the body to John to be raised. John, however, regards it as “no great matter (οὐκ ἐστὶν μεγαῖς) to do such small things (τὰς μικρὰς) and tells the young man — who, it is to be inferred, is a very recent convert to the faith — to “go and raise up the dead man yourself,” which he does (Acta Ioannis 47; cf. 24). Thus, on the one hand, the author presents a new convert as bringing back the dead alive. On the other hand, the

100 Acta Ioannis 42: p. 171, l. 12 — p. 172, l. 2. Cf. Acta Ioannis 44: the people again cry out, “The God of John is (the) only (God) we know.” Note also the fragmentary tradition of the Heidelberg Coptic Papyrus, which reports that, after Paul fasts and prays, half of the temple of Apollo collapses. Those who witness the spectacle state that “Apollo the god of the Ephesians is fallen, with half of his temple” (PHeid, pp. 35—39; ET. NTApo, 2,240—250).

101 Note the analogous tradition, commonly referred to as Acta Ioannis 56—57, that is exact only in the Acts of the Apostle John by Pascal-Proclus, which probably dates to the 17th century (cf. K. Schäferlick, NTApo, 2,236; A. de Santos Dixera, NTApo, 2,430—431). Antipasros, who had heard of John’s good deeds and miracles, approaches the apostle and offers to pay ten thousand gold pieces for the healing of his two sons (Acta Ioannis 56). Although the apostle rejects the offer, this author does not emphasize the virtue of the apostle in refusing the money, but rather puts forth an intriguing understanding of the role of miracles in conversion when he has the young man answer, “My physician took no reward in money, but when he heals for nothing, he reaps the souls of those who are healed, in exchange for the diseases. What then are you willing (to give). Antipasros, in exchange for your children? Offer your own soul to God, and you shall have your children healthy by the power of Christ.” To this proposition Antipasros agrees, and the healing of his sons is granted. With such a profound understanding of a miracle as a gift in exchange for a person’s allegiance, some sort of divine transaction is enacted in the working of the miracle through the apostle. Once the miracle is granted, God expects and receives the devotion of the person who previously was not faithful to God. Cf. Theodor Zahn, Acta Ioannis unter Berücksichtigung von C. v. Trechendorf’s Nachlass (Tübingen: Andreas Deichert, 1880; repr. Hildesheim: Gerstenberg, 1975) 1—165; cf. “Belgianen zu Prochorus,” pp. 166—192.
relative of the deceased priest does not act independently of John, who instructs him to say “only this: ‘John, the servant of God, says to you, Arise!’” (Acta Ioannis 47). The new believer thus receives a command from John rather than from Christ or God. The apostle then asks the raised priest if he too wishes to believe, which he does.

At another point in the Acts of John, a man, who wanted to be involved sexually with another man’s wife, kills his own father. John, summoned in a dream to come to the place of the murder, witnesses the patricide and sees the man running with the intention of killing both the woman he desires and her husband before taking his own life (Acta Ioannis 48–49). John offers to raise the dead father and save the man from punishment on the condition that the young man promise to stay away from the married woman in the future (Acta Ioannis 50). Once John brings the father back to life and accompanies him back to the city, he also exhorts the father to live a better life, with the result “that before they reached the city gate the old man believed” (Acta Ioannis 52).

Afterward the “young man, who saw the unexpected resurrection of his father and his own deliverance, ... cut off his private parts” with a sickle and, in an additional act of repentance, “ran to the house where he kept his adulteress and threw them down before her,” explaining that God has had “mercy on me and shown me his power” (Acta Ioannis 53). Until this point the portrayal of sexual continence is similar to that of the Acts of Andrew, and, if this part of the Acts of John had ended here, one could draw a comparison between the views on sexual abstinence in these two apocryphal acts. By contrast, the apostle John treats the man’s act of castration with contempt. Accordingly, Acta Ioannis 48–54 presents a different ethic from that of the Acts of Andrew, since it focuses on the attitude of the heart, and, unlike the latter writing, does not describe the holy life in terms of specific pious and ascetic acts but rather asks for a more general repentance, whose particular manifestations in daily life are not delineated.

Another account in the Acts of John bearing certain similarities and differences to the Acts of Andrew recounts what took place after Drusiana converted and subsequently abstained from not only relations with her husband, Andronicus, but also the subsequent advances of Callimachus. The narrative takes an unexpected twist when “Drusiana’s lover,” Callimachus, bribes Fortunatus, a steward of Andronicus, and gains access to the recently deceased woman’s tomb with the intention of having sexual relations with her corpse (Acta Ioannis 70). Suddenly a serpent appears (ὄφις ... ἐκείνης) and kills Fortunatus before immobilizing Callimachus by sitting on him (Acta Ioannis 71). The next day John, Andronicus, and others come to the sepulcher to commemorate Drusiana on the third day after her death (Acta Ioannis 72). John, noticing the dead steward Fortunatus and the serpent lying upon Callimachus, instructs the “venomous reptile” to “[d]e part from him who is about to be a servant of Jesus Christ!” (τὸ ἐκείνου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ) (Acta Ioannis 75). Noteworthy here is the assumption that belief or loyalty to the divine healing agent is expected: John does not even ask Callimachus — who, it must be remembered, had conspired to take part in necrophilia — whether he wishes to repent.

At Andronicus’ request, the apostle also raises Drusiana (Acta Ioannis 79–80). She in turn asks that the steward Fortunatus be raised as well, but Callimachus objects, explaining that, whereas he himself had seen “and believed, ... God would have pitied” the other fellow “if he [too] had been good” (Acta Ioannis 81). As is the case with the raisings of Cleopatra’s husband Lyconemus and of the priest of Artemis (Acta Ioannis 24, 46–47), the apostle allows someone else — in this case, Drusiana — to perform the miracle (Acta Ioannis 81–82). Although she is successful in raising the steward, Fortunatus nonetheless states that he would rather remain dead (Acta Ioannis 83). John then rebukes him, whose soul “was inexpressible towards the good,” and decrees to him, “Be removed then from those who hope in the Lord” (Acta Ioannis 84; cf. 85–86).

102 John responds, “Young man, the one who tempted you to kill your father and commit adultery with another man’s wife, he has also made you take off the unclean (member) as if this were a virtuous act” (Acta Ioannis 54). With an ethic similar to that of Matt 5:28—29 (ποιμάνατε ἑαυτὸν ἢ ἐρρίπτετε ὑπὸ [τῆς] παραβίασες τῆς γυναίκας ἡγεμόνος ἠτίον), but rejecting the mandate of Matt 5:29—30 (καὶ ἐὰν ὁ θεωρέως σὺν τῇ γυναικί συνάξεται σὺν, ἔβλεψαν καὶ βάλετε αὐτὸ τῷ συμβολετῷ γιὰ τῇ ἐν αὐτῷ ἀπολύεται ἐν τῶν μελῶν σου καὶ μὴ ἐλθῃ τὸ σώμα σου διὰ τῆς ἐν εἰς γὐναῖκας καὶ αὐτό τῇ γυναικὶ συν ἔσχατης συνάξεται σε, ἔξωθεν αὐτήν καὶ βάλε τῷ συμβολετῷ γιὰ τῇ ἐν ἀπολύεται ἐν τῶν μελῶν σου καὶ μὴ ἐλθῇ τὸ σώμα σου εἰς γυναῖκας καὶ σφέτερον ἐκεῖ, the apostle states that “it is not those organs which are harmful to man, but the unseen springs through which every shameful emotion is stirred up and comes to light.” Clearly compliant with the apostle’s rebuke, the young man henceforth “would not separate from John” (Acta Ioannis 54).

103 Acta Ioannis 63—66. Drusiana and Andronicus are presented as a devout Christian couple. Before Andronicus had become a believer; however, it was Drusiana who first “separated even from her husband for the sake of piety” (Acta Ioannis 63). When threatened by him with death, “she chose to die” and “to put to death rather than consent: to union with her husband and commit “that abominable act.” This scenario follows the introduction of “a certain man, an emissary of Satan,” later identified as Callimachus, who falls in love with Drusiana and desires to have sexual relations with her (Acta Ioannis 63; 73). Hearing of her admirer’s “life in despair,” Drusiana falls sick with a fever and soon dies from “the despondency” that results from knowing how she had affected “a man un instructed in religion” (Acta Ioannis 64). John then offers an exhortation, in which he Ilia perseverance in moral restraint to, among other things, one who rejoices only when the sun is over (Acta Ioannis 66—69).
Consequently, the story about Drusiana, Callimachus and Fortunatus contains a number of different — and sometimes contrasting — attitudes toward the miraculous. On the one hand, there is an element of divine foreknowledge active in deciding who is raised: it is taken for granted that Callimachus, who had no redeeming qualities before he was raised, would be repellant. It is also known that Fortunatus, whose only fault before being killed by the serpent’s bite was taking a bribe, would not want to continue living after he was raised. Such reflections of divine knowledge assume that there is not an infinite number of miracles which God could grant with the hope of saving the whole world. On the other hand, human petition also plays a role in two of the three raisings. The apostle, Andronicus, and others initially visit Drusiana’s tomb to commemorate her death rather than to raise her up (Acta Ioannis 72). Only after Callimachus is raised does Andronicus ask that Drusiana also be given life. Likewise, Drusiana’s request that Fortunatus be raised is granted, despite the fact that it is known that he will remain evil and return to the grave soon thereafter.

At another point in the Acts of John, John displays supernatural power for nobody else’s benefit except his own and, perhaps secondarily, the entertainment of those who read this tale (Acta Ioannis 60—61). In the miracle of dispersing the bedbugs, John’s companions want the apostle to sleep comfortably on a bed that is usually inhabited by a multitude of bugs (κόκκορας). He instructs the insects to “leave your home for the night” (Acta Ioannis 60), which they do. Waking the next morning to find that the bugs have been obedient, the apostle rewards the creatures, instructing them they may “go back to their own place” in the bed (Acta Ioannis 61). The story concludes with the following maxim from the lips of the apostle: “This creature listened to a man’s voice and kept to itself and was quiet and obedient; but we who hear the voice of God disobey his commandments and are irresponsible; how long will this go on?” (Acta Ioannis 61). Consequently, in this last anecdote a miracle offers entertainment and a context for moral exhortation but does not lead to the conversion of others.

When considering the Acts of John as a whole, the passages connecting miracles and conversions most clearly are healing of the Ephesian women and the conversion of the Ephesians after the temple of Artemis is destroyed (Acta Ioannis 30—36, 37—45; cf. 56—57). In addition, three accounts of raising the dead — performed by Cleopatra, a relative of the priest of Artemis, and Drusiana (respectively, Acta Ioannis 24, 46—47, 51—52) — indicate that the ability to perform miracles could at times be extended to those designated by an apostle.

c) The Acts of Paul

In this composite work, a number of passages assume a close association of miracles and mission. For example, in the fragmentary Heidelberg Coptic Papyrus No. 1, Paul in Antioch raises up a dead boy, and the response is: “We believe, Ananias, do not be afraid of the city.” Apparently after Ananias’ own profession of faith — “And I [also believe], my brethren, [that] there is no other God save [Jesus] Christ, the son of God, of whom is the glory forever Amen” — the Jews are said to have turned on Paul and driven him out of the city. Although many parts of the original narrative do not survive, the extant fragments indicate that this author drew a connection between the apostle’s miracle and the subsequent conversion of the Antiochenes. This same connection is evident in the reports about an exorcism in Tyre and the collapse of half of the temple of Apollo in Sidon after the apostle prays.

In addition, the Acts of Paul and Thecla, a late second-century writing known to Tertullian (Tert., de Baptismo 17), focuses on Thecla, who was converted by the teaching of Paul to a lifestyle of sexual continence, and on the various wonders leading to her escape from prison. In fact, toward the end of the narrative, it is Paul who marvels upon hearing of her miracles and the wonders surrounding her escape (Acts of Paul and Thecla 41; cf. 31—39).

Another tradition, preserved on the Hamburg Papyrus, places Paul in Ephesus and recounts the situation before the apostle is to be thrown to the beasts: A “hall-storm” comes and saves the apostle from the beasts and also tears off the ear of Hieronymus, who had ordered the animals to be sent. Although Paul himself never has to fight in the arena, the people furiously respond, “Save us O God, save us O God [from] the man who fought [sic] with the beasts!”

Finally, according to one account of this apostle’s death, Paul, as proof that he would be alive to the Lord Jesus, promises to appear to Caesar after

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104 Acta Ioannis 79. The narrative is not entirely consistent on this point, however. Note the announcements of the young men (ἀφελέοι), who states that he has come “for the sake of Drusiana . . . and for the sake of the man who has expired by her grave” (i.e., in the final form of the narrative, Callimachus, Acta Ioannes 73). It is possible that, at an earlier point, this passage referred only to Fortunatus, because Acta Ioannes 71 states that only the steward — and not (yet?) Callimachus — had been killed by the snake.


106 Phile, pp. 1—6; ET: NTAp, 2.238.

107 Phile, pp. 25—39 and 40 respectively.

108 The Hamburg Papyrus (Ph), pp. 1—5; ET: NTAp, 2.251—254.


d) The Acts of Peter

In the writings commonly known as the Acts of Peter, two distinct and contrasting portrayals of the apostle survive. One fragmentary tradition, referred to as the Acta Petri, emphasizes the importance of enkrateia. Two others recount the familiar showdown between Peter and Simon Magus at Rome (Actus Verceilenses and the Martyrdom of Peter). These writings will be discussed in turn.

i) Three Fragmentary Anecdotes (Acta Petri)

In the fragments that relate certain acts of Peter, one finds a curious presentation of the miraculous, which contrasts markedly with the documents presenting the confrontation between the apostle and Simon at Rome. The first of these anecdotes narrates the conversion of a certain Ptolemaeus, who had expressed his desire to have Peter’s daughter. Recognizing that Peter had been healing many people, someone asks why he has not healed his own daughter, who is paralyzed on one side. Apparently unconcerned about her condition, Peter responds that “it is evident to God alone why her body is not well. You must know, then, that God is not weak or powerless to grant this gift to my daughter.”\footnote{ET of the Coptos NTApΔ, 2.286—286.} Peter then calls for her to “rise up,” but only in order to “convince” his questioner and “increase the faith of those who are here.”

The story could, of course, have ended here with the crowd rejoicing after she is raised, but in the following paragraphs this author wishes to make a different point, namely that sexual continence takes precedence over the performing of miracles.

Shortly after she is raised, Peter instructs his daughter to “lie down and return to your infirmity.” An explanation for this curious reversal of the miracle is then given: when Peter’s daughter was born, the Lord had given Peter a vision, in which it was revealed that she would “do harm to many souls if her body remained healthy.” The apostle thus justifies his recent action in that the girl at ten (1?) years old “became a temptation to many.” In particular, Ptolemaeus, who is described as a “rich man,” wanted her to become his wife. This writing breaks off noting that “he sent many times for her, he could not wait. . . .”

When the narrative resumes after two missing pages in the Coptic MS, two of Ptolemaeus’ servants return the girl to Peter’s doorstep, and she is paralyzed on one side of her body. Presumably, the details of what happened when the girl was at Ptolemaeus’ house were contained in the lost pages. The reaction of the girl’s parents suggests that these pages narrated an intervention by the Lord to protect her from being violated while she was with Ptolemaeus. Rather than lament their daughter’s predicament, Peter and his wife praised “the Lord, who had preserved his servant from uncleanness and shame. . . .” Ptolemaeus, moreover, “grieved night and day over what had happened to him,” became blind and resolved to hang himself. Afterward “a light” fills the afflicted man’s house, and a voice states that it was not right for “you, a believer in me, to defile my virgin.”\footnote{The reference to Ptolemaeus as having already become a believer is curious and does not fit with the rest of the narrative.} Having been instructed to go to Peter’s house, Ptolemaeus learns from the apostle that “[it was] through her [that] he had believed in God and had been made whole.” The narrative ends with Peter exhorting the crowds before they disperse. Toward the end of the story, the daughter, who, like Peter’s wife, is never mentioned by name, drops out of the narrative. Her suffering and temporary healing are mentioned only to illustrate the main point that sexual purity as a way of life that is to be pursued, regardless of the consequences. A miracle is granted for the benefit of the crowd, but death rather than involuntary violation is better for the girl.

The other two narratives of the Acta Petri are much shorter than the one just discussed and may be understood in light of it.\footnote{The English translations cited for these two writings appear in NTApo, 2.287.} In the second of the three stories, a peasant asks Peter to pray for his only daughter. Following the prayer, the apostle assures the father that “the Lord would bestow upon her what was expedient for her soul,” after which point the girl immediately falls down and dies. As in the story about Ptolemaeus and Peter’s daughter, there is no concern for the plight of the girl. On the contrary, the author exults that she has escaped “the shamelessness of the flesh and [has broken] the pride of the blood.” Her father, however, failing “to recognize the worth of the heavenly grace,” asks Peter for his daughter to be raised from the dead and is consequently deemed a “distrustful old man.” Miracles are again of little consequence to this author: the actual deed of raising her is not even mentioned. Instead, the sentence following the father’s request begins, “some days later, after she had been raised. . . .” The point of these concluding lines is that the girl would have been better off dead: “. . . a man who passed himself
off as a believer. 

Finally, a very brief fragment preserves Peter speaking to another father, "who bitterly complained at the death of his daughter." Peter consoles the man that she has escaped "so many struggles with the body [and] so many disasters of the world." The apostle even expresses surprise that the man "shed tears" over her death. To summarize, in all three accounts of the *Acta Petri*, the same message comes to the fore: it is better to be stciken with death by the Lord's merciful hand than to have one's flesh corrupted by sexual relations. In the first story the miracle of raising Peter's daughter is strictly for the benefit of the crowd's faith and, moreover, is of only temporary benefit to the girl. In the second story the miracle of raising another girl is simply alluded to rather than narrated or described, and the third tradition consists only of a brief exhortation with no mention of the miraculous at all.

ii) Peter and Simon Magus at Rome (Actus Vercellenses)

In the more familiar *Acts of Peter*, the encounter between Peter and Simon in Rome is narrated in great detail. In the beginning, Paul's departure from Rome sets the stage for someone else to influence the people. As a result of Paul's absence, some believers come to Rome and report that they had seen Simon performing miracles (mirabilia) at Corinth. Others were saying some rather remarkable things to and about Simon: "You are God (deus) in Italy, you are the savior of the Romans (Romanorum salvator)," and the people were "all worshipping (adorantes) him" when he came to Rome. By contrast, Paul was remembered as "a sorcerer (magus)," and there was "a great commotion (turba et magna) in the church" at Rome. At this point the Lord calls Peter to sail from Jerusalem to Rome (*Actus Vercellenses 5*). Upon his arrival, Ariston greets Peter and reports that "we have lost all those whom Paul entrusted to us through the power of Simon (remissimus eum universos quos nobis Paulus tradiderat, Actus Vercellenses 6)."

114 In this passage one's identity as "a believer" connotes an individual who would never engage in sexual activity. The author seems to assume that all genuine believers would, or at least should be, sexually continent.

115 *Actus Vercellenses* 1–5. The author seems to build upon Rom 16:23b (θέλως τῷ ἱδρυματί ἐπηύρεσιν διὰ δόξαν τῆς θεᾶς καὶ Κριτίου τοῦ διακόνου) at this point (with W. Schneemelcher, *NTapo*, p. 287 n. 1). Note also the similarities to Acts 28:16, 30–31, according to which Paul stayed in Rome for two years with a single soldier guarding him. At this point the *Actus Vercellenses* takes up the story, beginning with the conversion of Candida and of her husband, Quercus, a prison officer who gives Paul leave to depart from Rome.


In his first preaching at Rome, the apostle places his anticipated conflict with Simon within the context of the battle between the Lord and Satan (*Actus Vercellenses 7*). Peter resolves to convince them "not only . . . with words (verbis) that it is the Christ that I am preaching, but also by deeds and marvelous powers (in tactis et in virtutibus magnificis). . . . not to expect any...Judaeus: "Using

117 *Actus Vercellenses* 12. By contrast, miracles are absent in the confrontation between Simon and Peter in the pseudo-Clementine * Clement Romance*. In this writing (esp. 46–48; Ec: *NTapo*, 2,515–516) Simon leaves Rome voluntarily after a public debate focusing on interpretations of scripture.
One might expect to find miracles leading to conversions after such a promise, but instead the former occur without the latter. Although the apostle twice performs healings — restoring the sight of one old woman, and then of a number of others — there is no reference to newfound belief among those healed. Rather, these healings take place among those who had already been converted, perhaps as a reward for their renewed loyalty after having turned away from following Simon (Actus Vercellenses 19—21).

The final confrontation between Peter and Simon (narrated in Actus Vercellenses 22—29) is one of the best-known tales in the apocryphal acts. The purpose here is not to rehearse the narrative in detail but simply to highlight certain elements pertaining to miracles and the conversion of others. Those who had paid admission to witness the spectacle say to Peter and Simon, “We have had evidence from Simon, now let us see yours; convince us, both of you, whom we should truly believe.” In response Peter promises “to give evidence of” his God (Actus Vercellenses 23).

Before any miracle takes place, the theological arguments made by Simon and Peter do not persuade anyone to follow either person.119 Although Peter responds to Simon’s assertions with a string of quotations mostly from OT prophetic texts (Actus Vercellenses 24), the miracles, rather than abstract, propositional arguments, persuade the crowd concerning which individual makes the most convincing case. Moreover, this author portrays both Peter and Simon as sharing this common assumption: neither leader thinks that such an argument, by itself, will persuade the fickle crowd.

The ensuing duel of miracles between Simon and Peter takes place in two stages. In the first series the prefect offers one of his young men for Simon to put to death and for Peter to raise up. Simon kills the man by breathing in his ear (Actus Vercellenses 25). In the process of restoring the soldier to life, the connection between Peter’s miracle and the belief of the crowd is explicit and repeated. Peter, when speaking to the mother of the deceased, bids, “Take these men for witnesses and go and bring your son, so that these may see and be enabled to believe that by the power of God he is raised up (ut hii uidentes

credere possint quoniam dei virtute surrexit).”120 Peter also observes that God “is doing such signs and wonders through me for the conversion of his sinners (in conversazione pecatorum suorum)” (Actus Vercellenses 26). Seeing that the boy had been restored to life when the prefect Agrippa, at Peter’s instruction, raised him up, “the crowds . . . all cried out, ‘There is but one God, the one God of Peter ( unus Deus, unus Deus Petri!’)” (Actus Vercellenses 26). Finally, after the man stands up, the people respond, “You are God the Savior (saluator), you, the God of Peter, the invisible God, the Savior!” (Actus Vercellenses 27).

In the second contest between Simon and Peter, the mother of Nicodorus, a senator, asks Peter to raise her deceased son. The miracle again has the primary function of setting the stage for demonstrating whose God is credible. Peter first asks the mother, “Do you believe in my God (deus meus), by whom your son shall be restored to life?” and she responds in the affirmative (Actus Vercellenses 28). Before the contest begins, Peter elaborates what is at stake, namely that the person who successfully performs this miracle is to be believed:

Men of Rome, let there now be a just judgment (judicium iustum) between me and Simon, and consider which of us believes in the living God, he or I. Let him revive the body which lies here; then believe in him as an angel of God (posuit animam corpus mactus hic et credidit illi quasi angelo deo). (Actus Vercellenses 28)

Simon has the first opportunity to raise Nicodorus and, predictably, fails. The reaction of the crowd to Peter’s success once again attests to this author’s connection between performing a miracle and gaining recognition as a divinely-appointed leader:

Ex eodem hora adorabunt eum tamquam deum pulchrum eius duxerint, et quos habeant in dume infernum ut carcerem eos.

From that same hour they revere [Peter] as a god, and laid at his feet such sick people as they had at home, so that he might heal them.121

Because he produced these miracles, the people now begin to offer allegiance to Peter, and the situation in church of Rome is restored to as it had been before the apostle Paul’s departure.

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119 Note Simon’s polemical statement: “You presume to talk of Jesus the Nazorean, the son of a carpenter and a carpenter himself, whose family comes from Judea. Listen, Peter, the Romans have sense; they are not fools . . . You men of Rome, is God born? Is he crucified? He who owns a Lord is no God!” (Actus Vercellenses 23, II. 24—28).

120 Actus Vercellenses 25, II. 7—9. In like manner Peter adds, “Now we need some young men, who are also willing to believe (prostratos volentium credentes)” (II. 10—11). He then says to the mother, “If you truly believe in Peter’s God (si credidit in deo Petri), we will lift him up and bring him to Peter, that he may revive him and restore him to you” (II. 18—19).

121 Actus Vercellenses 29, II. 5—7; contrast Acts 14:8—18.
iii) The Martyrdom of Peter

In a similar tradition about Peter’s encounter with Simon, the Martyrdom of Peter,\textsuperscript{122} the heretical villain intends to demonstrate that Peter “had not put his faith in the true God but in a deception.”\textsuperscript{123} In words possibly reminiscent of John 20:17b, Simon states that he will “fly up to God” and that he is “going up to my Father.”\textsuperscript{124} Led by a vision, Peter comes to meet Simon. As in Actus Vercellenses 28, the persuasive power of miracles again is assumed. Simon challenges Peter, “If your God is able (δύναμις), . . . let him show (δείξῃ) that faith in Christ is of God; let it be shown (δείκνυαι) at this time whether he be worthy of God” (\textit{Mart. Pet.} 32 [3]). For his part, the apostle Peter prays to Christ, acknowledging the possible effects of Simon’s miracles:

\textit{εἰς τὸν Παντοκράτορα τὸν εὐφροσύνην, τὸν πάντοτε αἰών αὐτοῦ} σωτηρίωσθαι καὶ ἐρπεῖν ἐν τῷ λόγῳ σωτηρίου σιμεὼς καὶ τρέπεται ὁ μέγαν.

If you permit this [ Simon] to do what he undertook, all who have believed in you shall now be led astray, and the signs and wonders which you gave them through me shall be disbelieved.\textsuperscript{125}

To remedy the situation Peter asks that Simon “be crippled, but not die” and for his leg to be broken in three places. Yet again the crowd’s reaction to Simon’s fall is predictable: “they stoned [ Simon] and went to their own homes; but from that time they all believed in Peter” (\textit{Πήγμα} τὸ λόγον πάντας πιστεύουσαν) (\textit{Mart. Pet.} 32 [3]).

\textsuperscript{122} The Greek and Latin texts of the Martyrdom of Peter appear in C. von Tischendorf, R. A. Lipsius and M. Bevenot, \textit{Acta Apostolorum post Constantinum Tischendorf}, 1.79—113. Page and line numbers listed with a citation refer to the Greek text of this edition. Whether this work was originally a part of the \textit{Actus Vercellenses} is a question beyond the scope of this discussion. Because the Latin text continues the \textit{Actus Vercellenses}, the Martyrdom of Peter’s twelve chapters are numbered as 30—41. Following W. Schneemelcher (\textit{NTApO}, 2.311—317), the numbering of the \textit{Liber} will be followed with the chapter of the Greek in parentheses; e.g., \textit{Mart. Pet.} 31 (2).

\textsuperscript{123} \textit{Mart. Pet.} 31 (2, II, 37, 1; καὶ δεῖγμα πρὸς τὸν πατέρα. Cf John 20:17b: οὐκ ὡς ἔχεις αὐτὸν καὶ εἰς αὑτὸν, ἄναπτομένος πρὸς τὸν πατέρα μοι καὶ τὰ πάντα ἔλεγον καὶ θεόν μοι καὶ θεόν ἔλεγον.}

\textsuperscript{124} \textit{Mart. Pet.} 32 (2, II, 21—23). Above I have modified Schneemelcher’s translation (\textit{NTApO}, 2.312—313; “Let this man do what he undertook, and all who have believed on you shall now be overthrown, and the signs and wonders which you gave them through me shall be disbelieved”), which does not convey as clearly the fact that this is a conditional sentence.

Evans Simon’s friend Gemellus recognizes the connection between power and belief in a god when he says, “Simon, if the Power of God is broken (καταστροφή), shall not the God himself, whose power you are, be proved an illusion (τρυπήλη;)?” (\textit{Mart. Pet.} 32 [3]). Gemellus then approaches Peter and exclaims, “I too desire to be one of those that believe in Christ.” Interestingly, there is no mention of instructing this new convert in the faith: as soon as Gemellus responds to the act of power with belief in the God of Peter, he, like the crowd earlier in the narrative, is recognized as a believer.

The interaction between Simon and Peter comes to an end when “Simon, the angel of the devil, ended his life” (\textit{Mart. Pet.} 32 [3]). At this point the narrative of Peter’s martyrdom begins (33—40 [4—12]). Before he is crucified upside-down, the apostle mentions miracles in his final exhortation: “Remember the signs and wonders which you saw through me . . . how many healings [God] has performed for you. Wait for him who shall come and reward everyone according to his deeds” (56 [7]). Such selective emphases in the Martyrdom of Peter suggest that, for this author, the only significant elements of Peter’s ministry — perhaps also of the Christian gospel — concern the miraculous and the coming judgment.

e) The Acts of Thomas

The Acts of Thomas is a composite document consisting of thirteen acts, or praxes, and ending with an account of the apostle’s death, which, in many respects, constitutes a fourteenth praxis. A consistent theme of the work as a whole concerns the emphasis placed on conversion to \textit{ekstrateia}. In its present form, the writing may be divided into two parts. Praxes one through six are loosely knit together, typically do not reflect any direct relation to the material preceding or following them, and thus may have been secondarily collected into the larger narrative.\textsuperscript{126} From the seventh praxis until the end of the work, however, the narrative reflects a unified progression of Thomas’s journey toward, and activities at, the court of the Indian king Mithridates.\textsuperscript{127}

This survey of miracles in the Acts of Thomas will discuss in turn this writing’s two main parts and call attention to the ways in which this author’s — or, perhaps, in the cases of praxes 1—6, compiler’s — interest in

\textsuperscript{126} With the exception of the introduction, in which the world is divided into missionary fields for each of the apostles, these early praxes could have been combined in almost any order with little effect on the overall narrative. In these early praxes, moreover, Thomas is depicted not simply as a mortal apostle but as “the twin-brother of Christ” (\textit{Aqua Thomas} 11, 31, 39, 45).

\textsuperscript{127} The presentation of Thomas in the early praxes contrasts with praxes 7—13 in that the former emphasizes the apostle’s weakness and complete inability to perform a miracle without the assistance of Christ (\textit{Acts Thom.} 66, 160).
sexual continence oftentimes overshadows the efficacy of miracles in converting the inhabitants of India.

1) The Early Praxes (1—6) of the Acta Thomae

The first praxis of the Acts of Thomas relates the dividing up of the world into missionary fields for each of the apostles. Although Thomas is instructed to travel to India, he is unwilling to go there. The exiled Christ arranges for Thomas to be sold into slavery, so that the apostle will complete his mission.128 Two related encounters narrate Thomas’s rapid rise from being just another attendant of a wedding to praying for the newlywed couple in their bridal chamber.129 After praying that “the Lord Jesus . . . do for them the things that help and are useful and profitable,” the apostle assures the couple that “the Lord shall be with you” (Acta Thom. 10). During that same evening, but before the couple have come together, Christ himself appears to them and exhorts them to adopt a life of enkrateia, a change which changes the king.130 This first praxis sets the tone for the Acts of Thomas as a whole: although during the wedding celebration Thomas predicts a single wonder — namely that a cup-bearer would be killed by the lion, an omen that results in his being recognized as an apostle of God (Acta Thom. 6—8) — the emphasis

128 Acta Thom. 1—3. Both figuratively and literally, the story of the apostle Thomas’s actions in India covers a lot of ground in the first praxis. From the beginning, the location of all the apostles in Jerusalem would agree with Luke-Acts and John (especially the former) and against the Johannine appearance of Jesus promised in Mark and narrated in Matthew. The Greek text cited for this writing appears in C. von Tischendorf, R. A. Lipsius and M. Beuchel, Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha post Constantinum Tischendorf, 2.1.12, 291. Page and line numbers listed with a citation refer to the Greek text of this edition. The ET cited appears in NYAS, 2.3:39—41.

129 Acta Thom. 4—7. First, a Hebrew flute-girl notices Thomas, especially after he sings a particular song. Second, a cup-bearer strikes Thomas. To the latter Thomas states that “God will show forth his wonders (οὐράνιον τούτον) and take the cup-bearer’s life, after which point the corpse will be dragged by dogs (Acta Thom. 6, p. 105, 2.11—12). The flute-girl, who had come to love Thomas, then recalls his words to the cup-bearer after the latter had been slain by a lion and torn into pieces by dogs. Recognizing the significance of Thomas’s prediction, the flute-girl says, “This man is either a god or an apostle of God” (Acta Thom. 9). After hearing her report, the king summons Thomas to “come . . . and pray for my daughter.”

130 Acta Thom. 11—16. Jesus exhorts the newlyweds, “to abandon this filthy intercourse” and to “become holy temple[s] . . .” (Acta Thom. 12). As a result, the young couple are converted: “They believed the Lord and gave themselves entirely to him, and refrained from the filthy passion (Acta Thom. 13). The next morning first the king’s daughter and then the bridegroom are forthcoming about the change they had experienced. She explains that “the mirror (Σκληροτομος; Σκληροτομος) of shame is taken from” her and that she is “yoked with a new man” (Acta Thom. 14; p. 120, II. 3, 12). Enraged, the king commands that Thomas “the sorcerer” (ὁ φάραστροκτον) be found (Acta Thom. 16: 1. 10).

lies not on the apostle’s miracles but on conversion to a life of sexual continence.

Likewise, in the fourth praxis a talking colt instructs Thomas to “mount and sit upon me and rest until you enter the city” (Acta Thom. 39). The colt dies promptly after they reach the gates of the city (Acta Thom. 41). Noteworthy here is Thomas’s refusal to perform a miracle: when the crowd asks that Thomas raise the colt, the apostle, although confessing that he possesses power to do so, defers to God, “who gave it speech that it might speak and was able to make it not die.” Thus, in this part of the Acts of Thomas the giving of moral instruction and entertainment are more important than the recording of miracles, which might lead to the conversion of many. Other narratives in the Acts of Thomas, which also do not emphasize miracles leading to conversions, will not be discussed in detail here (for example, Acta Thom. 42—46).

At two points in the Acts of Thomas, however, the combined effect of raising a dead person along with a vision that the individual received before being raised results in that person’s conversion. In the first passage a large snake (ὄρτωτον ὑμέρος) bearing a certain resemblance to the serpent of Genesis 3 bites and kills a man, whom it had seen having sex with “a certain beautiful woman” (Acta Thom. 30—32). Thomas commands the snake to “suck out your poison which you put into this man,” with the result that the young man comes back to life and the serpent dies (Acta Thom. 33). Afterward one learns that Christ was directing the working of this miracle: the young man who had been brought back to life states that he has seen “that man” (presumably Christ) instructing Thomas to heal him.131 Somewhat surprisingly, there is no overt connection between this miracle and the apostle’s subsequent remarks to the crowd: Thomas only exhorts belief “in our Lord Jesus Christ” and exhales that his God “does not condemn” them (Acta Thom. 37—38). This third praxis ends with neither another miracle nor any mention of other conversions among the crowd. The people of the city to which the two men had walked do not even seem to know that the apostle had recently raised the boy from the dead.

In a second account, a woman whom the apostle had raised from the dead reports to the crowd a horrific vision she had received of hell as a place of punishment for evil-doers (Acta Thom. 51—59). Upon arriving at the place where the woman had been murdered, Thomas prays to Jesus and acknowledges the importance of miracles for attaining an understanding of the divine:

131 Acta Thom. 34. According to the young man, Christ had said to the apostle, “I have many wonders (φασίν ὡς μαρτυρεῖς) to show through you, and I have great works (γεγονότα ὑποκάλεσθαι) to accomplish through you . . .”
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you who are not seen with our bodily eyes... but in your works are manifest to us (τοὺς ἔργας θεανορεοῦντες ηὐλίν) and by your many works we have come to know you (καὶ ταῖς ἐν πράξει σου ταῖς πολλαῖς καθὼς χαροῦμεν ἐπεπνεύσαμεν σε). (Acts Thon. 53)

Through "works (ἔργα)" like the raising of the woman, Jesus is about to make himself known. Furthermore, it is the young man, who, at the apostle's instruction, raises the woman "by faith in Jesus" (Acts Thon. 54). Such an understanding of Jesus, who reveals himself in his "works," parallels the LE, where the risen Christ confirms the gospel through signs (Mark 16:20bc).

Once raised, the girl relates a dreadful story of where she had been since the time she was killed, a place or torment and punishment which, to the modern reader, bears comparison to Dante's Inferno. To the ancient listener, the account of the woman could call to mind the myth of Er in Plato's Republic.132 Immediately after her testimony, Thomas exclaims the crowd to "believe therefore in Christ Jesus," who will "cleanse you from all your earthly desires which remain on the earth..." (Acts Thon. 58). The combined result of this miracle and the woman's testimony is markedly different from the third praxis, according to which no one had followed Thomas' preaching of continence (cf. Acts Thon. 37–38). By contrast, on this particular occasion "all the people believed" (Acts Thon. 59). Thus, not only the miracle of raising the dead person, but also the woman's testimony concerning the resurrection awaiting those who do not make a change in this life, move the crowd to repentance.

This sixth praxis, moreover, moves from a specific example of healing to the increase of the leader's reputation, and then to a more summary description of the same: Thomas' fame "spread into all the towns and villages, and all who had sick or such as were troubled by unclean spirits brought them..." Thomas healed many, with the result that "all who were healed by him said with one accord with one voice, 'Glory be to you, Jesus.'"133 At this point in the Acts of Thomas, the connection between miracle and belief could not be more clear.

One other miraculous deed ascribed to this apostle, which does not compare with other descriptions of his activities in the first half of the Acts of Thomas, also merits an explanation. The passage in question could constitute an older


133 Acts Thon. 59; cf. the similar progression in the Gospel of Mark from an initial miracle (Mark 1:28) to a more general statement about healings and the spread of Jesus' fame (Mark 1:32–34).

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piece of material from another author, who emphasized different aspects of the traditions associated with Thomas. The second praxis places Thomas at the court of king Gundsphon, who had commissioned the apostle to build a new palace (Acts Thon. 17–18). Instead of doing this, Thomas gives the money to the poor, explaining with imagery similar to Matt 6:19–20 that he has, in fact, been building the king a palace "in heaven" (Acts Thon. 19–21). The king's friends report their suspicion that, rather than building a royal palace,

he goes to the towns and villages, and if he has anything he gives it all to the poor, and he teaches one new God and heals the sick (νομοκτόνος ἑρατιστής) and drives out demons (ποιμέννων ἐνεποιύσας) and does many other wonderful things and we think he is a magician (μαγικός). But his works of compassion, and the healings which were wrought by him without reward, and moreover his simplicity and kindness and quality of his faith show that he is righteous or an apostle (ὁ ἰδίωτας ἐστιν ἢ διάποιλος) of the new God whom he preaches. (Acts Thon. 20)

Such gifts to the poor are recorded in the preceding paragraphs (Acts Thon. 19), and the teaching about a new God may be implied from Thomas' ministry. By contrast, this author has not yet mentioned healings, exorcisms and other miracles. The assumption of this possibly misplaced piece of tradition is much like that noted above in Acts 19:11–12 and 2 Cor 12:11–12, namely that the working of miracles is a part of an apostle's— or, at least, of this apostle's— credentials.134 One need not present any specific examples, for example, of Thomas' healings before recording a summary statement like Acts Thon. 20. Also significant is the fact that, although the king's friends think Thomas is "a magician," his works of compassion and miracles performed without expectation of reward nonetheless suggest at least that he is a just man, and perhaps even an "apostle of God."

ii) Thomas at the Court of King Misanthus

The seventh praxis of the Acts of Thomas marks the beginning of a rather unified block of material that places the apostle on route to, and ministering in,

134 Another instance occurs in praxis ten, in which Charisias, the husband of Mygdonia (a new convert), asks her how she can listen to Thomas' "rain words and look upon [his] magic works" (Acts Thon. 89; cf. 96). Up to this point in the narrative, however, it is not stated that Mygdonia herself has seen Thomas perform a single miracle. Presumably, she could have heard about the healing of the captain's wife and daughter (cf. praxes seven and eight), but, according to Acts Thon. 83–88, she herself has only been exposed to Thomas' moral teaching. Cf. the last line of praxis 1 (Acts Thon. 16): suddenly Thomas, who is the lone Christian in India, is said to have had a great number of converts, even though his missionary preaching has yet to be narrated.

135 Cf. Paul's statement about himself in 1 Thes 1:4–5 and 1 Cor 2:4–5, which are discussed above. Note also John 2:23b and 3:2, which refer to Jesus' miracles (οὐ παρέχεται) but occur between John 2:11 (διδόντων τοῦ στήλου) and John 4:54 (διδόντων τοῦ στήλου).
the court of the Indian king Misdeus. The seventh and eighth praxes constitute two parts of a single narrative. In the first a certain captain comes to Thomas and asks for the exorcism and healing of his wife and daughter, who have been sexually violated by father-and-son demons (Acta Thom. 62—67). In the second part the two men travel to the captain’s town, where the exorcism and healing take place (Acta Thom. 68—81). While they are en route toward the captain’s town, an unusual miracle tests the captain’s faith: “the beasts” pulling the men become weary from the heat and cannot go further. Thomas exhorts the captain to “believe in Jesus Christ . . . and you shall see great wonders” (68[3]ο[ν]τες . . . μεταφέρετε, Acta Thom. 69). Instructed by Thomas, the captain summons four wild asses to pull the cart, a task that they carry out “quietly and evenly, that they might not disturb the apostle of God” (Acta Thom. 70—71). When the men arrive at the gates of the captain’s home town, the spectacle of the wild asses leading the cart draws the attention of the whole city. Thomas then sends one of the asses into the town to address the demons and summon the wife and daughter, who have become subject to the apostle’s exorcism (Acta Thom. 74—80). Neither the miracle involving the wild beasts nor the exorcism of the demons from the women, however, inspires belief among the crowds. The apostle’s ministry results in the conversions of only the immediate family of husband, wife and daughter.

Praxes 9—11 also form a literary sub-unit and give an account of Mygdonia, the wife of Charissius, who follows Thomas’s teachings and subsequently abstains from sexual relations with her husband. The ninth praxis relates Mygdonia’s conversion (Acta Thom. 82—118). With the exception of Thomas’ departure from prison, which is not described in detail, no miraculous events are reported in this narrative. The story begins in the ninth praxis is continued in the tenth, which relates Mygdonia’s anointing with oil and baptism (Acta Thom. 119—133). The eleventh act relates that, since Mygdonia continued to withhold herself from her husband, King Misdeus sends Tertia, his own wife, to implore her (Acta Thom. 134). Misdeus’ decision culminates in another misfortune for the king: not only does Tertia fail to persuade Mygdonia, but Mygdonia also sends Tertia to hear Thomas, which, in turn, results in the conversion of the king’s wife (Acta Thom. 134—137). The two enraged husbands (Charissius and Misdeus) then have Thomas arrested (Acta Thom. 137—138). According to these three praxes, then, Mygdonia and Tertia are persuaded to convert by the apostle’s exhortation to enkrateia rather than by miraculous signs.

In the twelfth praxis Vazan, one of the king’s sons, confronts the apostle, promising to free him from prison if Vazan can learn his “magic power and craft” (Acta Thom. 139). Eventually, Vazan too becomes a believer, and, before the king arrives, he even contemplates how to help the apostle escape (Acta Thom. 140). When the king comes and orders “[iron] plates” to be heated and the apostle to walk upon them, a miracle does occur: water gushes from the ground to cool the plates. Such a spectacle, however, does not result in the conversion of anyone: the king simply commands for Thomas “to be taken into the prison ‘until I consider how we must deal with him.’”

In the account of the apostle’s martyrdom (Acta Thom. 159—169), which continues the narrative of praxis thirteen, Thomas knows that his death is imminent. The description of his death is anything but spectacular: he summons the soldiers and orders, “Come and fulfill the command of him who sent you! And at once the four smote him and slew him. But all the brethren wept” (Acta Thom. 168). A final story “after a long time had passed” relates the conversion of King Misdeus, who grieved over the fact that one of his sons suffered from demon possession.136 Apparently respecting the power associated with Thomas, the king resolves to heal his son by means of one of the deceased apostle’s bones. While the king is on the way to the tomb, Thomas himself appears and promises that Christ will heal the boy, who is then restored. For his part, the king confesses belief in Jesus, and even submits to the authority of the presbyter Siphon.

By the end of this second main section of the Acts of Thomas (praxes 7—13 and Thomas’ martyrdom), the apostle has made only six converts:

- Siphon, Siphon’s wife and their daughter (3 people; praxes 7—8)
- Tertia, Mygdonia and Marcia (3 people; praxes 9—11)
- The king’s son, Vazan (praxes 12)
- The king himself (the Martyrdom of Thomas [= praxis 14])

The author does not even specify whether the king’s other son, who had been freed from demon possession in Acta Thom. 170, was ever persuaded to follow the apostle’s teaching. For this author, then, it is more important to emphasize continence than to highlight the role of miracles in gaining converts. Two exceptions to this general tendency occur in praxes two (the summary statement about Thomas’ miracles, Acta Thom. 17—21) and six (the raising of the woman who warned about the coming judgment, 51—59).

Given this overarching aim, the apostle’s final statement to the king before his martyrdom comes as a great surprise: “I have come here in order to save many (τας πολλὰς ἰσχύοντας, and that I might at your hands depart from this body” (Acta Thom. 162). Although this writing may have the authorial intent of commending a lifestyle of enkrateia, the portrayals of this apostle’s own

136 Acta Thom. 141. In the thirteenth praxis Thomas gives the seal of anointing, administers the rite of baptism and serves the Eucharist to Vazan, Tertia, Mygdonia (who somehow had been freed from her husband’s grasp) and Mygdonia’s nursmaid Marcia (Acta Thom. 139—140).

137 Acta Thom. 170. This other son of Misdeus is not mentioned by name and is to be distinguished from Vazan, who had already converted.
ministry cannot be characterized as having had such an effect on “many” people. As in the summary of Thomas’ miracles in the second praxis (Acta Thom. 20), the apostle’s departing words in Acta Thom. 163 do not accord with the dominating interest in sexual continence that characterizes the work in its present form. Accordingly, a tendency away from the miraculous and toward enkratia similar to that observed in the Acts of Andrew is apparent also in much of the Acts of Thomas.

3. Summary of Miracles in the Apocryphal Acts

The various apocryphal acts offer numerous different presentations of the miraculous. Many, but certainly not all, individual narratives relating the miraculous are of relevance to the interpretation of Mark 16:15—20 in the direct connection assumed between miracles and conversions in a missionary context. The author of LE, however, reflects no interest in sexual continence, a recurring theme in certain parts of apocryphal acts. The numerous occurrences of miracles in these later writings suggests — contrary to the arguments discussed above of P. Hahn, B. Kollmann and others — that the LE’s expectation of miracles in a missionary context does not necessarily or exclusively stem from first-century traditions.

D. Select Apologetic Writers of the Second and Third Centuries

In his classic study of the significance of exorcisms in Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Origen and other Christian writers of the second and third centuries, Adolf von Harnack argued that these miracles were “ein sehr wichtiges Mittel der Mission und Propaganda.”138 Many centuries earlier, but in a similar vein, Eusebius of Caesarea describes those, who not only had recently converted to Christianity but also had enjoyed success in converting others

by the grace and cooperation (χρισμα και συνεργίας) of God, since many strange miracles of the divine spirit were at that time still being wrought by them (Εσσε). . . πιστοί και καταδίκων δύναμεις . . . καθήγοντος, so that whole crowds at the first hearing eagerly received (διότι . . . καταδίκασαν) in their souls the religion of the creator of the universe.139


139 Eusebius, Hist. eccl. 3.37.3; cf. 3.37.1—2; cf. R. MacMullen, Christianizing the Roman Empire, p. 25.

This third and final main section of chapter 5 will address in turn the writings of Justin Martyr, Theophilus of Antioch, Irenaeus, Tertullian and Origen and will evaluate the merits of the generalizations offered by Harnack and Eusebius for this period.140 A distinctive feature running through these apologists’ writings, which does not often occur in the NT or the apocryphal acts, concerns references to believers in general, rather than apostles or other recognized leaders, as miracle-workers.

I. Justin Martyr

The miracles of contemporary believers receive mention in most, but not all, of the second- and third-century Christian apologists. A notable exception is the earliest surviving Christian apologetic writing, the Apology by Marcianus Aristides of Athens (ca. 125 or 140’s CE), which never suggests that miracles were performed by the first apostles or by subsequent believers.141 Perhaps also of significance in this connection is the fragment of the apologist Quadratus (ca. 120’s CE) emphasizing the miracles of Jesus rather than those of the apostles or other believers.142 Beginning with Justin Martyr, however, a number of Christian apologists do emphasize the miracles of contemporary believers rather than those performed by Jesus or the first apostles.

This section will first examine references to heretical tricksters who perform miracles in the First Apology and then consider the apologist’s positive portrayals of, presumably, other miracle-workers in his Second

140 There is not space to mention here each second-century writer whose surviving works do not mention miracles. The author of 1 Clement, for example, is greatly interested in apostolic succession but not in the miracles of these same apostles (esp. chap. 54). Likewise, the Didache states that only apostles and prophets may celebrate the Eucharist. The Ascension of Isaiah portrays the apostles’ miracles strictly as part of the past (Isa. 3:15—31). However, it is not the purpose of this study to suggest that the spread of Christianity can be explained entirely by the miraculous. On this point see Rodney Stark, who calls attention to a variety of factors, such as demographics, interpersonal relations and family relations, which also impacted the spread of the Christianity: The Rise of Christianity: A Sociological Reconsideration [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996]; Idem, "E Communities," JESA 6 (1998) 259—267.

141 On this point see chapter 2 in the Syrian version and chapter 15 in the Greek version of M. Aristides’ Apology, which appear in J. Rendel Harris and J. Armistage Robinson, The Apology of Aristides on Behalf of the Christians, pp. 36—37 (ET of the Syrian) and 110 (Greek text). See also the discussion of this work in chapter 4.

142 This fragment, which may or may not bespeak the content of the remainder of Quadratus’ otherwise lost work, is preserved by Eusebius: “But the works (τὰ χωρια) or our Savior were always present, for they were true, those who were cured, those who rose from the dead, who had not merely (οὐκ . . . μόνον) appeared as cured and risen, but (ὅτιλα κατέχοντα) were constantly present, not only (οὐκ . . . μόνον) while the Savior was living, but even (ὥς ἐπηκυα) for some time after he had gone, so that (ὅτιλε) some of them survived even till our own time” (Hist. eccl. 4:3:2; Greek text and ET: Kinoopdi Lakes, LCL).
Assertion that they will never die. 446 With evident dismay, Justin also states that this teaching was a concern in his own day in that "all who follow these men are, as we said above, called Christians (Χριστιανοί καλούμενοι)." (Apol. 1.26.6; cf. 1.4, 1.7). By way of analogy, he conceives that those "deceived" by this "heretical" miracle-worker continue to be recognized as believers in Christian communities, "...just as (δι' τρόπον καί) those who do not share the same dogmas (τῶν αὐτῶν δογμάτων) share among philosophers the name of philosophy" (Apol. 1.26.6).

Later in the First Apology, Justin again calls attention to Menander's continuing influence. The apologist's primary focus at this point is the assertion that the demons, aware of the prophecies about Christ, created phenomena in pagan religion to mimic and compete with oracles of the Jewish scriptures as interpreted by Christians. 447 He also charges that these demons "produced other men, such as Simon and Menander of Samaria, who by mighty deeds of magic misled, and still mislead, many (οἱ καὶ μαγικὰς δυνάμεις ποιήσαντες πολλοὺς ἥξιστατον καὶ ἔτι ἀπατομένους ἥξιστον, Apol. 1.26.1)." Thus in Apol. 1.26.2 and 56 Justin indicates that the effects of Menander's popular ministry, which included magical tracts, had gained a significant following, which persisted into the apologist's own day.

A passage related to the above discussion of specific "heretical" miracle-workers in the First Apology is Dialogue 7, in which Justin refers indirectly to the continuing deceptions of such workers of wonders. Narrating his own journey to Christian faith, he relates the words of the old man, who first explained the scriptures to him (cf. Dialogue 2-8). The man speaks about the OT prophets, "who, inspired by the Holy Spirit, predicted events that would take place in the future" (Dialog. 7.1). The man then offers Justin two reasons for believing in the prophets' testimony. The first of these is far from a novel claim: one should acknowledge events which have come to pass and which are taking place according to the prophets' oracles (7.2). At least initially, however, the man's second reason would hardly seem to fit the context of Dial. 7.1-2. The man states that the prophets are trustworthy "because of the miracles which they performed (διὰ τῶν ὄνειρων ὁ ἐπιστόλου)" (7.3). Justin's teacher does not relate what miracles these prophets performed, instead he contrasts the Hebrew prophets with "the false prophets who are filled with an erring and unclean

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144 C. F. B. Falls, Saint Justin Martyr, p. 60 n. 1. In Apol. 1.26.7 Justin addresses the emperor Pius, "...they are neither persecuted nor murdered by you because of their beliefs (εἰς δόγματα)."

145 Apol. 1.26.3. The second person in the above list, Heraclitus, is mentioned only briefly (26.3). Cf. the discussion above of the Acts of Peter.

146 Apol. 1.26.4; cf. ὁ δὲ μὴ ἐκαθηκόρισεν ἔπειτα, 26.4. The fourth person in Justin's list, Marcion, stands out from Simon and Menander in that no miracles are attributed to him who taught about "another god (Διόνυσον, ἔφη)."
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spirit who neither did nor do (οὐτε ἑστοίχησαν οὐτε ποιοῦσιν) such miracles (7.3). The false prophets known to Justin "dare to perform certain miracles (δύναμες τινες) to astonish people and glorify demons and spirits of error" (7.3). With these last allegations, Justin has jumped from a discussion of OT figures to a contemporary situation, in which "false prophets" share the legacy of others mentioned in the Hebrew Bible. The line of Justin's argument can be traced by following the points of Dial. 7.2–3 in reverse order:

1) Justin was aware of certain contemporary individuals who performed miracles and characterized them as false prophets (7.3; 2) be assumed that contemporary false prophets would resemble those mentioned in the OT;148 3) it is further inferred that in biblical times there must have also been true prophets, who not only spoke about the distant future but also performed authentic miracles (7.2).

This progression in Justin's reasoning accounts for his polemical remarks against both past and present miracle-workers. It also elucidates the second reason given for trusting the prophets "because of the miracles which they performed."

Accordingly, Dialogue 7 thus also points to contemporary miracle-workers of whom Justin disapproved. Although nothing in this passage explicitly connects these false prophets with Simon and Menander in the First Apology, the descriptions in both writings of those who use miracles to astound people are mutually compatible. Perhaps it was the case, then, that Justin constructed this description of these allegedly false prophets in light of his own understanding of Simon and Menander.

b) Justin's Contrasting Portrayal of the Apostles' Activities

Justin's portrayal of the first apostles primarily as teachers stands in contrast with his depictions of the miraculous tricksters discussed above.

Afterwards, when Jesus rose from the dead and appeared to them (εἶς νεκράν ὄντος οὗτος καὶ οὐκ εἶναι δούλος) and taught them to read the prophesies in which all the above happenings were predicted as about to take place, and after they had seen him ascending into heaven (εἰς οὐράνιον ἀνεβαίνων), had believed, had received power

148 This second point is not explicit in Dialogue 7 and is inferred on the basis of points 1) and 3) above. In addition, such a connection between past and present false teachers is evident elsewhere in the Dialogue, where Justin denounces Trypho, "From the fact that to this day the gifts of prophecy exist (προφητικὰ καὶ τοιαύτα ἐχουσι καὶ τοιαύτα) among us (Christians), you should realize that the gifts which had resided among your people have now been transferred to us. And, just as there were false teachers among you at the time your holy prophets lived, so now are there also in our midst many false teachers against whom we were warned by our Lord himself." (Dial. E 21). Justin may also be equivocating between the prophets to whom writings of the HB are ascribed and those like Elijah who are said to have performed miracles (1 Samuel 18–19).

149 As noted in chapter 4, the adverb ἀπόθετον ("from there") refers back to οὗτος, thus connecting that the power had been sent "from heaven."

A related point occurs in his argument concerning the existing of the dead. Justin provides an analogy by asking who would believe, without having seen it, "that from a little drop of human seed it was possible to shape bones, muscles and flesh into the human form we now see?" (Apol. 119.1). Although they have never seen the dead raised, Justin asks them to believe in this also. What Justin does not offer as evidence, namely that the dead continue to be raised in his own day, is as interesting as his illustration from nature regarding human semen.
and for the defeat of demons” (Apol. II.6.5; cf. II.6.1—5). In support of this statement, the apologist explains to the prefect Ursicus,


Even now, you are able to learn using your own eyes (οὐκ ἔσται) about what has taken place. For many of our own people [the Christians] exercise (ἐξορκίζοντες) many demons through the entire world, and even in your own city [Rome], in the name of Jesus Christ, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate. They were not healed by all the other exorcists, incantations and drugs, but our own people cured (ἰδιαίτερα καὶ ἐκείνῳ ἑαυτοῦ) by rendering helpless and dispersing the demons who are taking (καταχάριζονται) possession of these people.

In the above statement Justin points Ursicus to Christians who perform exorcisms (ἐξορκίζοντες) in his own time. Such an appeal to contemporary manifestations of the miraculous is underscored by the fact that the last three present participles of Apol. II.6.6 — “rendering helpless and dispersing the demons who are taking possession (καταχάριζοντες καὶ ἐκείνῳ ἑαυτοῦ καταλαμβάνοντας)” — occur with the present verb ἑαυτοῦ. Thus, the performing of exorcisms is regarded as a regular activity of certain believers in Rome.

Justin’s primary interest, however, lies not in the miracles themselves but rather in their value as proof for his earlier statements concerning the unnamable God and the name of Jesus, who came “for believing people and for the defeat of demons” (II.6.1—5). Of course, what the historian would like to know from the apologist is just how the exorcists of Apol. II.6.5—6 would compare with the heretical tricks inspired by demons, whom he mentions pejoratively in Apol. I.26 and 56. Justin, however, neither reconciles their disparate evaluations to one another nor addresses possible criticisms from outsiders who, perhaps, would not be able to discern the difference between one Christian miracle-worker and another. Before reflecting further on this section of the Second Apology, the discussion will first consider five analogous statements in Justin’s Dialogue, which also refer to the miracles of contemporary believers.

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151 Justin wrote his Second Apology in response to a particular incident: the prefect Ursicus had three confessing Christians beheaded in Rome.
152 Cf.: “they.” The subject of ἑαυτοῦ is not explicitly stated, but the verb clearly refers to those who performed healings rather than those healed.
153 Apol. II.6.5—6. I have modified T. B. Falls’ translation (Saint Justin Martyr) so that the first clause of 6.6 is in the active voice, like the Greek, instead of using the passive voice, as in Falls’ translation.
154 Thus Robert M. Grant’s oft-quoted dictum: “Of course, it should be added that, in polemical writing, your magic is my miracle, and vice versa, and furthermore, that the fathers were fond of tracing generic developments in heresies. Not all their tracings were correct” (Gnosticism and Early Christianity [Second Edition; New York: Columbia University Press, 1966] 93, emphasis added).

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d) Justin on Miracles in the Dialogue with Trypho

As is well known, an overarching concern in Justin’s Dialogue is to demonstrate that Christian interpretation of the Old Testament is superior to Jewish exegesis and that Christians can refute all Jewish objections to the claim that OT prophecies are fulfilled in Christ. At a number of points Justin supports a certain interpretation of the Jewish scriptures by pointing to the occurrence of contemporary miracles, usually exorcisms, that are said to be performed by believers of his own time. Unfortunately, as in the Second Apology, Justin says nothing about the identity of these people and rarely describes the miracles themselves. What these five sections of the Dialogue (chs. 30—31, 35, 39, 76 and 85) do offer is an insight into how Justin appeals to the miraculous within the context of this apologetic treatise.

i) Exorcisms, the “Great Power” of Christ and Judgment at the Parousia

In Dialogue 30 Justin instructs Trypho: “that we believers beseech him to safeguard us from strange, that is, evil and deceitful spirits” (20.2). The apologist explains that the prevalence of exorcisms in his own day stands as proof that God bestowed “great power” upon Christ: We constantly ask God through Jesus Christ to keep us safe from these demons, who, were once adored by us. . . We call him our helper and redeemer by the power of whose name even the demons shudder. Even today they cast out (καὶ σημερον ἐξορκίζονται) in the name of Jesus Christ. . . From this it is clear to all (ὁ δὲ καὶ ἐκ τούτου πᾶν πάντων ἐξακολουθεῖ) that his Father bestowed upon him such a great power, with the result that (καὶ ταύτην τὸν διψαμένην) even the demons are subject to his name and to his preordained manner of suffering. (Dialog. 30:5; cf. Luke 11:20, 16:17)

As in Second Apology 6, Justin is not interested in the activities of exorcists as such, but rather in the support they lend to his argument concerning Christ, who received “great power” from his Father.

In Dial. 31.1, moreover, Justin connects the above discussion of Christ’s receiving strength from heaven to the parousia: “If such a great power (ἡ σαρκίδος τῶν θεοῦ) is shown to have accompanied and continues to accompany (παρακολούθησον καὶ παρακολούθησον) the passion, how great shall [his power be]? (τὸν ἐπιστήμην) at his glorious parousia?” The main point of Justin’s warning about the second coming is that the manifestation of power, which accompanied the earthly Jesus, continues to follow those who have faith in Jesus. Others like Trypho should thus take heed of this power and make themselves ready for the coming judgment at the parousia.155

155 Justin’s statement assumes an earlier reference to δυνάμει in the same sentence, ἰδοὺ, πάντων (δυνάμει). 156 This connection between miracles and the parousia in Justin’s argument may be unique among Christian writings of the first two centuries and merits further study.
with which this discussion is concerned. Justin cites Luke 10:19\textsuperscript{158} and explains,

And now we who believe (καὶ νῦν ἤμειν οἱ πιστεύοντες) in Jesus our Lord, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, cast out all devils and other evil spirits and have them submitting to us (τὰ δαμασία πάντα καὶ πνεύματα πονηρὰ ἐξορίζοντες ὑποτάσσομεν τοῖς ἑμοῖς). (Διάλ. 76.6a)

This interpretation of Luke 10:19 in relation to exorcisms of the apologist’s own day has the following function in Justin’s larger argument: the affirmation that believers currently cast out demons provides a contemporary illustration of the statement in Luke that Jesus gave authority to the disciples. Justin intends for the Lukan text, along with the three Markan passages, to support his christological interpretation of Genesis, Isaiah and Daniel.\textsuperscript{159} Contemporary exorcisms mentioned in Dial. 76.6a thus provide confirmation for his appeal to the Lukan prooftext.

Moreover, the description of exorcisms in Dial. 76.6a also merits comparison with Mark’s Longer Ending. The comprehensive reference to “we who believe (ἡμεῖς οἱ πιστεύοντες)” corresponds to that in Mark 16:17a, which claims σημεία δὲ τοῖς πιστεύοντες ταῦτα παρακολουθεῖσθαι. In Mark 16:17b–18, moreover, exorcism is the first of the five signs: εὑ̂ρήκατε λόγια ἕν τῷ ὅμοιῳ μου δαμασία ἐκβάλοντο (16:17b; cf. the exorcisms performed on Mary Magdalene, Mark 16:9b). Although Justin and the author of the LE used different terms for casting out demons, they both claim that performing exorcisms is a common function of believers.

v) Exorcisms Demonstrate that Christ is the Lord of Hosts (Dialogue 85)

In Dialogue 85 Justin again mentions exorcisms to support his christological exegesis when seeking to demonstrate that Psalm 24:7 refers to Christ.\textsuperscript{160} He

\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{158}] Justin’s citation of Matt 25:41: “Depart into exterior darkness which the Father has prepared for the devil and his angels.”
\item[\textsuperscript{159}] The apologist’s version of Luke 10:19: ἰδοὺ δὲ λέγω ἡμῖν τὴν ἐξορίζουσαν καταπλευσάς ἑνὸν δικαίων καὶ σκοτεινών καὶ σοκολοπεσῶν καὶ ἑνὸν πλῆθος σώματος τῶν ἔχοντων, Dial. 76.6a. The wording of this citation may be compared with that of the LXX: ἰδοὺ δὲ λέγω την τὴν ἐξορίζουσαν τοῖς παλικαρί δικαίων καὶ σκοτεινών καὶ ἑνὸν πλῆθος τῶν σώματος τῶν ἔχοντων, καὶ ἀπέκκειτο ὡς ἦν μὴ αὐτοῦ. Of the numerous distinctive aspects of Justin’s citation of Luke 10:19, the only variant reading widely attested elsewhere is the present tense of ἱδοὺ. Since it is rather common, it probably does not originate with Justin. Another interesting variant is the insertion of σοκολοπεσῶν (“poisonous insects,” “millipedes” or “sea animals”) in the list of things to be trampled.
\item[\textsuperscript{157}] Cf. the citations of Gen 49:1, Isa 9:6, 53:9, Dan 2:24 and 7:13 in Dial. 76.1–3, 9
\item[\textsuperscript{160}] Ps 24:7: “Lift up your gates, O you princes, and be lifted up, O eternal gates, that the king of glory may enter.” Following the numbering of the LXX, Justin refers to Psalm 23:7 in Dial. 85.1.
\end{itemize}
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contains that “the Psalm and the other passages of scripture made clear (δική λογία) and proclaimed (καταγγέλλω) him the Lord of hosts” (85.1). An additional proof for this interpretation of scripture mentions contemporary miracles. The apologist addresses Trypho directly:

Now (εἰς τὰ ἔννοια) you can, if you wish, be persuaded by the things that are happening in front of your eyes (ἐν τῇ ἐπεφανείᾳ). In (τῷ ὄνοματι) the name of this Son of God . . . every demon, once exorcised, is vanquished and subdued (τὴν δαμακον ἔχοντας ἑκράτειαν νικάται καὶ ἀπολέθρεται). 161

In this last example from Justin’s Dialogue, the success of contemporary believers in performing exorcisms offers an additional confirmation to Justin’s argument that Christ is the Lord of hosts to whom the Psalmist referred in Ps 24:7.

e) Summary of Justin on Miracles

The preceding treatment of six passages in Justin’s Second Apology and Dialogue with Trypho discussed the ways in which the apologists call upon miracles of his own day to support a number of different arguments. In the former work, exorcisms offer evidence that Christ came for the sake of believers and for the defeat of demons (Apol. II.6.5). In Dialogue 30—31 the casting out of evil spirits not only supports the contention that the Father granted “great power” to the earthly Jesus, but also warns unbelievers about the coming judgment at the parousia. In addition, Justin contends that contemporary miracles support the claim that Jesus was “blameless and without reproach” (Dial. 35.7—8). He also refers to miracles when asking Trypho to believe in Christ as the messiah (Dial. 39.6). In Dialogue 76 Justin points to exorcisms performed by “us” who believe, “in order to provide a contemporary example of Luke 10:19, according to which Jesus gave authority to the seventy disciples to trample on snakes, scorpions and, in Justin’s citation, poisonous insects (σκολοπάντες). Contemporary exorcisms lend credence to the Lukan prolepsis, which, in turn, supports the argument that prophecies by Moses, Isaiah and Daniel found fulfillment in the NT. Such a reference to believers in general as exorcists (ὑμεῖς οἱ πιστεύετεν, Dial. 76.6a) reflects a marked affinity with Mark 16:17a (τοῖς πιστεύσαντας) and, moreover, may have been influenced by it. At another point (Dial. 85.1—2) the apologist refers to miracles to support his christological exegesis of Psalm 24:7, which designates Christ as the Lord of hosts.

161 Dial. 85.1—2. Justin also contrasts the Christians’ proficiency in performing exorcisms with that of the Jews, some of whom are said to employ “the magical art of the gentiles, using fumigations and amulets” (85.3).

Believers as Miracle-Workers in the Writings of the Apologists

At the beginning of this discussion of Justin, it was noted that the apologist criticizes the miracles of “heretical” teachers like Simon and especially Menander. A question raised above concerns the ways in which this apologist points to the importance of miraculous phenomena in the mission and propaganda of the church. On the one hand, in the case of the “heretical” miracle-workers portrayed in Apol. I.26 and 56 and probably alluded to in Dialogue 7, as appeal to miraculous signs was, to use Harnack’s words, “ein sehr wichtige Mittel der Mission und Propaganda.” 162

On the other hand, in the case of the exorcists to whom the apologist refers in the Second Apology and Dialogue, Justin’s descriptions cannot substantiate the same claim. One only reads that exorcisms occurred on a somewhat regular basis. Justin never reveals whether such exorcisms took place in a missionary or evangelistic setting, within the church among those who were already believers, or, furthermore, whether he even knows such information. It is not even clear from Justin’s writings that the term ‘proto-orthodox’ would necessarily apply to this other group of miracle-workers.

Justin’s lack of details concerning the work of exorcists in his own day, however, does not cast doubt on the thesis articulated developed by Bernd Kollmann that miracles were a significant part of the ministry of the earthly Jesus and of numerous believers in the late first and second centuries. 163 Rather, Justin’s references to miracles for overtly apologetic purposes reflect a further, and perhaps novel, stage of development in Christian reflection on the miraculous. Once miracles become an established part of the Christian tradition, the deeds of exorcists and other wonder-workers can function not primarily as the subject of the discussion, but rather as a presupposition supporting the validity of other points of dogma.

2. Theophilus of Antioch

Theophilus of Antioch may well be the only other second-century apologist who mentions miracles of his own day for purposes somewhat analogous to those of Justin Martyr. Theophilus wrote his ad Autolycum (Θεοφίλου πρὸς Αὐτόλυκον) around 180 CE and died in 181 or 188 CE. At one point he refers to contemporary exorcisms to support his assessment of renowned writers like Homer and Hesiod.

On the negative side, every wicked thing stemming from these writers is due to the fact that they were “inspired by the demons (ὑπὸ δαμακον λέγοντας τὰ κακὰ) and spoke with fantasy and deception (παραγωγής καὶ...
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πλάναν ἐξαγαλλον).”164 On the positive side, Theophilus maintains that these same writers also bore witness to the truth. In support of these points he writes:

And this, indeed, clearly appears from the fact that even to this day the possessed are sometimes exercised in the name of the living and true God (ὡς καὶ ὁ δαίμονις ἐνέκοψα καὶ μέριμνα ἔχοντας κατακλούντας κατὰ τοῦ ὀνόματος τοῦ θεοῦ); and the deceiving spirits themselves confess that they are demons who also formerly inspired these writers (καὶ ἐπιγγέλλουσα σύνταξα ταῦτα σπαννοῦσαν, ἡ καὶ τότε οἶς ἑνοῦσαν ἐνεγράφασαν.) But sometimes some of them (that is, the ancient writers), weakened up in soul, and, that they might be for a witness to themselves and to all people, spoke things in harmony with (ἐν ἑνοῦσαν) the prophets regarding the monarchy and judgement of God and such like. (ad Autolycum 2.8.2—3)

As observed in Justin’s writings, Theophilus refers to contemporary exorcisms in support of a theological point. Unlike Justin, who was concerned primarily with Christology and the interpretation of the OT, Theophilus mentions exorcisms to support his critique of classical Greek writers and their sometime demonic source of inspiration. Moreover, Theophilus seems to refer to the exorcisms performed by ordinary Christians in that his explanation does not indicate that the exorcisms are the work of either apostolic figures or recognized ecclesiastical leaders.

3. Irenæus

The previous chapter discussed Irenæus’ citation of Mark 16:19, which does not reflect any interest in LE’s miracle traditions.165 In addition to Irenæus’ selective interest in the LE in Adv. Haer. iii.10.5, one finds throughout his writings a general tendency to avoid the miraculous or to discuss miracles only in relation to other points. For example, in Adv. Haer. iii. 11.5 Irenæus mentions the miracle of Jesus’ turning water into wine in John 2:1—11, but his primary interest lies in his argument against the Gnostics that the created order is good (cf. iii.16.7). Moreover, in his discussion of apostolic succession, Irenæus shows no interest in the apostles’ miracles but focuses only on the doctrine of the apostles and those who followed them (Adv. Haer. iii.2—5). His description of Paul preaching among the gentiles also omits reference to the miraculous.166 These tendencies of Irenæus’ treatise Against Heresies are also prominent in his other extant work, The Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching, which never refers to miracles performed by Jesus, his followers or those whom Irenæus deemed heretical.167

Were it not for one other section of Irenæus’ Against Heresies, one could generalize that, as is the case with his citation of the LE, Irenæus is never primarily concerned with the miracles of the disciples or contemporary believers.168 Toward the end of Book ii of Against Heresies, however, Irenæus criticizes “those... who belong to Simon and Carpocrat... who


165 As mentioned in chapter 4, Irenæus’ selective citations of Mark 1:1—3 and 16:19 in Adv. Haer. iii.10.5 reflect the specific purpose of demonstrating that Mark bears witness to important doctrines — namely, the fulfillment of prophecy and the ascension — mentioned elsewhere in the NT. Accordingly, Irenæus’ interest in the LE lies not in the miracle traditions which precede and follow 16:19, but rather in the mention of Jesus’ ascent to heaven, which accords with passages like Acts 1:9—12 and Eph 4:8. Strictly speaking, moreover, Irenæus is not typically classified among the apologists, but Robert Grant, writing in reference to the apologists Quadratus and to Irenæus, notes that in the second century “there was no sharp distinction between athiestthetic and apologetic writing, and apologists like Justin and Tertullian also wrote against heretics” (Greek Apologists of the Second Century (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1988) 36).

166 Irenæus, Adv. Haer., v.24.1—2. Likewise, in the context of combating a Gnostic understanding of human flesh, he maintains that Jesus did indeed heal blind eyes and a withered hand: “... and all who were healed generally did not change those parts of their bodies which had at their birth come forth from the womb, but simply obtained those new in a healthy condition?” (Adv. Haer. v.12.5). He emphasizes this point in order to defend his view in the resurrection of the body: “For what was [Jesus’] object in healing [different] portions of the flesh and restoring them to their original condition, if those parts which had been healed by him were not in a position to obtain salvation?” (Adv. Haer. v.12.6; cf. v.17.4). See also Adv. Haer. v.12.5 (Jesus performed healings in John 5 and 9 “that he might show forth the hand of God which in the beginning had molded man.”

167 Instead, Irenæus writes the following about the apostles: “Taught by him, his apostles were witnesses of all his good deeds and of his teachings, as well as his suffering, death, bodily resurrection, and ascension into heaven. After receiving the power of the Holy Spirit, they went to him in the whole world, carrying out the calling of the gentiles. Showing mankind the way of life, they turned them from idols, falsification and covetousness, cleansing their bodies and souls by the baptism of water and of the Holy Spirit — whom, having received from the Lord, they imparted to all who believed” (Demonstr. Apost. Pr., 4.). For a modern discussion, see Jack N. Sparks, St. Irenæus: The Preacher of the Apostles (PG: Brooklyn, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1987) 23). Moreover, in this work’s discussion of heretics (Demonstr. Apost. Pr. 98), there is also no mention of their miracles.

168 Due to an oversight in the translation by Kirsopp Lake, the above point could be called into question. Eusebius quotes a letter to Florinus in which Irenæus autobiographically relates that as a child he had heard the sermons of Polycarp of Smyrna (Hist. eccl. 5.20.4—8). In this letter Irenæus recalls how Polycarp “reported his interaction with John and the others who had seen the Lord, how he remembered their words, what were the things concerning the Lord which he had heard from them, and about Air miracles (τοιού ἐπιφανεῖς θαύματα) and about his teaching, and how Polycarp had received them from the eyewitnesses of the Word of Life, and reported all things in agreement with the scriptures” (Hist. eccl. 5.20.5—7). The emphasis added in the above translation highlight where I have modified the ET of the LCL. Lake translates “and about their miracles” (emphasizes mine), as if the latter read καὶ ταύτα ποιήσας ἐν εἰρήνη, and in doing so changes the reference from Jesus’ own miracles to those of the disciples. The singular possessive pronoun (αὐτοῦ) clearly refers to τῶν προσφάτων earlier in the sentence rather than to the disciples.
are said to perform miracles (ποτὲ... ύπροσ διακοπεῖ δικαίως)."169 Throughout Adv. Haer. ii.31.2—32.4 Irenaeus is not interested primarily in the miracles of contemporary believers, which he mentions only as a foil for the illegitimate miracle-workers against whom he writes, and to support the authenticity of Jesus' miracles. Furthermore, Irenaeus does not deny that heretics perform miracles but, instead, questions the character of their miracles and the motivation of those who perform them. In his view, such people do not act "either through the power of God or in connection with the truth," but rather wish to lead people astray:

For they can neither confine sight on the blind, nor bearing on the deaf, nor chase away all sorts of demons — [none, indeed,] except those that are sent into others by themselves, if they can even do so much as this. Nor can they furnish effective remedies for those external accidents which may occur.170

Irenaeus then contrasts the heretics' inability to perform miracles with the activity of the Jesus, the apostles, and the contemporary believers:

And so far are they [i.e., heretics] from being able to raise the dead, as the Lord raised them, and the apostles did by means of prayer, and has been frequently done in the brotherhood on account of some necessity of [in fratum or saeculum propter aliquid necessarium]... that they do not even believe this can possibly be done. (Adv. Haer. ii.31.3)

Irenaeus continues this contrast by observing that in the church "without fee or reward" people are "cured very frequently" (saepissime, Adv. Haer. ii.31.3)." Writing about a century and a half later, moreover, Eusebius of Caesarea borrowed selectively from Irenaeus' work and shifted its focus from responding to heretics to highlighting instead that "manifestations of the divine and marvellous power had remained in some churches" in the time of Irenaeus.171

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169 Adv. Haer. ii.31.2; cf. the pejorative descriptions of other "heretical" miracle-workers in Adv. Haer. i.12—21 (esp. 12) and 12.2.
170 Adv. Haer. ii.31.2; cf. ii.32.3. Cf. the discussion of miracle lists in chapter 4, where this and other statements by Irenaeus in Adv. Haer. ii.31.2—32.4 are also discussed.
171 Eusebius, Hist. eccl. 5.7.1. For example, Eusebius writes: "in the second book of this work he proves in the following words that manifestations of the divine and marvellous power had remained in some churches even as far as his time (συνέπισταν την βλέπων και παραδόθην ὑπόγεια ἐν ἐκείνης τινι ὑποκειμένην): But they fall so far short of raising the dead, as did his apostles through prayer and often among the brethren, because of the necessity (κατά ἐν τῇ διδακτίας οἰκολογίας ἐν τῇ διακοπείν) and at the request of the whole church in the neighborhood, with fasting and much supplication, the spirit of him who had died returned, and the man was given to the prayers of the saints (Hist. eccl. 5.7.1—2).

Eusebius' summary reproduces the beginning, but omits the end, of Irenaeus' sentence that "so far are they from being able to raise the dead... that they do not even believe this can possibly be done." Moreover, in two other lengthy excerpts from this part of the Adv. Haer.,

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A little later in Adv. Haer. ii.32, Irenaeus offers two proofs in response to the charge that the miracles of Jesus were not authentic: the predictions of the OT prophets and the miracles performed also by Jesus' disciples.172 With regard to the latter he writes,

Whereas, also, those who are in truth his disciples, receiving grace (gratia, ἡ χάρις) from him, do in his name perform [miracles],173 as to promote the welfare of others, according to the gift which each one has received from him. For some do certainly and truly drive out devils, so that (ἐστίν παραπλήγη, ὑπὸ τούτου παραπλήγη) those who have thus been cleansed from evil spirits frequently both believe [in Christ] and join themselves to the church (credent... et sint in Ecclesias; πιστεύετε... καὶ εἰσί... ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ).174

Mentioning other manifestations of foreknowledge, visions, prophetic expressions, healing and raising the dead, Irenaeus argues that the church uses these gifts "day by day (per singulos dies; ἐκκλησία τῷ ἴδιον) for the benefit of the gentiles," neither deceiving people "nor taking any reward." Of particular interest is Irenaeus' claim that the performing of miracles is routine. These miracles call unbelievers to conversion and result in their incorporation into the church (in Ecclesias; ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ).

As mentioned above, however, Irenaeus discusses miracles only in reaction to perceived threats from outsiders. These threats came in two forms — certain heretics performed miracles, and others doubted the authenticity of Jesus' miracles. Accordingly, it would be mistaken to conclude, with Bernd Kollmann, "Es geht also nicht um missionspropagandistische Wunderatzen an außerhalb der Gemeinde stehenden Personen, sondern um inniggemeindliche Krankenursorge."175 Certainly Adv. Haer. ii.31—32 is not missionary propaganda, but it does not follow that the only alternative, as Kollmann seems to infer, is that Irenaeus refers exclusively to the benefit received by Christians who are sick. On the contrary, Irenaeus indicates that some non-

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173 The word "miracles" appears in brackets because there is no object for the verb perficiunt (ἐπιτελοῦσιν). Mention of exorcism and other wonders later in the passage indicates that this is a reasonable inference.

174 Adv. Haer. ii.32.4. Gk: ὑπὸ τούτου παραπλήγη καὶ πιστεύετε ἑαυτῶν ταύταν αὐτοῖς καθαρισθέντας ἀνα τῶν πνευμάτων παραγίγας καὶ ἐσόμεθν ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ (Eusebius, Hist. eccl. 5.7.4).

175 B. Kollmann, Wandlungen, p. 348.
Believers became Christian and incorporated into the church after being exercised by believers (Adv. Haer. ii.32.4).

In light of this passage as a whole as compared with other points at which Irenaeus shows little or no interest in miracles, it stands to reason that this late second-century author could have written much more about miracles if he considered such information important to his treatise against heretics. For Irenaeus, however, maintaining the unity both of the two Testaments of the Bible and of the one God behind these Testaments receives priority. He mentions that Jesus and the apostles performed miracles, but such feats are not nearly as important as the fulfillment of OT prophecies or the unity of the apostles’ doctrine. Although he is primarily interested in responding to the challenges of heretical miracle-workers, Irenaeus’ statement in Adv. Haer. ii.31.2—32.4 nonetheless merits comparison with the LkE because of the relationship between miracle and persuasion and the references to contemporary believers who perform exercismus and other miracles.

4. Tertullian

Like Irenaeus, Tertullian (ca. 155—220 CE) also places primary emphasis on the miracles of believers in general rather than those of the first apostles or of recognized church leaders. For example, recognizing that many outsiders will not be persuaded about claims to the uniqueness of Christ, in Apol. 23 Tertullian poses the following text: in a public forum let the demons themselves try to deny “that Christ is coming to judge every human soul which has existed from the beginning...”176 In offering this challenge, the apologist reflects confidence in believers as successful exercismus and makes an additional inference concerning the demons’ acknowledgment of the coming judgment:

> why, all the authority and power we have over them is from our naming the name of Christ (de nominatio Christi), and recalling to their memory the woes which God threatens them at the hands of Christ the judge, and which they expect one day to overtake them. Fearing Christ in God, and God in Christ, they become subject to the servitude of God and Christ (pubsivitur servus dei et Christi). So as our touch and breathing (ita de contactu et exsessment nostro, overthrown by the thought and realization of those judgment fears, they leave at our command (noscro imperio eceunt) the bodies they have entered, unwilling, and distressed, and before your very eyes (velbis praesentibus) put to an open shame.177

176 References to the Latin text of Tertullian’s Apologeticus correspond to page and line numbers in John E. B. Mayor and Alexander Souter, O. Sequini. Florentis Tertulliani Apologeticus: The Text of Oehler Annotated, with an Introduction (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1917). For the above citation of Apol. 23, see I. E. B. Mayor and A. Souter, Tertulliani Apologeticos, p. 82, l. 11—13. English translations cited from Tertullian’s works are from vols. 3—4 of the AVF, which at certain points have been modified to conform more accurately to the LkE.

177 Apol. 23; J. E. B. Mayor and A. Souter, Tertulliani Apologeticos, p. 82, l. 21—28.

In light of this power claimed for the Lord’s servants (servus dei et Christi), Tertullian calls upon outsiders who have trusted in the lies of demons to give heed to these spirits when they tell the truth about Christ before being cast out.

Tertullian’s testimony concerning the miraculous is perhaps nowhere more trustworthy than when he complains about the activities of his opponents whom, not surprisingly, he deems as heretical. As R. MacMullen notes, in Prescription Against Heretics 41 Tertullian “mentions with irritation even female exercismos” and healers, who stand as evidence for the lack of order and the gradations of authority that should have been maintained among leaders in the heretical camps:

> The very women of these heretics, how wanton they are! For they dare to teach (qua exaudient docere), to dispute, to exact exercismos (exercizimos egere), to undertake cures (curationes repositiare) — it may be even to baptize.178

Despite Tertullian’s vehemence rejection of these heretics as bona fide believers,¹⁰⁴ his complaint in de Prescriptione Haereticon 41 points to the existence of — in this case, female — exercismos and healers, who, like other members of these non-orthodox sects, were viewed by Tertullian as evidence of a community “without seriousness, without authority, without discipline.”¹⁰⁵ Such a criticism could imply that Tertullian reserved such activities for men only and, in particular, those officially recognized by the established church.

In his other writings, however, Tertullian does not consistently reflect this criterion, and his criticisms in de Prescriptione Haereticon 41 seem to have been motivated by a wish to expose the disorder of heretical communities rather than to offer a comprehensive position on the appropriate modus operandi of approved miracle-workers. For example, in his treatise On the Testimony of the Soul, Tertullian makes the contrasting claim that it is only Christians who exercise demons:

> But when we say that there are demons — as though, in the simple fact that we alone expel them from their bodies (poli de corpore exignio), we did not also prove their existence — yet some disciple of Carpophorus began to cut the lip.¹⁸¹

¹⁰⁴ MacMullen, Christianizing the Roman Empire, p. 133 n. 7; cf. p. 27 and Tert., de Prascr., 41.5, l. 14—16. The Latin text cited for de Prescriptione Haereticorum was edited by R. F. Redford, Tertullian, Traité de la Prescription contre les Hérétiques (SC 46; Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1957).

¹⁰⁵ Tert., de Prescriptione Haereticorum 1.1—2, 6, 15—19, 37, etc.

¹⁰⁶ Lat.: sive graeitum, sive soothing, sive discipulam (de Prascr. 41.1. I. 5—6). A

¹⁰⁷ Tert., de Testimonial Anima 3.1; p. 178, l. 1—3. The Latin text cited for Tertullian’s de Test. An. was edited by R. Williams and appears in Quatiri Septimi Florentis Tertulliani Opera (2 Vols.; CCSL 1)—2; Turin: Brepols, 1954) 1.175—183. Pages and line numbers cited refer to this edition.
Offered as supporting evidence for the larger argument for the existence of one God and regarding all other deities as demons (cf. de Test. An. 2—4), this statement claims in the simplest possible terms that exorcism is an activity performed by certain Christians without any reference to these believers as church leaders or officials.  

The contrasting statements of Tertullian in de Praescriptione Haereticorum 41 and de Test. An. 3.1 may be better understood in light of the apologist's writing Against Marcion, in which the apologist discusses Paul's teaching on spiritual gifts in 1 Cor 12:8—11. Tertullian argues that such gifts of the Spirit continue to distinguish true believers from those associated with Marcion.  

In support of this argument he states that some of the faithful known to him possess gifts of healing and the performing of miracles (alii donum curatum, alii virtutum: hic ertit valentiae spiritus). It is thus plausible that, whereas Tertullian expressed ire at the disorder evidenced by the activities of female exorcists and healers (de Praescriptione Haereticorum 41), he could conveniently overlook the implications of this criticism when making claims about the distinctiveness of Christian wonder-workers (de Test. An. 3.1), and even when attacking a different heretical group like the Marcionites (Adv. Marc. 5.8.4—11).

Similar portrayals of miracles as the work of believers in general appear in two of Tertullian's apologetic writings, the Apology and his letter To Scapula. In Apology 37 Tertullian seeks to demonstrate the foolishness of considering Christians as "enemies of the human race." In response he points to the good they do for all people in casting out demons:  

Moreover, who would deliver you from these secret foes, ever busy both destroying your souls and making your health? [Who would save you,] I mean, from the attacks of those demons which we drive out (a daemonium inquirunt quae de nobis ... dopellimus) without reward or without price? This alone would be revenge for us, that an empty tenement would be left for possession by unclean spirits.

182 Cf. other references to exorcism in Tertullian's writings, e.g., de Spectaculis 26, de Anima 57, de Idolatria 11, de Corona 17, as well as other passages discussed below.


184 Citing, and then interpreting, 1 Cor 12:9—10 in connection with Isa 11:2 (πνευμα δόξης καὶ διδασκαλίας, LXX): "to another a gift of healing and to another the working of miracles," that is, "the spirit of might." (Text., Adv. Marc. v.8.8; Quinti Sabinii Florentis Tertulliani Opera, 1.687, l. 16—17). See the discussion above of Paul's comments on miracles in 1 Cor 12:9—10.


His argument in Apology 37 assumes the work of believers in general as exorcists.  

Likewise, in his letter to the Roman proconsul Scapula, Tertullian elucidates why Christians simply pray for the emperor rather than offer sacrifices:  

For God, creator of the universe, has no need of colors or of blood. These things are the food of demons (daemoniorum pabula sunt). But we not only reject demons: we overcome them and daily hold them up to contempt (resuscitatis et cotidie traducimus); we exorcise them from people, as has been observed by multitudes (et de hominibus expellimus, sic ut plurimum nunc esto). So all the more we pray for the imperial welfare, as those who seek it at the hands of him who is able to bestow it.  

Reflecting once again an assumed connection between pagan sacrifice and demons (cf. de Spectaculis 2—3), Tertullian explains that Christians cast demons out rather than participate in rites inspired by them. In so doing, he hopes that the proconsul of Carthage will agree that prayer for the emperor constitutes a sufficient expression of loyalty to Rome. Moreover, in another passage addressed to Scapula, the apologist maintains the benevolence of Christians, who do not deserve the charges often brought against them in court:  

The cleric (notarius) of one of them, who was likewise to be thrown down upon the ground by a demon, was set free from his affliction (een a daemon praecipitatur liberatur eas); as was also the relative of another, and the little boy of a third. How many men of rank — to say nothing of common people — have been delivered from devils, and healed of diseases (et quandum non est — de vulgaribus enim non dicimus — aut a daemonis et valetudinibus remeditatur?) Even Severus himself, the father of Antoninus, was graciously mindful of the Christians; for he sought out the Christian Proculius ... and, in gratitude for his having once cured him by exorcising (per daemon aliquando curavit), he kept him in his palace until the day of his death. Antoninus, too, ... was intimately acquainted with this man.  

Accordingly, the innocence of Christians in the face of the frivolous charges brought against them is demonstrated by the benevolent acts of believers, who cast out demons and perform healings.  

In addition to these passages from Tertullian's apologetic writings, his depiction of Christians as healers of scorpion stings follows in a similar vein.  

(quisdam signis et miraculis et oraculis fidel divinitatis operatur.) Cf. B. Kollmann, Wunderstätter, p. 573.

186 Text., ad Scapulam 2.80—9; p. 1128, ll. 34—41. The Latin text cited for Tertullian's ad Scapulum was edited by D. Dekkers and appears in Quinti Sabinii Florentis Tertulliani Opera, 2.1115—1132.

187 ad Scap. 4.5; Quinti Sabinii Florentis Tertulliani Opera, 2.1150—1131, ll. 23—32.

188 Cf. B. Kollmann, Wunderstächer, pp. 319 n. 8, 374 n. 39.
His treatise Scorpice, or "antidote for the scorpion’s sting," consists of "a defense of martyrdom against the Gnostics, who are compared to scorpions," and their potentially harmful stings aimed to harm the faithful. Before developing the idea that scorpion stings are symbolic of the dangers of gnostic teaching, Tertullian calls attention to the physical harm caused by these creatures and the ways in which Christians heal themselves and others. In these introductory remarks, he first mentions natural remedies, the use of magic, the art of healing and other helps:

Among cures (remedias), certain substances supplied by nature (naturalia) have very great efficacy; magic also puts on some bandage; dice of healing counteracts with lemon and cup. For sores, making haste, take also beforehand a protecting draught; but sexual intercourse drains it off, and they are dry again. Turning specifically to remedies Christians use, he refers to the apostle Paul’s encounter with a viper in Acts 28:1—6:

We have faith for a defense, if we are not smitten with distrust itself also, in immediately making the sign [of the cross] and adoring... Finally, we often aid in this way even the heathen (hos demum modo etiam e omni usque subveniunt), since we have been endowed by God with that power which the apostle first used (dixit a deo ea potestatem quam apostolus dedicavit) when he despoiled the viper’s bite.

Noteworthy here is that the accidental experience of Paul in Acts 28 is now considered a normative example of the power (ea potestatem) that Christians may expect. Although the believers Tertullian describes do not actively seek encounters with live scorpions, it is significant that, as in the LE, these people are said to be "endowed with (dixit)" the same power that Paul used when shaking off the viper that attacked him. Moreover, these Christians’ claim of immunity to scorpion stings goes beyond what is predicated of Paul in Acts: they heal not only themselves but also outsiders who have been stung.

In one other passage Tertullian broadens the scope of people who would normally be considered miracle-workers to include those who pray for miracles to take place. Toward the end of his writing On Prayer, Tertullian expresses confidence that, because of Christ’s decree, prayer itself will also work miracles:

It is only prayer (sola... oratio) that vanquishes (vincit) God. But Christ has willed that [prayer] be operative for no evil; he has conferred on it all virtue for the cause of good. And so it knows nothing save how to call the souls of the departed from the very path of death, to transform the weak, to restore the sick (satis remedium), to purge the poisoned (remendit et emilibruit), to open prison doors, to loose the bonds of the innocent.

Such a statement, which illustrates the relative efficacy of Christian prayer (de Orat. 29.2—3) as compared with what was possible in Old Testament times (29.1), expects that any praying believer can play a role, for example, in raising the dead, healing the sick or exorcising demons.

Thus Tertullian’s view of the relation of mission and miracle generally compares with that of the LE and the other apologists discussed above. On the one hand, Tertullian expresses irritation at the activities of women who performed healings and exorcisms in certain heretical circles (de Prescriptione Haereticorum 41). He maintains elsewhere that performing miracles constitutes a distinguishing mark of orthodox believers (de Test. An. 5.1, 4—11; cf. Scorpice 1.2—4s, de Orat. 29.2). The latter sentiment dominates Tertullian’s apologetic references to miracles in that wonders performed by believers both explain why Christians pray for the emperor instead of offering sacrifices (ad Scapulam 2.8—9), and defend the good will of Christians toward outsiders (Apology 37, ad Scapulam 4.5). In all of these passages, Tertullian assumes that his appeals to the miracles of ordinary believers do not require additional explanation or defense. Especially in this respect, Tertullian’s writings, like those of Justin and Irenaeus, are similar to the LE in that these miracles are not highlighted in connection with the authority of a single individual, as in the NT book of Acts, most of Paul’s writings and most parts of the apocryphal acts.

5. Origen and Celsus

This section focuses on Origen’s responses to the renowned pagan critic Celsus in the Contra Celsum. Recent studies of this text by Eugene Gallagher and Harold Remus have focused respectively on how to characterize the significance of Jesus as a miracle-worker and on the common terminology and assumptions concerning the legitimating criteria for miracles held by both Celsus and Origen. Passages mentioning the disciples or contemporary

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189 J. Quasten, Patrology, 2.281; cf. Tertullian’s treatises To the Martyrs (ad Martyras) and Concerning Flight in Persecution (ad Fugam in Persecutione) esp. 6.
190 Text., Scorpice 1.2—3a; p. 1096, II. 14—17. Note the implicit rejection of enagrotai here. The Latin text cited for Tertullian’s Scorpice was edited by A. Reifferscheid and G. Wisowa, and appears in Quiniti Sceptini Florenti Tertulliani Opera, 2.1097—1097.
191 Scorpice 1.3b—4a; Quiniti Sceptini Florenti Tertulliani Opera, 2.1099, II. 17—19, 1—2.
192 Lat.: cern (l. 17), referring to orato (l. 16). The Latin text cited for Tertullian’s de Oratone was edited by G. F. Dickeaux and appears in Quinti Sceptini Florenti Tertulliani Opera, 1.255—274.
193 Text., de Orat. 29.2; Quinti Sceptini Florenti Tertulliani Opera, 1.274, II. 16—21.
believers as performers of wonders constitute a small but related part of a larger debate concerning the identity and miracles of Jesus. Three passages of the Contra Celsum mention believers, who use "histories" about Jesus when performing exorcisms and healings. At three other points Origen calls attention to the importance of both the disciples' and later Christians' miracles in persuading others to convert to the new faith.

a) Believers' Using "Histories" about Jesus in Performing Exorcisms and Healings: Contra Celsum 1.6, 7.67 and 3.24

If, as seems reasonable, one grants any credence to Origen's testimony concerning the beginning of Celsum's writing,197 it is relevant to this inquiry that an early charge arises against "Christians [who] get the power which they seem to possess (δοκεῖν ισχύς) by pronouncing the names of certain demons."198 It is probable that Origen anticipates this complaint in CC 1.2 when alluding to the apostle Paul's reference to "a demonstration of the Spirit and of power" (1 Cor 2:4). He interprets "Spirit" in terms of prophecies — especially those about Christ — and "power" as "the prodigious miracles which may be proved to have happened (τὰς τερατουσ ἀναμείκτας δὲ κατασκευασμένα γεγονότα, CC 1.2)." Concerning these miracles, Origen also adds that "the traces of them"199 still remain among those who live according to the will of the Logos."199 In CC 1.6 Origen’s response to the above mentioned charge is that believers do indeed receive power

by the name of Jesus with the recital of the histories about him (μετὰ τοῦ διαγγέλλον 
 
τῶν τερατικῶν ὡς ἰσχύος), for when these are pronounced they have often (πολλάκις) 
 
made demons to be driven out of people (τερατικὰς ἀναμείκτας χαράσσεις), and 
 
especially when those who utter them speak with real sincerity and genuine belief. 

(CC 1.6)

According to Origen's explanation, people perform exorcisms by means of reading the holy books, a practice which, to an outsider, may well have looked a lot like the sort of incantations about which Celsus complained.199 Accordingly, on this point Celsum and Origen offer complementary descriptions of the exorcisms Christians perform but differ in their interpretations of the phenomenon.

At another point Origen again mentions the use of the scriptures in exorcisms when responding to what he perceives as Celsum's charge that Christians worship demons:

So far, indeed, are we from serving demons that by prayers and formulas from the holy scriptures we even drive them out of human souls and from places where they have established themselves, and sometimes even from animals (Ζώα). For frequently (πολλάκις) the demons effect some device for the injury of these as well. (CC 7.67)

Although Origen offers a copious citation of Celsum's charge at the beginning of CC 7.67, he nonetheless seems to misunderstand it. Celsum himself maintains that it is absurd to equate pagan religious practices with the worship of demons. Even if Origen is guilty of having changed the subject — whether mistakenly or deliberately — his response is relevant to this inquiry. For Origen, the exorcism "we perform on both people and animals constitute an activity with which demon worship would be incompatible. In offering such a defense, he seems to describe the same approach to performing exorcisms that required defense in CC 1.6.

In addition, at the beginning of CC 3.24 Origen presents a more nuanced, but similar, picture of miracles. Here Celsum calls attention to "a great multitude of people," who claim that they have seen "Asclepius himself healing people and doing good and predicting the future." The point at issue


198 CC 1.6, cf. 1.27, 3.44, 5.12. Such practices of contemporary believers are then compared with Jesus, who also "performed miracles by magic" (γοητεύσεως διερρέουσας καὶ ἐκεῖθεν ἐρμηνεύσεως, CC 1.6, II, 17–18). A similar charge concerning modern Christians appears in 6.40–41, in which Origen notes Celsum's claim to have "seen among certain elders who were of our opinion books containing barbarian names of demons and magical formulas" (CC 6.40). Note also Celsum's allegation that, "if one pronounces their name in a barbarian tongue, they will have power; but if in Greek or Latin, they are no longer effective" (CC 8.37).

199 Cf.: ἐκ τῶν αὐτῶν (CC 1.2, II, 20–21), referring to τὰς τερατουσ ἀναμείκτας (I, 19).
is whether Christians— and not also others associated with, for example, the worship of Asclepius—possess the exclusive right to make truth claims based upon experiences of healing. Origen responds that “we accept the testimony of the disciples, who both saw the wonders of Jesus and show clearly their good conscience, since we see their unqualified goodness…” Origen later calls attention to an unbridled number of Greeks and barbarians who believe in Jesus. Some (τύποι) display signs (την τιμησεως) of having received some miraculous power because of this faith, in those they hasten; upon those who need healing they use no other invocation than that of the supreme God and of the name of Jesus, together with the history about him (σωτηρ Χριστός). By them we also have seen many delivere[d] from serious ailments, and from mental distraction and madness, and countless other [diseases], which neither human beings nor demons had cured. (CC 3.24; cf. 7.5—10).

Viewed as a whole, these three responses of Origen in CC 1.16, 7.67 and 3.24 include the same emphases and noteworthy omission discussed above in Justin Martyr and Irenaeus. Although the miracles of Jesus are valued, the apostles are significant primarily for their “good conscience (τον ευγνωμον την ευσεβειαν) and “goodness (τον δεχωντον αμαρτωλον),” qualities that guarantee the reliability of their testimony to Jesus’ wonders, but do not attest to their own ability to perform miracles. Origen’s second response in CC 3.24 calls attention to certain converts, who, in turn, have performed healings, exorcisms and other miracles. Of particular interest to the interpretation of Mark 16:17 is Origen’s statement that at least some (τυποι) recent converts—who are not described as recognizable apostolic figures or church leaders—work miracles.

b) Miracles and Persuasion: Contra Celsum 1.38, 1.46 and 7.3

In three or other three passages of the Contra Celsum Origen highlights the persuasive power of miracles in converting outsiders. The first two texts refer to the disciples’ miracles (CC 1.38, 1.46), and a third mentions contemporary exorcisms (7.3).

Compared with CC 3.24, somewhat different emphases with regard to the miraculous come to the forefront in 1.38 and 1.46. First, in responding to the charge that Jesus was a magician rather than a miracle-worker, Origen highlights the importance of miracles to the disciples’ own ministry (1.38). For Origen, the affirmation that the disciples performed genuine miracles rather than magical tricks lends support to the claim that Jesus himself had worked miracles and taught them the same when persuading others:

Believers as Miracle-Workers in the Writings of the Apologists

Did the disciples persuade their hearers because they had been taught to do miracles in this way, or did they not do any miracles? It is quite irrational (προς θεου απελευθερωντα) to maintain that they did no miracles at all, but that, although they had believed without any adequate reasons comparable to the dialectical wisdom of the Greeks, they devoted themselves to teaching a new doctrine to any whom they might visit. (CC 1.38)

Such a response reflects an intriguing view of the miraculous: because Jesus’ first followers obviously did not possess “the dialectical wisdom of the Greeks,” they must therefore have persuaded others by means of miracles.

Second, in CC 1.46 Origen defends the accuracy of the Gospel’s reports about Jesus’ baptism with regard to the descent of the Spirit like a dove and the voice from heaven. In the course of his argument Origen again refers to the disciples’ miracles. As in CC 3.24, Origen refers first to the miracles of Jesus: “But I think that the miracles (τα.. παρασκευασματα) performed by Jesus are a sign (της ευγνωμον) that the Holy Spirit was seen in the form of a dove…” (1.46). Origen then calls attention to the first apostles’ miracles:

And I will not mention these only, but also, as is reasonable, those which were done by Jesus’ apostles. For without miracles and wonders they would have neither persuaded (προς θεου δεξαμενων) nor persuaded (παρασκευασματα) those who heard new doctrines and new teachings to leave their traditional religion and accept the apostles’ teachings at the risk of their lives. (CC 1.46)

Continuing this last statement, Origen refers also to miracles of his own time:

Traces of that Holy Spirit (της ευγνωμον παρασκευασματ), who appeared in the form of a dove, are still preserved (παρασκευασματ) among Christians when they chase away demons, perform many cures and perceive certain things about the future according to the will of the Logos.

In contrast with CC 3.24, where Origen ignores the apostles’ miracles, the wonders they are said to have performed in 1.46 support the validity of Jesus’ own miracles, which, in turn, lend credibility to the NT evangelists’ depictions of Jesus’ baptism.

As noted elsewhere in the Contra Celsum, Origen also maintains in CC 1.46 that “traces (της ευγνωμον)” of the same Holy Spirit working in the present...

201. Gk: κατασκευασματα της ευγνωμον παρασκευασματ. That is, Jesus performed (ταις) miracles, rather than, as Celsum alleged, exhibiting the power of an Egyptian magician.
202. CC 1.46; cf. Mark 1:5—11 par. and CC 1.41—47, esp. 1.41.
203. The present participles έως της διασκεδαστευων… ἐπι σκέπαστε… δοκουν are used in conjunction with the present verb ολοκληρωω.
204. CC 1.46, ll. 15—16. In this same section Origen mentions that “many have come to Christianity as it were in spite of themselves, some spirit having turned their mind from hate to the gospel of Jesus” (κατακεραυνηδους δεινοντος της ψυχης) if they were to become widely known (CC 1.46, ll. 23—24). C. B. Kollmann, Wundtliche, p. 375.

201 Gk.: the masculine pronoun τοιοντας (l. 20), referring to τυποι (l. 15).
lead support to his assertions concerning the apostles’ wonders (cf. CC 1.2, 1.46, 2.8, 7.8). Of interest here is Origen’s argument that the apostles’ miracles, in addition to those of Jesus and contemporary believers, support the Gospels’ accounts of Jesus’ baptism (CC 1.46). Also of relevance is the statement that “without miracles and wonders they would not have persuaded those who heard” their preaching. As in CC 1.38, Origen recognizes the compelling force of wonders in relation to the message of the apostles, and hopes that his own appeal to the miraculous will have a similar effect with regard to defending the NT evangelists’ portrayals of the dove and the Spirit at the baptism of Jesus. In making such an explicit connection between miracle and persuasion, Origen reflects an understanding of mission like that of Mark 16:15—20.

Third, Origen elsewhere draws attention to contemporary exorcisms when criticizing the Pythagorean priestess whom Celsum had mentioned. For Origen, her character must be like that of the race of demons, which not a few Christians drive out (οὐς ἀληθεύει τινά ἐκ τῶν αὐτῶν ἀπελήφθη) of those who suffer (from them), without any curious magical art or sorcerer’s device, but with prayer alone and very simple adjurations and formulas such as a rather simple person could use (ὅταν ἐν νόμῳ προσέθη ἐκεῖνος ἄνθρωπος). (CC 1.46, ed. 7.3)

Continuing the above statement, Origen also acknowledges the importance of miracles to the uneducated, who are not impressed with rational arguments:

For generally speaking it is uneducated people who do this kind of work (ὅσον ἀληθεύει τοῦ τούτου κατὰ πράξεις) when the power of the word of Christ shows the weakness and weakness of the demons. For it is not necessary to have someone who is wise and competent in the rational proofs of the faith, in order that they should be defeated and yield to expulsion from the soul and the body of a person. (CC 7.4)

Thus once again Origen recognizes the importance of miracles for persuading outsiders. Although his primary concern in CC 7.4 is discrediting the Pythagorean priestess, he calls attention both to the many believers, who perform exorcisms, and to the διότα, who, by means of such a demonstration of Christ’s power, persuade others to abandon the deceitful ways of demons. This last passage highlighting contemporary exorcists may thus be understood in light of CC 1.38 and 1.46, in which Origen calls attention to the persuasive power of the first apostles’ miracles.

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206 Note the genitive absolute παρά τῆς ... ἀρνίου, which occurs in conjunction with the present verb προκύπτων.
E. Conclusion: Miracle and Mission in Christian Writings of the First Three Centuries

This chapter has discussed the connection between miracles and mission in the New Testament, as well as in various apocryphal acts of the apostles and in writings of the second- and third-century apologists, in order to place the expectations of Mark 16:15—20 in relation to analogous formulations in these Christian writings. With regard to the role of the miraculous in converting outsiders, this motif receives prominence in many, but not all, of the apocryphal acts, and finds an analogy, though somewhat less emphasized, in the NT book of Acts. Because the expectation of miracles in a missionary setting is prominent in numerous writings both earlier and much later than the LE, it cannot be used as a definitive criterion for ascertaining the date of this passage.

Perhaps the most distinctive feature of the LE's statements related to miracles is the expectation that "those who believe" (16:17a) will perform the miraculous signs listed in Mark 16:17b—18. With the exception of John 14:12, miracles are never discussed analogously in the NT, whose authors are usually interested in the wonders performed by the twelve disciples or the apostle Paul. As noted above, Paul's statement about certain Corinthian believers performing healings and other miracles in 1 Cor 12:9—10 constitutes a rare, early exception to this pattern and, moreover, stands in tension with Paul's other arguments concerning his own authority as a divinely-appointed wonder-worker.

Furthermore, in the apocryphal acts, which highlight the miracles of apostolic figures like John and Peter, only certain exceptional passages portray someone other than an apostle performing a miracle (Acts of John 24, 46—47, 81—82, Acts of Peter 25, Acts of Thomas 34). In each of these unusual instances, the role of the apostle is nonetheless prominent in giving instructions to the person who performs the miracle, which in these five passages involves the raising of a dead person.

In numerous parts of the writings of five second- and third-century Christian apologists, however, a markedly different picture comes into focus. These writers typically do not emphasize the miracles of the twelve apostles. Moreover, when they do occasionally discuss the miraculous, they tend instead to relate feats performed by contemporary believers rather than by the apostles. Therefore, the otherwise surprising expectation of Mark 16:17a that believers in general will perform miracles corresponds most closely to one saying in the Fourth Gospel (John 14:12) and numerous writings of these Christian apologists, who maintain that such power has, in fact, been given to ordinary believers. As a result, the analysis offered in this chapter complements the argument offered heretofore in this study: the second-century