

GUIDED BY THE SPIRIT: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE MINISTRY OF
REVEREND SEEN-OK AHN WITH PAUL'S MISSION IN LIGHT OF ACTS 16:6-15

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DISCLAIMER

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ABSTRACT

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Guided by the Spirit: A Comparative Study of the Ministry of Reverend Seen-Ok Ahn with Paul's Mission In Light of Acts 16:6-15.

Trevor Grizzle, Ph.D.

Acts 16:6-15 records Paul's second missional journey begins with the divine guidance. By obeying the Spirit, Paul went to Macedonia where he never planned to go to preach the Gospel. Back then, a man was led by the Spirit in an unanticipated way. About two thousand years later, a similar event happened to a woman, Rev. Seen-Ok Ahn. By the guidance of the Spirit, Ahn went in a direction she had not previously planned, and expanded the Kingdom of God in South Korea. Thus, how can contemporary Christians understand the divine guidance of Spirit based on these two experiences?

The purpose of this thesis is to compare the divine guidance of Ahn with Paul's Spirit-guided mission and ministry in light of Acts 16:6-15. Chapter 1 provided an introduction and background on Acts. Chapter 2 exegeted Acts 16:6-10 in the light of "divine guidance of the Holy Spirit." Chapter 3 did exegetical word studies on Acts 16:11-15, focusing on the meeting of Paul and Lydia and the influence of the mission led by the Holy Spirit. Chapter 4 reviewed the life and ministry of Ahn and found similarities and effectiveness between Paul's second missional journey and Ahn's ministry being led by the Spirit.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to each of my family members—Hyun Ki Kim, Hye Kyong Nam, A Young Kim, and Do Hee Kim—who encourage me with sincere prayers and strengthen me emotionally and spiritually to stand firm in Christ. Their dedication, absolute love, and sacrifice have made me who I am today.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background and Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this thesis is to explain the divine guidance of Paul's mission, by comparing Reverend Seen-Ok Ahn's ministry with it in light of Acts 16:6-15. After encountering the risen Jesus in Acts 9:3-7, Paul begins his missional journeys to preach the Gospel of Jesus.¹ If one looks at Paul's first, second, and third missional journeys, one discovers that he was always led by the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:2-4; 16:6-7; 20:22-23). However, Paul's second missional journey in particular was guided by the Holy Spirit in a completely different way from the first and third journeys. He starts the second journey with Timothy and Silas instead of Barnabas, who was his partner in the first journey. Paul and his companions went to Derbe and then to Lystra (Acts 16:1). Next, Paul originally planned to go to Asia. Yet, the Spirit did not allow him to do so (16:6). Then, they reached Mysia and tried to go to Bithynia. However, again, the Spirit of Jesus blocked them (16:7). Eventually, they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas (16:8). During the night, God gave Paul a vision, and called him to Macedonia (16:9-10). In Macedonia, Paul met Lydia from Thyatira; and, God opened her heart to hear the Gospel (16:14).

¹Unless otherwise indicated all English Bible references in this thesis are to the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2010).

The meeting between Paul and Lydia led to the explosive expansion of the Kingdom of God in Europe because Paul's Spirit-led mission into Europe resulted in the establishment of the Philippian church. Karen J. Torjesen points out that Lydia would establish the church in Philippi and become a primary leader.² Ben Witherington III adds that even Lydia's house became the "embryonic church" in Philippi (Acts 16:40).³ It is noteworthy that this early church contained the Philippian jailer and his household upon their conversion (Acts 16:26-34). The outcome of Paul's Spirit-led mission into Europe, establishing the Philippian church and the life and ministry of Lydia, will be covered in more detail in chapter 3. Lydia and Seen-Ok Ahn have three parallels: they were both immigrants, women, and in leadership. These parallels will also be covered in more depth in chapter 4.

Paul's second missionary journey and fruits are the result of his obedience to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. In terms of his obedience and guidance by the Holy Spirit, Paul is in a long line of biblical characters (e.g., Enoch, Moses, Joshua, Samuel, King David, the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, Jesus, and the disciples of Jesus). Many other leaders (e.g., Martin Luther, John Knox, John Wesley, George Whitefield, Jonathan Edwards, Charles H. Spurgeon, Oral Roberts, Kenneth E. Hagin, and David Yonggi Choi) have also experienced guidance by the Spirit. This thesis centers upon one such modern leader — Seen-Ok Ahn — a female pastor in South Korea who experienced

²Karen J. Torjesen, *When Women Were Priests: Women's Leadership in the Early Church and the Scandal of their Subordination in the Rise of Christianity* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1993), 5.

³Ben Witherington III, *Women in the Earliest Churches* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 149.

divine guidance similar to Paul. Yeol Soo Eim explains that although Seen-Ok Ahn planned to dedicate her life to educating young people as a laywoman, she came to the United States to be trained as a full time minister.⁴ According to Eim, God showed a vision to her, and guided her to meet Dr. Rolf. K McPherson, who was the President of the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel in 1969, and the son of Aimee Semple McPherson, who founded the Foursquare Church in 1923. Seen-Ok Ahn connected with the Foursquare Church in 1969, and was ordained as a Foursquare pastor in 1970. This event eventually brought the International Foursquare Church to South Korea for the first time.⁵

Divine intervention, leading through dreams and visions, and raising leaders are common features of the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the ministry of Ahn and Paul. God did not lead Paul where he wanted to go, but called him to Macedonia through dreams and visions. Through his obedience, he met Lydia. And, this had a great influence on European missions. Likewise, the Holy Spirit did not lead Ahn to the position she had planned, but called her to be a full-time minister in Korea, through dreams and visions. Ahn and Aimee Semple Mcpherson, who is the founder of the Foursquare Church, have this in common: they are both women who were called to full-time ministry. These similarities will be discussed further in chapter 4. This unplanned connection had a great

⁴Yeol Soo Eim, “Pentecostalism and Public School: A Case Study of Rev. Dr. Seen-Ok Ahn,” *The Spirit & Church* 1, no.1 (1999): 8-10.

⁵Yeol Soo Eim, “Ahn, Seen Ok (Kim),” *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movement*, ed. Stanley M. Burgess and Ed M. Van der Maas (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 309-10.

influence on Korean churches and schools. The next part will explain the purpose and importance of this thesis.

Purpose

The primary purpose of this thesis is to reveal the divine guidance in Paul's and Seen-Ok Ahn's ministry. In Proverbs 19:21, the author declares that the purpose of the Lord will only be established among the plans made by humanity. According to Larry Hart, history is governed by God. He is in control of history, and proceeds with specific history through His "unique method through specific people."⁶ God used Paul as His tool to preach the Gospel, and led him to a place that he had not planned. Paul had no plan to go to Europe, but was led there by the Spirit. A great ministry was accomplished because of the Spirit's guidance and Paul's obedience. Ahn's ministry followed a similar path. Specifically in South Korea, God changed the direction of Ahn's life, and used her as His servant to preach the Gospel. Although Paul and Ahn each had their own plans, the Lord finally led them to fulfill His plan. Therefore, this research will show that divine guidance is not just limited to the time of Paul or a specific biblical period, but also occurs even in the present time.

Another purpose of this thesis is to explain to future generations how God accomplished a unique historical event through Ahn's obedience and faith, by discovering how God worked through His female servant as He did through Paul in Acts 16:6-15. In Judges 2:8-15, one can see what happened to the Israelites after Joshua died.

⁶Larry Hart, *Truth Aflame: Theology for the Church in Renewal*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 46, 162.

Right after the people of Israel buried Joshua, the whole generation began to forget the LORD and what He had done for Israel. According to George Santayana, there is no “future for a person or nation that has forgotten their history.”⁷ This research will remind the future generations of the greatness of the Sovereign LORD who works beyond humanity’s effort or understanding. These two purposes of the thesis lead to its specific objectives and significance.

Objectives and Significance

Through this study, readers will find out a certain form of ministry that is led by the Holy Spirit. The importance of Spirit-led ministry, rather than a ministry that is done by only human effort will be examined. Christians will especially be able to understand the effectiveness of God’s divine guidance beyond humanity’s plan, and see what a Spirit-filled ministry looks like, by comparing Ahn’s ministry with Paul’s second missional journey. In addition, as a result of this comparison, this thesis will give an example to the academic community and believers of how the guidance of the Holy Spirit applies to modern figures. Another benefit of the findings of this thesis is to also present the ministry of Ahn. This research provides readers with an understanding of the divine guidance of the Spirit in a modern figure. Next, the defining of primary terms used in this thesis will produce further understanding of the thesis.

⁷George Santayana, *The Life of Reason or the Phases of Human Progress*, vol. 7, *Reason in Society*, ed. Marianne S. Wokeck and Martin A. Coleman (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2013), 172.

Definition of Terms

In Acts 16:6-15, it is important to define the term “Holy Spirit,” in order to understand divine guidance. Thomas R. W. Longstaff defines the term “spirit” as “wind, moving air, breathing,” and by extension, “life-giving elements,” from the Hebrew (רוּחַ) and Greek (πνεῦμα). The term “holy” refers to the “nature and function of the Spirit.” When the adjective “holy” is added to the term “spirit,” the reference is to the divine Spirit, as “the Spirit of God.” Longstaff explains that in the Old Testament specifically, spirit is described in three ways. First of all, the Holy Spirit is identified as “the agent of creation (Gen 1:2; Ps 33:6; Ezek 37:1-10).” Next, the Holy Spirit is described as “the one who gives strength and inspiration” in the books of the Judges, Kings, and Prophets. Finally, the Holy Spirit is described as “the presence of God.” Longstaff adds that in the New Testament, this term has more diverse meanings than in the Old Testament. In particular, it is the Holy Spirit who “endows Jesus as the Messiah in the Synoptic Gospels,” and also, “empowers the Church for mission.”⁸ Thus, the terms “Holy Spirit,” “Spirit of God,” “Spirit of the Lord,” “Spirit of Christ,” “Spirit of Jesus,” and “the Spirit of His Son” will be used interchangeably.

The Holy Spirit is primarily a NT term which denotes the nature and function of the Spirit, appearing only three times in the OT (Ps 51:11; Isa 63:10,11). F. W. Horn explains that the term πνεῦμα occurs 379 as a substantive form in NT and usually refers to “Spirit of God” or “holy spirit” and the term only used as the literal meaning of

⁸Thomas R. W. Longstaff, “Holy Spirit,” *The Harper Collins Bible Dictionary*, ed. Paul J. Achtemeier and Roger S. Boraas (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996), 432.

wind/breath in John 3:8, Heb 1:7, and 2 Thess 2:8.⁹ Geoffrey W. Bromiley states that the term πνεῦμα is mostly understood as “God’s power to perform special acts” in Matthew and Mark.¹⁰ Bromiley points out that in Luke and Acts, the term πνεῦμα appear “three times more often than in Mark.”¹¹

The words “dreams” and “visions” also need to be defined in this thesis.

According to Janet M. Everts, in the Old Testament, prophets were also called “seers,” because the Word of God “appeared to them in dreams and visions.” The Old Testament puts emphasis on how the Word of God was “revealed through dreams and visions,” rather than on dreams and visions themselves. The New Testament does not always clearly distinguish between the words dreams and visions. The common Greek word for dream, “ὄναρ, is only found in the Gospel of Matthew (1:20; 2:12-3, 19, 22; 27:19).” The common Greek terms for vision are the following three words: “ὄραμα (Acts 7:31; 10:17; 11:5; 12:9; and 16:9-10), ὀπτασία (Acts 26:19), and ὀράσεις (2:17).”¹² John B. F. Miller adds that the Greco-Romans believed that dreams and visions were a way “to receive

⁹F. W. Horn, “Holy Spirit,” *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol. 3, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 3670. The term πνεῦμα is approximately used 275 times as “spirit of God” in the NT.

¹⁰Geoffrey W. Bromiley, ed., “πνεῦμα” *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament: Abridged in One Volume* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1985), 1239. Sometimes, the term πνεῦμα can refer to “an unclean spirit” (Mark 1:23; 9:17).

¹¹Bromiley, 1241 adds that in Acts, the Spirit did not leave the community. The phrase “full of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 6:3; 11:24) denotes “the lasting union,” while the phrase “filled with the Holy Spirit” stresses “the dynamic aspect” (4:8, 13:9).

¹²Janet M. Everts, “Dreams in the NT and Greco-Roman Literature,” *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol. 2 (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 231 (E-book accessed on 27 October 2020, from EBSCOhost eBook collection).

divine prophecy, messages, and healing.” Luke, the author of the books of Luke and Acts, actually does not distinguish between the two terms “vision” and “dream.” Luke uses the term ὄραμα to refer to visions and dreams that one is able “to experience during the day (Acts 10:3 and 10:17).” Yet, Luke also believes that dreams and visions can happen in the middle of the night. In Acts, he considers visions to include both “auditory and visual experiences.”¹³ While the definition of the terms gives further information to comprehend this thesis, delimitations and limitations will help to narrow the framework.

Delimitations and Limitations

This thesis will not cover all of Paul’s second missional journey, but focus on the beginning part of the second journey, when Paul visited Macedonia and met Lydia in Acts 16:6-15. Academic studies and journals on Paul’s second missionary journey are abundant. However, while there are some resources on Ahn written in Korean, the ministry of Ahn is rarely recorded in English documents. There are only a few journals and books that have important materials that are translated into English. As a result, the details of the research will be necessarily confirmed to an interview with her. The author also acknowledges that the Spirit works uniquely through each individual; so, Ahn’s experience is not a template for how the Spirit will lead all of God’s people. Since the author of this thesis realizes that everyone has their own perspective, his presuppositions will be addressed next.

¹³John B. F. Miller, “*Convinced That God Had Called Us*”: *Dreams, Visions, and the Perception of God’s Will in Luke-Acts*, Biblical Interpretation Series, vol. 85 (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2007), 94.

Author's Assumptions

The author of this thesis holds the belief of conservative Evangelical Christians, supporting a “high view of Scripture and supernatural inspiration of the Bible by the Holy Spirit.”¹⁴ In particular, the author holds to the doctrines of the International Foursquare Church, as Kristy Maddux explains.¹⁵ Although the author supports the doctrines of the Foursquare Church, he presupposes that his position on the baptism of the Holy Spirit is different from that of the Foursquare Church. Goran Medved states that The Foursquare Church’s position of Holy Spirit baptism believes it to be “the second blessing.”¹⁶ On the contrary, Walter C. Kaiser Jr. clarifies that the position of Reformed Theology adheres to the position of “a first blessing.”¹⁷ However, the author assumes that since both perspectives are taken from examples found in the Bible, he holds that both perspectives are possible and beyond human understanding and knowledge. The author also believes that God, through the Holy Spirit, leads people in various ways, including by dreams and visions. Beyond the author’s bias and presuppositions, a specified methodology will follow, in order to focus on the specific direction of this thesis.

¹⁴Carl F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation, and Authority*, vol. 4 (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1999), 68.

¹⁵Kristy Maddux, “The Foursquare Gospel of Aimee Semple McPherson,” *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 14, no. 2 (July 1, 2011): 300.

¹⁶Goran Medved, “The Doctrine of Baptism in the Spirit in the Charismatic Movement,” *Kairos: Evangelical Journal of Theology* 9, no. 2 (July 2015): 175.

¹⁷Walter C. Kaiser Jr., “The Baptism in the Holy Spirit as the Promise of the Father: A Reformed Perspective,” in *Perspectives on Spirit Baptism: Five Views*, ed. Chad Owen Brand (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing, 2004), 40.

Methodology

Chapter 1 starts with the general information of the Acts of the Apostles. Chapter 2 adds the specific information on the book of Acts and the exegesis of the passage found in Acts 16:6-10. Identifying the meaning of “forbidden by the Spirit” (Acts 16:6) will be an essential element of the thesis. Chapter 2 will also discuss the key terms “dreams and visions” used by Luke and the usage of these two terms in both the Old and New Testament texts. Chapter 3 will start with the background, including exegetical word studies, of Acts 16:11-15, with the understanding of the region of Philippi and the person Lydia. In particular, chapter 3 will analyze the work of the Spirit, who opens and closes one’s heart, and specifically examine the influence of Paul’s Spirit-led ministry. Chapter 4 will add a brief summary of the life and ministry of Seen-Ok Ahn, and then, discuss similarities and differences between Paul’s second missional journey and Ahn’s ministry that were led by the Spirit and bring conclusions. In order to first look at Paul’s ministry in the book of Acts, it is necessary to examine the background of the book of Acts.

Background of Acts

F. F. Bruce explains that the Acts of the Apostles was thus named after the second century AD, the name given to volume two of the “history of Christian origins,” dedicated to “a certain Theophilus.”¹⁸ In particular, there are several perspectives to see the Book of Acts. Thus, the author of this thesis will explain and

¹⁸F. F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1988), 25.

examine the Acts of the Apostles based on historical, missiological, pneumatological and practical considerations.

Eckhard J. Schnabel introduces that the Book of Acts is “an account of Christianity origins,” starting with Jesus and continuing to His followers (the Twelve disciples and other preachers). The book also contains the footsteps of witnesses who spread the Gospel of Jesus from Jews to Gentiles. Thus, Schnabel views Acts as a record of “recent historical events” that took place by the followers of Jesus and the news of Jesus as Israel’s and “Messiah and Savior” to other parts of the Mediterranean. Schnabel notes that Acts is a “biographical history” of important developments in early Christianity, and concludes that the two-volume work, Luke-Acts is “a historical report of the major leaders of the Christian movement.”¹⁹

Although Acts is a historical book, it does not contain the entire human history of that period. David G. Peterson suggests that Acts only addresses the origins of early Christianity, and does not provide for “important communities such as Antioch and Rome.” Thus, Acts is a very “selective history”; and, it concerns the movement of some of the apostles. In conclusion, Peterson considers that Acts is a “theological history,” considering that it contains “God’s saving activities,” the fulfillment of the Old Testament, and “revelation through dreams and visions.”²⁰

¹⁹Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Acts*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 41. See also Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2007) 32.

²⁰David G. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), 97.

Acts can be approached not only historically, but also missiologically. This book begins with Jesus' ascension to heaven (1:10) and the proclamation of the Great Commission to his disciples (1:8). Steve Walton explains that this Great Commission has to do with "renewing as well as restoring creation, individual Israel, and the whole world."²¹ According to Schnabel, the proclamation of the Gospel in Acts always entails persecution. However, he notes that the Gospel and missionary work that can change the world; "ironically, it grows even more in the face of persecution and opposition."²²

Walton refers to the missionary spirituality contained in Acts, explaining that this spirituality is "not for a settled life, but for a missionary journey." In order to understand the "missionary spirituality" in Acts, Walton argues that it is first necessary to study the way God moves humanity and the way humanity responds to "God's initiatives." Walton, therefore, concludes that Acts is a book with a missionary mission to obey God's commands and preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to places and cities where it has not yet been proclaimed.²³

Next, a pneumatological approach is needed to understand Acts. Peterson asserts that Luke's special interest in the Holy Spirit is indicated by the noun

²¹Steve Walton, "A Spirituality of Acts," *Christian Reflection* 54 (January 1, 2015): 11–12.

²²Schnabel, 1489.

²³Walton, 12.

“πνεύμα (“spirit”), which occurs fifty-five times” in Acts alone.²⁴ Several scholars also mention the correlation between Acts and the role of the Holy Spirit. According to Kirsopp Lake, the whole background of Acts can be explained as “the guidance of the Holy Spirit.”²⁵ David S. Dockery adds that in Acts after the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was critically involved in “preaching, prophesying, witnessing, joy and decision-making within the Christian community.”²⁶ Luke Timothy Johnson calls Acts “the book of the Holy Spirit.” And in Acts, Luke shows the Holy Spirit “actively intervening in the story, impelling and guiding human beings (Acts 8:29, 39; 10:19; 11:15; 13:2; 15:28; 16:6; 20:22; 21:4, 11).”²⁷ Walton specifically concludes that Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to direct and guide the mission of the believing community at “key times.”²⁸

As mentioned briefly above, missionary work in the Early Church continued to grow despite the persecution and opposition. Bruce explains that it was the “constant help of the Holy Spirit” that continued to bring the Gospel to the world in

²⁴Peterson, 135.

²⁵Kirsopp Lake, *The Acts of the Apostles* (London: Macmillan, 1933), 108.

²⁶David S. Dockery, “The Theology of Acts,” *Criswell Theological Review* 5 (Fall 1990): 48, *AtlaSerialsPLUS*®, EBSCOhost (19 November 2021).

²⁷Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, Sacra Pagina Series, vol. 5 (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 14.

²⁸Walton, 12.

Acts, “even in difficult circumstances.”²⁹ Regarding the explosive spread of the Gospel, Dockery understands that the activity of the Holy Spirit in Acts contributed to the “universalization of the mission of Jesus.”³⁰ Joseph A. Fitzmyer urges that Acts is a continuation of the Gospel of Luke, where Jesus’ disciples “were guided by the Spirit on how they carried out God’s mission.” So, it is totally “a record of the work of the Holy Spirit.”³¹ Schnabel adds that if the “main character in the Gospel of Luke is Jesus,” then the “focus of Acts is not on individuals, but on the work of the Holy Spirit.”³²

The historical, missionary, and spiritual approaches of Acts eventually lead to the practical dimension of Acts. In the opinion of Walton, Acts provides an exemplary life of the followers of Jesus. He also emphasizes that in Acts, believers do not direct their lives and set agendas, but rather, respond “sensitively to God’s initiative and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.”³³ Mark W. Wilson adds that Acts illustrates Paul’s obedience to the “divine will,” with his continued “risk-taking in

²⁹F. F. Bruce, “Holy Spirit in the Acts of the Apostles,” *Interpretation* 27, no. 2 (April 1973): 183, *AtlaSerialsPLUS*®, EBSCOhost (19 November 2021).

³⁰Dockery, 45.

³¹Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, The Anchor Bible, vol. 31 (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 55.

³²Schnabel, 1495.

³³Walton, 18.

his missionary journeys.”³⁴ Thus, Acts presents many examples of the lives of believers who were led by the Holy Spirit and are sensitive to His sovereignty.

In Acts, the Holy Spirit ultimately leads and guides His followers to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Witherington III reveals a special interest in the preaching of the Gospel to “the poor, the oppressed, possessed, and imprisoned” by the empowering of the Holy Spirit in Acts. He also adds that the “universalization of the Gospel embraces people of all racial diversity,” as well as “people above and below social scales,” including both “the oppressed and the oppressor.”³⁵ In other words, Acts is a book that teaches believers to live a life of preaching the Gospel with wide inclusivity, and without limits or discrimination. Next, the authorship of Acts will be addressed.

Authorship of Acts

Craig S. Keener states that the “debate over the authorship of the Acts continues unabated,” even though almost all scholars today admit that the Gospel of Luke and Acts were written by the same author.³⁶ According to James D. G. Dunn, “from the earliest to at least the end of the second century AD, it was traditionally accepted” that the author of Acts was Luke, the man described by Paul as the “beloved physician (Col. 4:14).” But

³⁴Mark W. Wilson, “Praxeis as Praxis: Odegeology as Practical Theology in the Book of Acts,” *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 75, no. 2 (2019): 6.

³⁵Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 122.

³⁶Craig S. Keener, *Acts*, New Cambridge Bible Commentary (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 48.

after that, scholars started to ask the authorship of Acts.³⁷ Thus, this thesis tries to follow a reasonable procedure to explain the authorship of the Acts, by examining both internal and external evidence of Acts at the same time. Revealing the authorship of Acts is important to the credibility of the content of the book, and will help readers understand a particular topic or point of view in it.

Richard N. Longenecker explains that first of all, there are “two particularly biblical internal evidences” for identifying the author of Acts. The view that the author of Acts is the same as the author of the Gospel of Luke draws “attention to the stylistic, structural, and linguistic commonalities of these two books.” Both “the third Gospel and Acts are addressed to the same recipient, Theophilus (Luke 1:3; Acts 1:1).” Acts begins by providing a brief introduction to the “first book” (1:1). This signal suggests the identity of the author of the Gospel of Luke and of Acts. Accordingly, Longenecker concludes that when examining the close relationship between the Gospel of Luke and Acts, “both stylistically and structurally, it can be reasonably inferred that these two books were written by the same author.”³⁸ Dunn also compares the introduction of each book, and judges positively about the “high possibility” that both books were written by the same person, Luke.³⁹

³⁷James D. G. Dunn, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Peterborough, England: Epworth Press, 1996), x.

³⁸Richard N. Longenecker, *Luke-Acts*, The Expositor’s Bible Commentary, rev. ed., vol. 10, ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland (Grand Rapid, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 898.

³⁹Dunn, x.

The second internal evidence of Acts is the “we passage.” A. D. Nock explains the usage of the word “we,” and emphasizes the importance of the “we passages.” According to Nock, when historians use the word “we,” it indicates that they must have presented in a certain place at a certain time. He also asserts that the word “we” is generally used “only if another person is present as witness, and that the audience does not easily suspect that they are lying.”⁴⁰ To state it another way, the “we passages” must come from an eye-witness. Keener explains that scholars refer to the so-called “we passages as a first-person plural that first appears in Acts 16:10,” and “speculate that Paul had a companion; and, that this companion in Acts was Luke, the author of Acts.” Keener also asserts that according to Paul’s literature, there are several candidates for Paul’s companion; but the companion was “the physician Luke (Col 4:14; Philm 24; 2 Tim 4:11),” who remained with Paul while he was in Rome and Caesarea.⁴¹ One might also think specifically of Paul’s companion Timothy. Consequently, Keener is surprised that early Christians did not think of Timothy as the author of Acts. In addition, Keener concludes that if the author of Acts was Paul’s companion, then the tradition that this companion was Luke is “reasonable.”⁴²

There are external evidences that also support that Luke was the author of Acts. According to Ajith Fernando, external evidence for the authorship is gathered

⁴⁰A. D. Nock, *Essays on Religion and the Ancient World*, vol. 2, ed. Z. Stewart (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972), 827-828.

⁴¹Keener, *Acts*, 48.

⁴²Keener, *Acts*, 49.

“from Church records during the first few centuries AD, and is unanimous that Luke was the author.”⁴³ Peterson provides external evidence from examples of early documents. The earliest manuscript of *Luke-Acts* is “Papyrus 75, entitled *Ευαγγελιον κατα Λουκαν* (“Gospel According to Luke”), dated AD 175-225.” Peterson adds that this is a bit earlier than the Muratorian Scriptures, which also designates the author of *Luke-Acts* as Luke, “who is a physician and a companion of Paul.” And, according to the “Anti-Marcionite Prologue to the Third Gospel,” the author of *Luke-Acts* is Luke “an Antiochene of Syria, a physician by profession.”⁴⁴ Thus, evidence within Christianity and early evidence outside Christianity leads to the reasonable conclusion that the author of Acts is Luke. Next, a subsequent description of the dating of Acts gives a deeper understanding of the book.

Dating of Acts

According to Keener, scholars divide the dates of Acts into three broad categories. Many scholars speculate that Acts was written between AD 70-90. The second most supported dating is in the AD 60s. Finally, few scholars claim that Acts was written in the second century AD.⁴⁵

Keener states that the most logical basis for supporting the early dating of Acts is the status of “Jews in the Roman courts and the legitimacy of Christianity in

⁴³Ajith Fernando, *Acts: From Biblical Text to Contemporary Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1998), 21.

⁴⁴Peterson, 69.

⁴⁵Keener, *Acts*, 46.

Rome.” According to Keener, Acts is generally considered to be written between AD 60-63, before the martyrdom of Paul and before the fall of Jerusalem. This is the reason is that the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70 is not recorded; and the persecution of Nero in AD 64 is also not recorded.⁴⁶ Longenecker supports Keener’s early dating, emphasizing that “Christianity in Acts still retains legitimacy.” Longenecker also explains that Acts represents a “generally hopeful prospect for the Roman authorities to recognize Christianity and its acceptance in the Gentile world.” According to Longenecker, this friendly attitude toward Christianity is rarely seen after Nero’s persecution that began in AD 64.⁴⁷ Considering Emperor Nero’s persecution and the dynamic movement of the Christian community, it can be inferred that Acts was written before AD 64.

Fitzmyer adds that Acts ends with Paul’s arrival in Rome and two years of imprisonment. One can argue for the early writings of Acts by stating that Luke, the author, did not record Paul’s death and trial results.⁴⁸ Keener explains that tradition records that Paul was martyred between AD 66-68.⁴⁹ Thus, it is speculated that Acts had an abrupt end before Paul’s martyrdom. According to William J. Larkin, the

⁴⁶Keener, *Acts*, 47.

⁴⁷Longenecker, *Luke-Acts*, 896.

⁴⁸Fitzmyer, 51.

⁴⁹Keener, *Acts*, 47.

abrupt ending is closely related with the early dating of Acts.⁵⁰ However, Fitzmyer does not believe that the abrupt ending of Acts supports an early date. He explains that Mark's Gospel also ends abruptly, and does not suggest that this abrupt ending is due to the author's ignorance of what happened after that.⁵¹ But Keener adds that the abrupt ending is quite common in ancient texts, suggesting that it could be interpreted as an "intentional omission by the author."⁵² Witherington III also argues that given the purpose of writing Acts, the dating of Acts should focus more on "the progress of the gospel and salvation history" than on the life of Paul.⁵³ D. A. Carson and Douglas J. Moo explain that Paul's death is omitted from Acts in relation to the purpose of the book. They explain that "Luke's focus is theological rather than biographical," revealing that Luke is concerned with the expansion of the Gospel, not the life of Paul. Luke, through Acts, intended to show the "growth and expansion of the Christian movement." Thus, Carson and Moo conclude that the reason Luke does not reveal the death of Paul's or the outcome of his appeal to the emperor in Acts is because Luke was more interested in the preaching of the Gospel than in Paul's life.⁵⁴

⁵⁰William J. Larkin, "Acts," *The Gospel of Luke & Acts*, Cornerstone Biblical Commentary Series, vol. 12 (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2006), 18.

⁵¹Fitzmyer, 52.

⁵²Keener, *Acts*, 46.

⁵³Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 112.

⁵⁴D. A. Carson and Douglas J. Moo, *Introducing the New Testament*, ed. Andrew David Naselli (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 523.

Yet, Keener states that a number of scholars assume that Acts was written after the fall of Jerusalem (AD 70). It is believed that Acts was written by Luke after “the Third Gospel.”⁵⁵ Witherington III argues that it is acceptable to most scholars to claim that the Gospel of Mark is the earliest.⁵⁶ Longenecker also emphasizes the fact that the Gospel of Mark was used as the source of the Gospel of Luke.⁵⁷ In particular, Witherington III explains that there is the internal evidence in Mark 13, which argues that it was written in the late 60s, “when the Christians in Rome were persecuted and concerned about contemporary events taking place in Jerusalem (Mark 13:14).” For this reason, Witherington III argues that the Gospel of Luke must have been written after Mark, and Acts after Luke, and must have been written after AD 70.⁵⁸ Bock adds that “proponents of this mid-date argue that Luke 19:41-44 suggests a unique description of the Roman army surrounding Jerusalem or an allusion to Israel’s desolation.” For this reason, Bock speculates that Acts, written after Luke, must be dated after AD 70.⁵⁹ Fitzmyer, along with fifteen others scholars, strongly favors an intermediate date, and asserts that there would be “no good reason to oppose that date.”⁶⁰

⁵⁵Keener, *Acts*, 48.

⁵⁶Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 112.

⁵⁷Longenecker, *Luke-Acts*, 698.

⁵⁸Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 112.

⁵⁹Bock, 58.

⁶⁰Fitzmyer, 55.

Joseph B. Tyson and Richard I. Pervo represent those scholars who believe that Acts was written after the second century AD. In particular, Tyson raises constant questions and complaints about the “consensus dating” that most scholars claim Acts was written between AD 70-100.⁶¹ Pervo stresses Luke’s dependence on Josephus, and asserts that Acts was written in the second century AD.⁶² When it comes to the dependence on Josephus, Keener argues that Luke does not seem to quote Josephus. Keener adds that Josephus’ *Antiquities* were probably “published around AD 93 or 94, and that the twenty books were quite expensive and not readily available shortly after publication.”⁶³ While some scholars claim that Luke relied on, or prefaced, Paul’s collected epistles, Witherington III states that Paul’s developed theology in Luke-Acts cannot be found, since Acts predates Paul’s letters. Witherington III also opposes the late dating of Acts on the grounds that Luke has a “primitive development of Christology and ecclesiology that is not parallel to the early second century.”⁶⁴ Therefore, the dating of the Acts of the Apostles to the second century AD is supported only by a small number of scholars.

In conclusion, even among scholars, there is a gap that cannot be narrowed in the debate about the date of the writing of the Acts. Thus, this thesis will agree with

⁶¹Joseph B. Tyson, *Marcion and Luke-Acts: A Defining Struggle* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2006), ix.

⁶²Richard I. Pervo, *Dating Acts: Between the Evangelists and the Apologists* (Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge Press, 2006), 360.

⁶³Craig S. Keener, *Acts 1:1–2:47: An Exegetical Commentary*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2012), 394.

⁶⁴Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 61.

an intermediate date of AD 70-100 that is popularly supported by scholars. But at the same time, it takes into account the premise that, as Fitzmyer argues, the date of the writing of Acts has little effect on the interpretation of the book.⁶⁵

Conclusion

The primary task of this thesis is to compare the ministry of Ahn with the mission of Paul in light of Acts 16:6-15. It is important for all believers to realize that the Holy Spirit guides his people equally in the past as well as in the present. Background information revealed that Acts is a “theological history with selective historicity.”⁶⁶ Acts can be explained as the missionary journey of the apostles, so it was accessible from a missiological perspective.⁶⁷ In Acts, the Holy Spirit plays a subjective role as the protagonist rather than the individual being revealed, so it is a book that can be accessed spiritually as well.⁶⁸ Finally, Acts can also be interpreted as a practical aspect in which believers act under the sovereign guidance of the Holy Spirit.⁶⁹ This chapter concluded that the author of Acts is the “Physician Luke,” considering the similar style to the Gospel of Luke and the usage of “we passages.”⁷⁰ The date of Acts was supported by different scholars in different chronology, but the

⁶⁵Fitzmyer, 55.

⁶⁶Peterson, 97

⁶⁷Watson, 12

⁶⁸Dockery, 45.

⁶⁹Wilson, 6

⁷⁰Nock, 827.

author of this thesis considered it to be AD 70-100, with which many scholars popularly agree. The genre and literary accompanied by an exegetical study of Acts 16:6-10 will follow in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 2

EXEGESIS OF ACTS 16:6-10

Introduction

This second chapter will exegete Acts 16:6-10 and show how Paul's second missionary journey was sovereignly led by the Holy Spirit. Before the exegesis, genre analysis and literacy analysis of the passage will be addressed. In interpreting the Bible, understanding the historical background is important. However, equally important is the understanding of the literary style, characteristics, and genre. Through examining those elements, the possibility of the misinterpretation of Acts will be reduced.

Genre Analysis

One of the important issues in the study of Acts is to identify its literary genre. This is because how one approaches interpreting it is determined by its genre. In addition, the thesis intends to bring the appropriate application of Acts 16:6-15 to the forefront, which depends on its genre type. Regarding the genre of Acts, scholars have divided it into biography, epic, novel, and history and have studied it along with various

“Greco-Roman literary genres.”¹ The first view of Acts is in the genre of biography. While Acts has always been interpreted in the light of the genre of history, scholars began to question whether the genre of Acts could be a literary work other than history. These questions created new opportunities for scholars to study Acts comparatively with many other ancient novels. Charles H. Talbert argues that Acts has specific forms and characteristics of the genre of biography and views Diogenes Laertius’ *The Lives of Eminent Philosophers* as the fundamental model of the book of Acts.² According to Talbert, two associations are found between Acts and *The Lives of Eminent Philosophers*. The first one is that the founders of ancient philosophies were primarily concerned with religious, rather than academic roles. The second one is that both books contain stories of “chosen disciples who formed a kind of religious community.”³ Talbert concludes that Luke’s writing of Acts as a biographical genre intended to defend a particular form of Christianity.⁴

There have also been attempts to regard Acts as an epic. This view was first developed by M. P. Bonz. According to Bonz, Luke writes Acts to give his epic narrative “historicity, and to reshape the community’s vision.” Bonz also asserts that Luke’s

¹Bock, 31; Peterson, 77; Keener, *Acts*, 51; Dunn, xv; Schnabel, 35.

²Charles H. Talbert, *Literary Patterns, Theological Themes and the Genre of Luke–Acts*, Monograph Series - Society of Biblical Literature, vol. 20 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1974), 125.

³Talbert, *Literary Patterns*, 126.

⁴Talbert, *Literary Patterns*, 135.

narrative mimics Virgil's *Aeneid*. In addition to Bonz, Dennis R. MacDonald understands Acts and other Christian narratives within the framework of the "Homeric epics."⁵

The following is an opinion that regards the Acts of the Apostles in the genre of a novel. Richard I. describes Acts in the genre of novel.⁶ Ernst Haenchen agrees with Pervo, adding that Luke's creative writing can be found in Acts, although he is far from being a historian.⁷ The reason Pervo classifies Acts as a novel is that it is very similar to ancient novels. According to Pervo, the book of Acts appears to be a long prose novel that "depicts or ridicules a specific ideal based on the life and experiences of a person or human who transcends the limits of daily life and engages in specific activities."⁸ Pervo is using Arthur Heiserman's formula for what constitutes a novel. According to Heiserman, a novel contains: "material, manner, style, and structure."⁹ Reorganizing the book of Acts based on Heiserman's formula, Pervo concludes that Acts fits this formula, and approaches it within the framework of the genre of the novel.¹⁰

⁵M. P. Bonz, *The Past as Legacy: Luke–Acts and Ancient Epic* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 25.

⁶Richard I. Pervo, *Profit with Delight: The Literary Genre of the Acts of the Apostles* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 1.

⁷Ernst Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary*, trans. R. M. Wilson (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1971), 740.

⁸Pervo, *Profit with Delight*, 105.

⁹Arthur Heiserman, *The Novel Before the Novel* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), 59.

¹⁰Pervo, *Profit with Delight*, 105.

The last view of the book of Acts is as history. Herman H. Van Alten explains that according to John Calvin, Acts belongs to the genre of “sacred histories.”¹¹ Henry J. Cadbury asserts that Acts is best understood in the “rubric of history.”¹² Cadbury argues that Luke-Acts was not two separate documents written for the understanding of one author, but “an integrated work divided into two parts.”¹³ Martin Hengel calls Acts a special kind of “historical monography.”¹⁴ Martin Dibelius claims that Acts has historical significance, unlike Luke’s Gospel. However, he still poses many questions about the historical authenticity of Acts.¹⁵ For this problem, William M. Ramsay and Mark W. Wilson classify Acts as the “first rate historical writing” out of the four types of historical writing: “romance, legend, second rate history, and first rate history.”¹⁶ After Dibelius, several scholars dismissed the view that the Acts could belong to a specific literary genre other than history, and regarded it as belonging to the general category of “ancient

¹¹Herman H. Van Alten, “Calvin’s View on the Book of the Acts of the Apostles,” *Koers-Bulletin for Christian Scholarship* 79, no. 4 (2014): 2.

¹²Henry J. Cadbury, *The Making of Luke-Acts* (London: Macmillan, 1927), 132.

¹³Cadbury, 1-11.

¹⁴Martin Hengel, *Acts and the History of Earliest Christianity*, trans. J. Bowden (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 36.

¹⁵Martin Dibelius, *The Book of Acts: Form, Style, and Theology*, ed. K. C. Hanson (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004), 5.

¹⁶William M. Ramsay and Mark W. Wilson, *St. Paul: The Traveler and Roman Citizen* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2001), 9-10.

history.”¹⁷ Although Acts appears to belong to the genre of ancient history, according to Bock, recent research trends in Acts reveal that the historical view of Acts is being divided into more “specific sub-genres: general history, political history, and apologetic history.”¹⁸ John R. W. Stott understands Luke as both a theologian and historian, mentioning that Luke’s history is not just history. According to Stott, Acts is an “interpreted history with theological perspective.”¹⁹ This thesis will support the historical authenticity of Acts mentioned by Ramsay and Wilson and understand Acts in the genre of “historical monography interpreted with a theological perspective.”²⁰ Finding out the genre of Acts is like getting a lens for proper interpretation of the book. Attention will now turn to literary analysis which unfolds the significance of Acts 16:6-15 in the entire book of Acts.

Literary Analysis

Acts 16:6-15 can be fully interpreted only when the flow of the entire book of Acts is grasped. Therefore, if the text is interpreted individually while omitting the meaning of the whole, it may lead to inappropriate interpretation and conclusions. Bock provides the following brief summary of the overall structure of the book of Acts.

¹⁷Sean A. Adams, *The Genre of Acts and Collected Biography*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 6.

¹⁸Bock, 38-43.

¹⁹John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Acts: The Spirit, the Church & the World* (Leicester, England: InterVarsity Press, 2014), 19-27.

²⁰Ramsay and Wilson, 10.

- I. Introduction: Jesus Ascends to the Father and Gives a Mission (1:1–11)
- II. The Early Church in Jerusalem (1:12–6:7)
- III. Persecution in Jerusalem Moves the Message to Judea and Samaria as a New Witness Emerges (6:8–9:31)
- IV. The Gospel to the Gentiles and More Persecution in Jerusalem (9:32–12:25)
- V. The Mission from Antioch and the Full Incorporation of Gentiles (13:1–15:35)
- VI. The Second and Third Missionary Journeys: Expansion to Greece and Consolidation Amid Opposition (15:36–21:16)
 - A. Paul and Barnabas Split Up (15:36–41)²¹
 - B. Timothy Joins Paul and Silas in Lystra (16:1–5)²²
 - C. The Vision of the Macedonian Man (16:6–10)²³
 - D. The Journey to Philippi and the Meeting with Lydia (16:11–15)²⁴
 - E. Paul and Silas in Prison (16:16–40)
 - F. In Thessalonica (17:1–9)
 - G. In Berea (17:10–15)
 - H. In Athens (17:16–34)
 - I. In Corinth (18:1–17)
 - J. Back to Antioch and through the Region (18:18–23)
 - K. The Third Missionary Journey, Ending in Jerusalem (18:24–21:16)
- VII. The Arrest: The Message is Defended and Reaches Rome (21:17–28:31)²⁵

Bock explains that Acts begins with Jesus ascending into heaven and promising the Holy Spirit and a mission to the disciples (Acts 1:1-11). After that, the Early Church began. At the same time, persecution also began. However, “ironically after the persecution, the Gospel exploded and spread across races and borders.” Although the Gospel was initially limited to the Jews, it spread to the Gentiles as well (Acts 1:12-

²¹Bock, 81.

²²Bock, 626.

²³Bock, 630.

²⁴Bock, 636.

²⁵Bock, 84.

15:35). Paul's second missionary journey shows that the Gospel was now beginning to spread to Europe (Acts 16:6). However, this part also ironically begins with the separation of Paul and Barnabas (Acts 15:36-41). Similarly, even before the Gospel was extended to Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth, and Antioch, Paul and Silas experienced imprisonment (Acts 16:16-40). The missionary journey, which starts in Jerusalem, returns to Jerusalem and ends; and, Paul is taken to Rome (Acts 17:1-28:31).²⁶ The overall structure of Acts reveals that the Gospel of Jesus spread explosively in all circumstances. From an external point of view, it seems that God's work was frustrated due to conflict and persecution. Yet, ironically, the Gospel of Jesus continued to spread. However, the work of the Holy Spirit, who makes everything possible, is a key point that can be found throughout Acts. The next step will be to exegete Acts 16:6-10, starting with 16:6.

Exegesis of Acts 16:6

6 Διήλθον δὲ τὴν Φρυγίαν καὶ Γαλατικὴν χώραν κωλυθέντες ὑπὸ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος λαλῆσαι τὸν λόγον ἐν τῇ Ἀσίᾳ.²⁷

6 They went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia.²⁸

²⁶Bock, 84.

²⁷All Greek Bible references are from Barbara Aland et al., eds., *The USB Greek New Testament: A Reader's Edition*, 5th ed. (Stuttgart, Germany: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2014).

²⁸Author's translation.

Before the exegesis of Acts 16:6-10, it is necessary to briefly review Paul's missionary strategy. According to D. T. Rowlingson, Paul's missionary work largely started with the Church of Antioch; and he evangelized first in "central cities, such as Philippi, Thessalonica, Ephesus, Corinth, and Athens, and then the surrounding areas."²⁹ According to Bruce, Ephesus was "the new center of Gentile missions," and was second most important after Antioch.³⁰ John B. Polhill explains that Paul especially wanted to head to Ephesus to preach the Gospel in Asia Minor. Polhill adds that Ephesus, "a major city in the Roman Empire in Asia Minor, served as a transportation and commerce center because of its geographical location at the intersection of sea and land trade routes, and was a port city on the western coast of Turkey." In other words, it was the center of politics and commerce throughout Asia.³¹ As such, it is strategically justified to think that Paul chose this city as the center of his missionary work because it was the center of the entire region of Asia. Regarding the geographical importance of Ephesus, Polhill adds that for Paul, no better place could be chosen than Ephesus for the evangelization of the whole of Asia Minor.³²

In addition, at the time of Paul's third trip, he stayed in Ephesus for about three years with his disciples and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus (Acts

²⁹D. T. Rowlingson, "The Geographical Orientation of Paul's Missionary Interests," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 69 (1950): 342.

³⁰Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 365.

³¹John B. Polhill, *Acts*, The New American Commentary, vol. 26 (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1992), 395.

³²Polhill, 395.

20:31). Simon J. Kistemaker states that in Ephesus, Paul opened a seminary to train more leaders to develop the church in Asia; and, His disciples preached the Gospel of Christ to both Jews and Greeks.³³ Paul strategically planned his itinerary, leaving nothing to chance. However, being led by the Holy Spirit, he was willing to set aside his plan. Thus, Paul's mission strategy includes a strategic planning and sensitivity to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

In Acts 16:6, Paul wanted to preach the Gospel in Asia with Timothy and Silas. Bock explains that in this text, Asia does not refer to the present-day Asian continent, but to the western part of what is now called Asia Minor (Turkey). It was part of Roman territory, with Ephesus being the representative city. However, the Holy Spirit blocked Paul from going to Asia. How the Holy Spirit stopped Paul is not recorded in detail. Bock adds that the term κωλυθέντες is one of the words to describe the Spirit's action. The verb "to prevent" is frequently used in Acts to mean to prevent an action. Thus, one can find the guidance of the Holy Spirit in Acts to be found quite naturally and frequently (see 4:31; 8:29, 39; 10:44; 13:2, 4).³⁴ Matteo Crimella explains this action of the Holy Spirit as "a passivum divinum," which highlights the accountability of the Spirit "for the lack of evangelization in Asia."³⁵

³³Simon J. Kistemaker, *Exposition of the Acts of the Apostles*, New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990), 684-685.

³⁴Bock, 631.

³⁵Matteo Crimella, "The Vision of the Macedonian: Acts 16:6-10," *Revue Biblique* 121, no. 3 (2014): 396.

Since the Holy Spirit prevented them from preaching in Asia, Paul and his companions passed through the regions of Phrygia and Galatia. According to Bruce, scholars have two main views on the geographical location of the regions of Phrygia and Galatia in Acts 16. Traditionally, “the region of Galatia in the interior of central Anatolia (Turkey)” has been thought of as Galatia in Acts 16:6. However, from the middle of the eighteenth century, some argued that it “refers to the Roman province of Galatia, which located in central Turkey.”³⁶ Ronald Y. K. Fung explains that this view is not recognized as the region of Galatia as traditionally conceived, but as the Roman province of Galatia, which includes Pisidia, Isauria, Lycaonia, and eastern Phrygia in the south.³⁷ Therefore, this view holds that the Galatia visited by Paul did not refer to the central inland region, but to Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe. The important reason for this view is that there is no specific record of Paul’s visit to the central inland region of Anatolia (Turkey) in Acts. This view asserts that the southern cities Paul visited were called Galatia.³⁸ Therefore, according to the geographical location of Phrygia and Galatia, it is divided in a Southern Galatian view and a Northern Galatian view among scholars.

Traditionally, Douglas Moo explains that the Galatia mentioned in Acts 16 has been thought of as a “region of Galatia.” For example, J. B. Lightfoot and James Moffatt

³⁶F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary Series, vol. 8 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1982), 28-29.

³⁷Ronald Y. K. Fung, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1988), 49.

³⁸Fung, 50.

strongly advocate the “region of Galatian” or the “North Galatian theory.” Also, German scholars such as E. Schürer, A. Steinmann, and H. Lietzmann, support the North Galatian theory.³⁹ Bruce adds that they believe that the book of Galatians was written to Christians of “Celtic descent” located in northern Asia Minor. Around AD 74, Emperor Vespasian separated most of the region of Pisidia from Galatia. And in AD 137, Lycaonia Galatica was separated from Galatia and merged with Cilicia and Isaurica to form the wider region of Cilicia.⁴⁰

On the other hand, Bruce states that the “South Galatian theory” was not known at all until the first half of the eighteenth century. This view was first raised by J. J. Schmied, and later endorsed by J. P. Mynster. Then after that, W. M. Ramsay asserted that the Galatia visited by Paul refers to the provinces of Pisidia, Antioch, Lystra, and Derbe, as included in the province of Galatia, “the name of the Roman administrative division.”⁴¹ Additionally in the twentieth century, Bruce and Fung follow the South Galatian theory.⁴²

According to Fung, William Ramsay refutes the North Galatian theory on the following grounds. As early as the second century BC, the origins of borders of Phrygia, which accounted for more than half of the population of Galatia (Northern Asia Minor), were forgotten by the common people of the surrounding region; and the whole region

³⁹Douglas J. Moo, *Galatians*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013), 4.

⁴⁰Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 29.

⁴¹Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 33.

⁴²Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 33.

was considered Galatia, and its people were Galatians.⁴³ Bruce adds that when Galatia was widened in 25 BC, the Roman Empire merged the area into the southern Galatia. The reason is that all “non-Romans of the Roman Empire became provincial citizens”; and, they were called members of the Roman Empire “according to their surname, not their ethnicity.”⁴⁴ In summary, Moo concludes that according to Ramsay, when Paul refers to the Galatians, he is referring to the four churches located south of the city of Galatia. Ramsay also says that when Luke refers to the land of Galatia (Acts 16:6, 18:23), he meant “Galatia administratively as a city, in contrast to Galatia as a race.”⁴⁵ The next section will exegete Acts 16:7-8, where the Spirit of Jesus forbade Paul to preach the Gospel in Asia Minor again.

Exegesis of Acts 16:7-8

7 ἐλθόντες δὲ κατὰ τὴν Μυσίαν ἐπέιραζον εἰς τὴν Βιθυνίαν πορευθῆναι, καὶ οὐκ εἶασεν αὐτοὺς τὸ πνεῦμα Ἰησοῦ: 8 παρελθόντες δὲ τὴν Μυσίαν κατέβησαν εἰς Τρωάδα.

7 When they had come up to Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them; 8 so, passing by Mysia, they went down to Troas.⁴⁶

To understand verse 7a, an accurate explanation of the phrase of ἐλθόντες δὲ κατὰ τὴν Μυσίαν is necessary. There are various interpretations of 7a. Some versions (KJV

⁴³Fung, 49.

⁴⁴Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 32.

⁴⁵Moo, 5.

⁴⁶Author’s translation.

and ESV) prefer to translate it as, “came (up) to Mysia.” The NIV and NLT translate it more in detail as, “came to the border of Mysia.” Only the NRSV translates it as, “came opposite to Mysia.” According to Walter Bauer, the term *κατὰ*, which is a preposition, is translated as “to” in Acts 16:7a.⁴⁷ Edward Robinson also adds that *κατὰ* means “to,” “near to,” or “adjacent to” in Acts 16:7a.⁴⁸ J. B. Lightfoot, Ben Witherington III, and Todd D. Still argue that, given the context, the word *κατὰ* should be translated as “in the borders of” or “in the neighborhood of.”⁴⁹

Regarding Paul’s attempt to go to Bithynia, Bruce states that unless Asia was the “field of Paul’s evangelistic activities,” it was natural for them to look further north and think of “the highly civilized province of Bithynia in the northwest of Asia Minor.”⁵⁰

Longenecker also assumes that Paul may have decided to go to the “Thracian region of

⁴⁷Walter Bauer, “*κατὰ*,” *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd rev. ed., ed. F. W. Danker (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 453-455. Bauer notes the following different ways to use the term *κατὰ* in the NT. The term can be used with a genitive as a “marker of extension or orientation in space or specific area,” which is “down from,” “into,” “throughout,” “toward,” “against.” It can be translated with the accusative as a “marker of spatial or temporal aspect,” which is “along,” “over,” “through,” “in,” “upon,” “toward,” “to,” “up to,” “by,” “at,” “on,” “during,” “about.” The word can be also used as a “marker of division of a greater whole into individual parts, at a time, in detail, distributive use apart from indications of place and time.” In 7a, the term will be used as “to.”

⁴⁸Edward Robinson, “*κατὰ*,” *A Greek and English Lexicon of the New Testament* (New York: Harper, 1862), 420.

⁴⁹J. B. Lightfoot, Ben Witherington III, and Todd D. Still, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Newly Discovered Commentary* (Downers Grove IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014), 214.

⁵⁰Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 358.

Bithynia” to preach the Gospel through “strategic cities and the main port of the Black Sea connected by elaborate Roman roads.”⁵¹

In verse 7b, the Holy Spirit once again blocks the way Paul was going, just as he did in verse 6. But this time, the wording is not τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος (“the Holy Spirit”), but τὸ πνεῦμα Ἰησοῦ (“the Spirit of Jesus”) who did not allow Paul and his companions to go on their journey. Bock notes that the Greek usage of οὐκ εἴασεν in verse 7b is interpreted differently in several versions of the Bible. Some versions (e.g., NRSV, RSV, NIV, and NASB) interpret it as “did or would not allow (or permit).” Yet, only the KJV interprets it as “suffered them not.”⁵² Although it is not clear how Paul and his companions were guided by the Holy Spirit in 7b, Keener regards prophetic utterances (Acts 13:1-2) and dreams or visions (Acts 16:9-10) as possible means. Keener adds that it is ultimately important for Luke to portray their uncertainty as a matter of waiting for divine guidance, not as a negative whim or human indecisiveness.⁵³

G. Stählin states that the divine guidance is the work of the κύριος Ἰησοῦς (“Lord Jesus”), as the “principal actor” in the narratives of Acts. He continues that Jesus is not regarded as a tool of God, but rather acts as “God’s representative,” which has an equal power and authority with God Himself as the κύριος. Thus, Stählin believes that the

⁵¹Longenecker, *Luke-Acts*, 1240.

⁵²Bock, 633.

⁵³Craig S. Keener, *Acts 15:1–23:35: An Exegetical Commentary*, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2014), 295 believes that the Holy Spirit can speak less formally by delivering His words through one of them (8:29; 10:19), perhaps sharing a strong, but “preverbal sense of intuition.”

Spirit of the Lord is “rightly called the Spirit of Jesus.” He emphasizes that the work of the Lord Jesus is “indissolubly linked with the work of God.” He also regards the work of the Spirit as Christ’s work. Based on this understanding, there can be no concept of consequent “subordination between the Spirit and Christ.” Since *Kyrios* and Spirit are rather more than “closely intertwined, this unique form appears” in τὸ πνεῦμα Ἰησοῦ (“the Spirit of Jesus”).⁵⁴ Max Turner also adds that the phrases “Spirit of Christ” and “the Spirit of God” are used in an interchangeable way.⁵⁵

According to Longenecker, the change of terminology from “the Holy Spirit” to “the Spirit of Jesus” to “God” in Acts 16:6-10 is not simply “a stylistic expression, but an unconscious reflection of the early church’s undeveloped belief in the Trinity.”⁵⁶ Keener explains that in this passage, Luke expresses “the divine Christology that he holds by equating the Holy Spirit (the Spirit of God) with the Spirit of Jesus.” Keener adds that Jesus is the “exalted divine agent representing the Father, as the Spirit represents him.”⁵⁷ Peterson asserts that Luke does not just choose these words here for a “simple stylistic

⁵⁴G. Stählin, “Τὸ πνεῦμα Ἰησοῦ (Apostelgeschichte 16:7),” in *Christ and Spirit in the New Testament*, ed. Barnabas Lindars and Stephen Smalley (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 252. Stählin excludes the possibility that the blocking of the Spirit of Jesus in v. 7b means “a natural event, an irresistible mental impulse, or a vision,” as in v. 9. He offers “an inner certainty that comes from the Holy Spirit.” However, he describes this as an “inspiration through the words of Christ by a prophet (probably Paul or Silas),” rather than simply an inner conviction.

⁵⁵Max Turner, *Power from on High: The Spirit in Israel’s Restoration and Witness in Luke-Acts* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield, 1996), 304.

⁵⁶Richard N. Longenecker, *The Acts of the Apostles*, The Expositor’s Bible Commentary, vol. 9 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1981), 457.

⁵⁷Keener, *Acts 15:1–23:35*, 295-6, 380.

transformation.” He continues to show the reader the “relationship between the ascended and enthroned Messiah and the Holy Spirit.” This verse also shows that Jesus continues to play an active role in any form of Paul’s journey⁵⁸

Keener explains that while the reason Paul and his companions received the prohibition of the Holy Spirit is uncertain, he “can offer some possibilities” based on the rest of the book of Acts. His argument is that Paul eventually did a very effective ministry in Asia Minor during his third missionary journey (19:10, 20). Keener asserts that Paul learned several strategies of missions “to reach out to the Greeks in Achaia,” which historically exposed Paul to “a higher level of rhetoric and philosophy” than he had ever experienced (see Acts 17:22–34; 18:11). After being blocked by the Holy Spirit twice in the end, they did not stay in Mysia, but passed through Mysia and headed for Troas (verse 8). Longenecker assumes that because Luke used the term *παρελθόντες* (“they passed by”) instead of *διελθόντες* (“they passed through”), they did not stay in Mysia to preach the Gospel.⁵⁹ The next section will present the exegesis of Acts 16:9.

Exegesis of Acts 16:9

9 καὶ ὄραμα διὰ [τῆς] νυκτὸς τῷ Παύλῳ ὄφθη, ἀνὴρ Μακεδῶν τις ἦν ἐστῶς καὶ παρακαλῶν αὐτὸν καὶ λέγων, Διαβὰς εἰς Μακεδονίαν βοήθησον ἡμῖν.

9 During the night a vision appeared to Paul: a man of Macedonia was standing there, beseeching him, and saying, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.”⁶⁰

⁵⁸Peterson, 562.

⁵⁹Longenecker, *Luke-Acts*, 1240.

⁶⁰Author’s translation.

When Paul and his companions arrived in Troas, they could understand through a vision why the Holy Spirit had hindered their journey twice. In the middle of the night, Paul had a vision of a Macedonian man standing and begging him, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” According to Crimella, this verse emphasizes the ὄραμα (“vision”) imposed on Paul from the outside. The verb ὤφθη (“to see”) is a word often used in the New Testament to show “the origin of heaven to humans as an experience of visual manifestation.” Besides, the setting of the night time is reminiscent of God’s revelations to humanity in the Old Testament (see Gen 15:12; 46:2). Thus, Crimella concludes that the vision is a “unique narrative tool that Luke uses to effectively show the divine guidance that directs history.”⁶¹ Luke writes that “a vision appeared to Paul” in verse 9. Steve Walton explains that the usage of ὤφθη (“appeared”) as a passive verb, assumes this would be a “divine passive signaling that God is the vision’s source.”⁶²

In verse 9, the usage of ἦν ἐστὼς (“was standing”) is remarkable, comparing of the words παρακαλῶν (“beseeching”) and λέγων (“saying”). While Luke uses the word ἴστημι (“to stand”) as a perfect active participle, the others—παρακαλέω (“to beseech”) and λέγω (“to say”)—are used as the present active participle. The words ἦν ἐστὼς means that a Macedonian man continued to stand as he kept beseeching and saying to come help.

⁶¹Crimella, 399. The same word is used for the vision that Cornelius had in Acts 10.

⁶²Walton, 14.

This intransitive and periphrastic imperfect form of ἴσθημι may have helped Paul’s vision to be rendered like a “vivid picture.”⁶³

The Macedonian turned to Paul for help. According to Bock, the word βοηθέω (“to help”) is often used by doctors. Its basic meaning is “run to help,” which later came to mean the term help. In the Bible, the term help is often found used in connection with “salvation” in Genesis 49:25, Exodus 18:4, Deuteronomy 33:26, Psalm 9:35, and Isaiah 41:10. The term βοηθέω also includes “a pastoral aspect that protects against disease and persecution of demons” (see Matt 15:25, Mark 9:22, Acts 16:9, 2 Cor 6:2, Heb 2:18).⁶⁴ When Paul saw a vision of a Macedonian asking for help, he accepted this as a divine call for Macedonian evangelization. The following section will provide the exegesis of Acts 16:10.

Exegesis of Acts 16:10

10 ὡς δὲ τὸ ὄραμα εἶδεν, εὐθέως ἐζητήσαμεν ἐξελθεῖν εἰς Μακεδονίαν, συμβιβάζοντες ὅτι προσκέκληται ἡμᾶς ὁ θεὸς εὐαγγελίσασθαι αὐτούς.

10 When he had seen the vision, we immediately tried to cross over to Macedonia, being convinced that God had called us to proclaim the good news to them.⁶⁵

After the door was opened by God’s sovereign intervention, the clear will of God was finally revealed. When they were convinced that it was God’s call, Paul and his companions immediately obeyed. Also, having received a vision from God, Paul and his

⁶³A. T. Robertson, “Acts 16,” *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, vol. 3, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1933), 281.

⁶⁴Bock, 633.

⁶⁵Author’s translation.

companions responded “immediately” (εὐθέως), by preparing to leave for Macedonia. Bruce describes, at this point, that Luke continues the story by using the first-person plural “we” rather than the third person to “avoid being conspicuous that he himself had joined the missionary team as a fourth member (Paul, Silas, Timothy, and Luke).”⁶⁶

Talbert states that “we-sections” indicate the author’s presence as “an eyewitness” in Acts 16:10.⁶⁷ Peterson also notes that this use of the first person plural reappears in the account of sea voyages in the same way, and that it gives “a sense of eyewitness involvement and authenticity” (See Acts 20:5-15; 21:1-18; 27:1-28: 16).⁶⁸

Keener concedes that many scholars in fact admit that “we” represents the author or his sources, adding that readers will also accept the first-person claim in most other ancient historical texts. For a particular event, he reveals that the ancient historians considered the authors directly involved in the event to be the most reliable; and that Luke’s preface “may suggest such a claim of participation” in Luke 1:3. He also argues that the narrator does not insert himself simply to get attention. According to Keener, if Luke had wanted to “insert himself hypothetically for the sake of credibility,” he would classify himself as the main witness (Luke 1:2-3), and would “force himself into the story” and “also be present at important moments like the empty tomb or Pentecost.”⁶⁹ The

⁶⁶Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 359.

⁶⁷Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Acts: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles* (New York: Crossroad, 1997), 140.

⁶⁸Peterson, 563.

⁶⁹Keener, *Acts 15:1-23:35*, 348.

reason Paul and his associates were able to take this immediate and urgent action was that, as shown in verse 10, they recognized the Macedonian's call to preach the Gospel.

According to Frederick W. Danker, Walter Bauer, and William F. Arndt, the term *συμβιβάζω* means "to conclude" or "to demonstrate."⁷⁰ This is a scene in which Paul and his companions accept a new calling while acknowledging the specific reason and purpose of the divine intervention they had experienced.

Conclusion

Regarding the genre of Acts, scholars have divided it into biography, epic, novel, and history and have studied it along with various Greco-Roman literary genres. Acts has been mainly interpreted from the perspective of the genre of history. However, scholars have been studying whether the genre of Acts can be a literary work rather than a historical one. Talbert concludes that Luke wrote the book of Acts as a biographical genre containing the stories of his disciples in defense of a particular form of Christianity.⁷¹ Bonz concludes that Luke wrote the book of Acts to give historicity and restructure the vision of the Christian community to his epic, but because Acts imitated Virgil's Aeneid, it would eventually be an epic genre.⁷² Pervo classifies the book of Acts

⁷⁰Frederick W. Danker, Walter Bauer, and William F. Arndt, "συμβιβάζω," *A Greek- English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature (BDAG)*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2000), 773. In the LXX, the word frequently means "to instruct." The normal sense of the word is "to put to gather" (See Eph 4:16; Col 2:2, 19).

⁷¹Talbert, *Literary Patterns*, 135.

⁷²Bonz, 25

as a novel, focusing on "material, manner, style, and structure," which are the elements of the novel, on the argument that the book of Acts is very similar to the ancient novel.⁷³ However, this thesis supports the historical authenticity of the book of Acts mentioned by Ramsay and Wilson and tries to understand the genre of Acts as "a historical monograph interpreted from a theological perspective."⁷⁴

Paul's missionary journey is in the book of Acts at the point where the persecution begins after the beginning of the early church and the gospel is preached to the Gentiles. According to Paul's missionary strategy, he targets large cities and cities with ports.⁷⁵ Paul did not go where he originally planned, but he ended up going to Asia Minor, which he had planned on his third trip. However, his second trip to Macedonia allowed him to reach out more effectively to the Greeks in Achaia because he was exposed to higher levels of philosophy and mathematics (see Acts 17:22–34; 18:11). Thus, Paul and his companions responded with obedience to the preventing of the Holy Spirit; they were used to preach the gospel more effectively than they had planned. The next chapter will cover the missional journey in Macedonia.

⁷³Pervo, *Profit with Delight*, 105.

⁷⁴Ramsay and Wilson, 10

⁷⁵Rowlingson, 342.

CHAPTER 3
EXEGESIS OF ACTS 16:11-15

Introduction

The previous chapter showed that divine guidance interrupted Paul and his companions' journey, leading them to new places. Verse 12 records that Paul and his companions went to Macedonia. This chapter will discuss the region of Philippi, as well as present the differing opinions of scholars about the meaning of προσευχήν. The chapter will also show how Paul's party met Lydia, one of the fruits of their ministry in Philippi. The exegesis of Acts 16:11-15 will show how the Holy Spirit guided Paul and his companions at a time of uncertainty, and reveal the fruit of obedience to God's divine guidance through Lydia's conversion. At the end of the chapter, it will be revealed what kind of influence Lydia's conversion had later on in Europe. The following section will exegete Acts 16:11.

Exegesis of Acts 16:11

11 Ἀναχθέντες δὲ ἀπὸ Τρωάδος εὐθυδρομήσαμεν εἰς Σαμοθράκην, τῇ δὲ ἐπιούσῃ
εἰς Νέαν Πόλιν

11 We set sail from Troas and took a straight course to Samothrace, the following day to city of Neapolis,¹

According to Fernando, Acts 16:11 contains the “typical latter part of Acts,” showing a detailed travel log.² Bruce adds that in the detailed description of the journey, the reader can see through the “we-narrative” that the author of Acts is involved with the event. He frequently mentions “the ports of departure and arrival, revealing interest in sea journeys” as a part of the we-narratives.³

Fernando explains Samothrace as an island between Troas and Neapolis, which was primarily “a stop-over for ships.” Also, the “captains preferred anchoring there rather than sailing dangerously, especially at night.” Fernando adds that Paul and his companions “landed at Neapolis because Philippi was about ten miles inland.”⁴ According to Longenecker, the distance from Troas to Neapolis was about fifteen miles by sea. However, Paul and his companions covered it in two days. Longenecker believes that the wind was favorable to the travelers at that time. But, it took Paul and his companions five days to “return to Troas after the third missionary journey in Acts 20:6.”⁵ Specifically in verse 11, the reader finds no evangelistic work in Samothrace or Neapolis. In this regard, Peterson speculates that , perhaps it was because there were no

¹Author’s translation.

²Fernando, 443.

³F. F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles: The Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary* (London: Tyndale Press, 1951), 357.

⁴Fernando, 443.

⁵Longenecker, *Luke-Acts*, 1243.

Jewish prayer places or synagogues, or because “Paul was deliberately heading to a larger and more influential place, Philippi.”⁶ The following section will present the exegesis of Acts 16:12.

Exegesis of Acts 16:12

12 κάκειθεν εἰς Φιλίππους, ἣτις ἐστὶν πρώτη[ς] μερίδος τῆς Μακεδονίας πόλις, κολωνία. ἤμεν δὲ ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ πόλει διατρίβοντες ἡμέρας τινάς.

12 and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district[c] of Macedonia and a [Roman] colony. We remained in this city for some days.⁷

Fernando asserts that Paul and his companions arrived at Philippi from Neapolis “via the famous Roman road called ‘Egnatian Way.’”⁸ According to Bock, Philippi was a city that developed “more agriculture than commerce,” unlike the other cities Paul had targeted.⁹ Ben Witherington III suggests that Philippi was Luke’s hometown.¹⁰ Keener adds that the mainland is “only 167 acres (68 hectares),” and the “population of Philippi is estimated to be between 5,000 and 10,000.”¹¹ Although the inhabitants of Philippi were few, Bock declares that it was “a wealthy city, with abundant deposits of silver, gold, and

⁶Peterson, 566.

⁷Author’s translation.

⁸Fernando, 443.

⁹Bock, 639.

¹⁰Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 471.

¹¹Keener, *Acts 15:1–23:35*, 351.

copper.”¹² Hans Conzelmann concludes that a church was later started in Philippi, and that Paul wrote a letter to this church from prison, the letter to the Philippians.¹³

Luke’s specific mention in verse 12 that Philippi was a Roman colony is important for understanding the identity of the city. Bruce reveals that Luke mentions Philippi as “the only explicitly Roman colony,” while also mentioning several other cities known to have been Roman colonies at the time. Bruce continues that “Philip II, the father of Alexander the Great, conquered the *Tasian Krenides*,” meaning “the little fountains.” After he fortified the city, he named it after himself.¹⁴ Later, Alexander the Great, “turned his army eastward” and ruled over the east, “causing Greek to be spoken in all areas and Greek culture” to take over the entire area of the East. The foundation laid by Philip II and Alexander the Great would have been helpful to Paul, as he later went to the East to preach the Gospel.

Bruce adds that Macedonia began to be ruled entirely by Rome about two centuries after the founding of the city of Philippi. According to Bruce, the Roman general Aemilius Paulus won the Third Macedonian War, in 168 BC, giving Rome control over Macedonia. From this time on, the city of Philippi came to be regarded as “a mere settlement city.” At that time, Macedonia was “divided into four administrative

¹²Bock, 639.

¹³Hans Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, trans. James Limburg, Thomas Kraabel, and Donald H. Juel, ed. Eldon Jay Epp, and Christopher R. Matthews (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 129.

¹⁴Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 360.

divisions or republics.” But later, Macedonia became a Roman province in 146 BC. Then, the Philippine War broke out and Philippi was extended as a city in 42 BC.¹⁵

Bruce further states that The Philippian War was the beginning of the “Romanization” of the city itself, further expanding the city of Philippi. Julius Caesar came to power in “republican Rome in 48 BC, but expressed his ambitions to become emperor.” He was murdered by Brutus and Cassius in 44 BC, supporters of the republic. Thus, in 42 BC, the armies of Anthony and Octavian seeking revenge for “Julius Caesar’s death, clashed with the armies of Brutus and Cassius in the city of Philippi.” In this war, Anthony and Octavian’s forces were victorious, and Brutus and Cassius were killed. After that, the city of Philippi became a full-fledged Roman colony and was called “*Colonia Victrix Philippensium*.” Bruce concludes that after this battle, Anthony remained many veterans in Philippi on purpose to make the city a Roman colony.¹⁶ Octavian also remained more colonists in Philippi after the victories over Antony and Cleopatra at Actium in 31 BC.¹⁷ Thus, the city of Philippi was gradually Romanized.

Yet, Philippi was not simply a Romanized city. Bock points out that Philippi was a Roman colony, but legally having the same privileges as Rome.¹⁸ As for legal privileges, Larkin adds that Philippi had “the rights of autonomous government, freedom from normal provincial tribute to Rome, or taxation”; and “the whole legal system” was

¹⁵Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 357.

¹⁶Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 357.

¹⁷Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 360.

¹⁸Bock, 639.

the same as Italy. In other words, the inhabitants of Philippi were exempted from paying tribute to Rome and had the privilege of owning and selling property. Not only that, but they also enjoyed political privileges, such as having the right and responsibility to run the city “administration on their own without interference from the provincial governor.”¹⁹ Keener supports this view, by stating that “in Philippi the coins were also in Latin,” and that the “political and judicial system followed the Roman model.”²⁰ Witherington III also points out the fact that “eighty percent of the inscriptions found there are in Latin,” reflecting the “Roman character and atmosphere that was established in Philippi.”²¹

Taken together, Bock emphasizes that Philippi had “the highest status a provincial city could have,” explaining that Philippi was probably considered “a little Rome.”²² Peterson adds that the inhabitants of Philippi lived with the privileges of Roman citizens. Others considered themselves Romans, but not the Philippians or Macedonians (vv. 20-21).²³ Marvin R. Vincent concludes that they “were not whipped and they were not arrested except for radical acts;” and, they had “the privilege of appealing to the emperor.” They also “spoke Latin, were dressed in Roman style, and veterans were given lands

¹⁹Larkin, 1099.

²⁰Keener, *Acts 15:1–23:35*, 353.

²¹Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 488.

²²Bock, 639.

²³Peterson, 565.

granted by the emperor.”²⁴ In other words, Philippi was a Roman colony, also called “Little Rome”; and, the people living in that city considered themselves Romans and lived with the pride and benefits of being Romans.

In verse 12, there is a debate among scholars about the textual problem. The point of this debate is whether to interpret “Philippi as a first (or “leading”) city of the district of Macedonia” (πρώτη τῆς μερίδος Μακεδονίας πόλις), or whether Philippi is to be interpreted as “a city of the first district of Macedonia” (πρώτης μερίδος τῆς Μακεδονίας πόλις). The phrase πρώτη πόλις in verse 12 can be interpreted as “the first city” [of Macedonia]. However, Bock asserts that Philippi was “neither the largest city nor the capital at that time,” and prefers to interpret πρώτη πόλις as “leading city.”²⁵ Peterson adds that the capital of Macedonia was “Thessalonica, not Philippi,” and that the “capital of the region was Amphipolis.”²⁶ Longenecker, A, C, and Codex Vaticanus [B] interpret this as the “leading” (or first) city of Macedonia (πρώτη τῆς μερίδος Μακεδονίας πόλις).²⁷

²⁴Marvin R. Vincent, *The Acts of the Apostles*, Word Studies in the New Testament, vol. 1 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), 564.

²⁵Bock, 639.

²⁶Peterson, 567.

²⁷Longenecker, *Luke-Acts*, 1244.

Richard S. Ascough says that the phrase πρώτη πόλις reflects “Luke’s personal civic pride in Philippi.”²⁸ Peterson says he used πρώτη as an “honorific expression as Luke’s hometown.”²⁹ Keener says “first” was an honorary title that applied more broadly than just the capital.³⁰ Thus, these scholars favor the interpretation of Philippi as “the first city of that district of Macedonia.” However, to counter this view, Bruce argues that at that time Macedonia was divided into four regions. Scholars agreeing with Bruce interpret Philippi as “the city of the first region of Macedonia.”³¹ The following section will exegete Acts 16:13.

Exegesis of Acts 16:13

13 τῇ τε ἡμέρᾳ τῶν σαββάτων ἐξήλθομεν ἔξω τῆς πύλης παρὰ ποταμὸν οὗ ἐνομιζομεν προσευχὴν εἶναι, καὶ καθίσαντες ἐλάλοῦμεν ταῖς συνελθούσαις γυναῖξιν.

13 On the sabbath day we went outside the gate by the river, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and we sat down and spoke to the women who had gathered there.³²

According to Bruce, when Paul visited a new place, it was his custom to attend the local Jewish synagogue “on the first Sabbath after his arrival, and preach the gospel

²⁸Richard S. Ascough, “Civic Pride at Philippi: The Text-Critical Problem of Acts 16:12,” *New Testament Studies* 44, no. 1 (January 1998): 102-103, *AtlaSerialsPLUS*®, EBSCOhost (8 October 2021).

²⁹Peterson, 567.

³⁰Keener, *Acts 15:1–23:35*, 353.

³¹Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 357.

³²Author’s translation.

there.”³³ However, in Philippi, Paul and his companions went outside the gate by the river, searching for a place of prayer on the Sabbath. In the context of the book of Acts in general, Luke often mentions the importance of prayer. Peter and John heal a lame man on their way to pray (Acts 3:1). Cornelius’s two servant visited Peter when he was preparing for prayer (Acts 10:9-33).³⁴ In Acts 13, Paul and his companions went to find a place of prayer and met some women there, one of whom was Lydia (verse 14). Luke emphasizes prayer itself, but it seems that some special events and divine connection occurred while they were praying. In order to understand verse 13, it is important to identify the river. It would also be essential to clarify what a place of prayer meant to Paul and his companions.

There are three opinions among scholars about the location of the river. First, according to Keener, many scholars tend to link the location of the river to the “Gangites (also called Angites), a tributary of the Strymon River.”³⁵ In the second view, Schnabel considers the river to be the “Crenides, just outside the town close to the city, because the Gangites river is too far to travel to on the Sabbath.”³⁶ The third view supported by Keener is that the location of the river is to the east of the city, “through the Neapolis Gate.” Outside this gate is an “old creek with a fourth century church.” Inside the gate was another “fourth century AD church dedicated to Paul.” However, according to

³³Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 361.

³⁴Bock, 459.

³⁵Keener, *Acts*, 406.

³⁶Schnabel, 927.

Keener, since neither the Crenides Creek, nor the old creek was considered as a “river,” the first view is mainly accepted among scholars.³⁷

Bock explains that the reason that Paul’s group went to the river was probably because it could meet the “Jewish purification requirements.”³⁸ Keener agrees with Bock, stating that it was important for “Diaspora Judaism to wash hands before prayer.” Besides, Keener adds that it made sense for the missionaries to look “outside the gates,” if they had never heard of a Jewish gathering in the city. Keener also speculates that it was the best place Paul’s group could guess that would have been near the water where a purification ceremony could be held.³⁹ According to Josephus, on the Sabbath, the Jews, according to Jewish law and their forefathers, made their προσευχή (“a place of prayer”) at the seaside and “performed their holy offices.”⁴⁰

Next, it is important to clarify what προσευχήν is in verse 13. Adolf Deissmann explains that the place where Paul and his companions arrived along the river was a place called προσευχήν, which is translated as “the house of prayer.” Scholars are divided as to whether a house of prayer in Philippi refers to συναγωγή (“synagogue”) or a house of prayer. First of all, scholars claim that the προσευχήν, located in Philippi, often functioned as a designation for Jewish prayer houses, while the προσευχήν found in

³⁷Keener, *Acts*, 406.

³⁸Bock, 640.

³⁹Keener, *Acts 15:1–23:35*, 355.

⁴⁰Flavius Josephus, *The Complete Works of Flavius Josephus*, trans. William Whiston (Green Forest, AR: New Leaf, 2008), 1386.

ancient literature and inscriptions, were regarded as gathering places.⁴¹ Keener notes that προσευχήν was used frequently in Palestine; but, this word was regularly used in the New Testament as συναγωγή.⁴² According to James D. G. Dunn, the Diaspora synagogues were also commonly referred to as “the (houses of) prayer” in Jewish and Greek literature.⁴³ Considering the use of these words, one can assume that the terms συναγωγή and προσευχήν are used interchangeably. Bock says that whenever the word the προσευχήν is used, it almost always refers to a synagogue, and concludes that προσευχήν at Philippi was a synagogue.⁴⁴ Subsequently, Bruce concludes that the fact that Paul always went to the synagogue on the Sabbath to strategically proclaim the Gospel may suggest that the προσευχήν in Philippi was a synagogue.⁴⁵ Paul’s mission strategy will not be dealt with here, but will be dealt with in more detail in chapter 4.

Contrary to the above view, there is the view that the προσευχήν of Philippi was not a synagogue. Vincent explains that there were very few Jews living in Philippi

⁴¹Adolf Deissmann, *Bible Studies: Contributions, Chiefly from Papyri and Inscriptions, to the History of the Language, the Literature, and the Religion of Hellenistic Judaism and Primitive Christianity* (Winona Lake, IN: Alpha, 1979), 222.

⁴²Keener, *Acts 1:1–2:47*, 170.

⁴³Dunn, 219.

⁴⁴Bock, 640.

⁴⁵Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 361.

because it was a commercial, and not a military, city.⁴⁶ Bruce emphasizes that Paul and his companions met only women in the προσευχήν.⁴⁷ If the synagogue had at least ten Jewish men, they would have sufficed as “constituents for the synagogue.” Thus, Longenecker speculates that the fact that there were only a few Jews in the synagogue and that there were only women in the synagogue suggests that the προσευχήν in Philippi was not a regular synagogue.⁴⁸ Keener adds that “Jews and God-fearers met regularly on the Sabbath”; and, “if there was no synagogue, worshipers gathered near the water needed for the ceremonial cleansing of their hands.”⁴⁹ Thus, Fernando concludes that although προσευχήν was used as a synagogue at the time, it may have simply been a place where people gathered to worship God rather than a synagogue.⁵⁰ Combining these two views: in general προσευχήν is a word that can be used interchangeably with συναγωγή. However, the Philippian προσευχήν may have had the same function as συναγωγή (“gathering place”), but not a be συναγωγή building itself. The greatest evidence is that men cannot be found among these gathered for worship on the Sabbath in Philippi. The next section will exegete Acts 16:14-15.

⁴⁶Vincent, 564.

⁴⁷Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 361.

⁴⁸Longenecker, *Luke-Acts*, 1245.

⁴⁹Keener, *Acts*, 406.

⁵⁰Fernando, 445.

Exegesis of Acts 16:14-15

14 καί τις γυνή ὀνόματι Λυδία, πορφυρόπωλις πόλεως Θυατείρων σεβομένη τὸν θεόν, ἤκουεν, ἧς ὁ κύριος διήνοιξεν τὴν καρδίαν προσέχειν τοῖς λαλουμένοις ὑπὸ τοῦ Παύλου. 15 ὡς δὲ ἐβαπτίσθη καὶ ὁ οἶκος αὐτῆς, παρεκάλεσεν λέγουσα, Εἰ κεκρίκατέ με πιστὴν τῷ κυρίῳ εἶναι, εἰσελθόντες εἰς τὸν οἶκόν μου μένετε· καὶ παρεβιάσατο ἡμᾶς.

14 A certain woman named Lydia, a worshiper of God, was listening to us; she was from the city of Thyatira and a dealer in purple cloth. The Lord opened her heart to listen eagerly to what was said by Paul. 15 When she and her household were baptized, she urged us, saying, “If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come and stay at my home.” And she prevailed upon us.⁵¹

There are several theories about the name “Lydia.” According to Bruce, some scholars explain that Lydia is not an actual name, but merely a name given for “a Lydian woman”; that is, “a person who lived in a region that was the territory of the ancient kingdom of Lydia.” However, Bruce states the name is also endorsed as the “personal name of women of high status, as well as slaves and freed women.”⁵² Witherington III also supports that mentioning her name can make a lot of sense because “Roman women were traditionally referred to by family titles rather than by personal names or nicknames.” However, the fact that Luke records Lydia as her personal name “suggests that she is of Greek descent.” Witherington III adds that it may also imply that “she was of some position or that she was famous or notorious.”⁵³ At that time, Lydia was famous for her art of weaving and using purple dye (16:14); and, it is likely that Lydia came to Philippi to continue expanding her business. Meanwhile, according to Schnabel, it is believed that

⁵¹Author’s translation.

⁵²Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 358.

⁵³Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 473.

she had already been taught Judaism in the synagogue while in Thyatira. In verse 14, the word ἤκουεν (“was listening,” or “used to hear”) is imperfect, and implies a recurring meeting. This verb shows that Lydia may not have been converted on this Sabbath. As she listened to Paul, it was God who opened her heart to accept the Gospel. Schnabel reveals that Paul spoke, Lydia heard; but it was the Lord who δῆνοιξεν (“opened”) Lydia’s heart to understand and accept the Gospel.⁵⁴ Finally, Keener adds that Lydia’s house was large enough to receive Paul and his companions. So, her house provided the foundation for an early church to evangelize Philippi.⁵⁵ Next section will present the conclusion of this chapter.

Conclusion

The call to Macedonia was not planned, but a missionary trip based on uncertainty. However, Paul began his first mission in Europe with the interception and vision in obedience to the Holy Spirit. Although Philippi was a Roman colony; it had an administrative authority similar to that of Rome. Thus, visiting Philippi was also consistent with Paul’s missionary strategy. Through God’s guidance, Paul and his companions met Lydia. And through Paul’s teachings, Lydia became the first convert in Europe. Also, Lydia’s house later became a foundation for the Philippian church. In the end, Paul’s unintentional plan followed the divine guidance, which established the first

⁵⁴Schnabel, 929. This verb is also used by Jesus to “open” the Bible in Luke 24:32 and to “open” the eyes when the disciples recognize the risen Jesus in Luke 24:31.

⁵⁵Keener, Acts, 377.

church in Europe through Lydia. Based on this understanding, in the next chapter, Seen Ok Ahn's ministry will be compared and analyzed with Paul's second missionary journey.

CHAPTER 4

COMPARING THE MINISTRY OF REV. SEEN-OK AHN AND PAUL'S MINISTRY

Introduction

Previous chapters provided exegetical analysis for background and interpretation of Acts 16:6-15. This chapter compares the ministry of Seen-Ok Ahn with Paul's ministry. Paul and Ahn have four major similarities. First, they both experienced being prevented by the Holy Spirit. In particular, they experienced the preventing of the Holy Spirit in their lives and ministry. Second, they could expand their ministry through their disciples and preteges. Third, they knew the importance of teaching, and they continued to teach people. Finally, they preached the gospel of Jesus Christ even in prison. However, before comparing the two ministries, it will provide information about Ahn's life and ministry.

Background of Rev. Seen-Ok Ahn

Julie C. Ma and Wonsuk Ma give a brief background to Seen-Ok Ahn in their book *Mission in the Spirit*. They say that Seen-Ok Ahn was born on August 22, 1924, in Pyongyang, the capital of North Korea, the eldest of four children. Although her parents were not Christians, she attended a church near her home during her

childhood.¹ According to Eim, Ahn's parents wanted her to become a doctor.² However, according to Rebekka Horlacher, she dreamed of becoming an educator "like Johann Pestalozzi," who emphasized the holistic development of children.³ So, Eim concludes that she finally became a high school teacher in 1942.⁴ Ma and Ma add that the world was suffering from World War II in 1942; and, Korea was under Japanese rule at the time. Ahn often visited orphanages in Pyongyang, to comfort orphans suffering the pain of war. This was Ahn's first ministry. And she met Kee-Seuk Ahn, her husband to be, at the orphanage.⁵

Eim continues that when the Korean War broke out in 1950, the Ahns moved to South Korea. After moving to South Korea, they began teaching a small group of

¹Julie C. Ma and Wonsuk Ma, *Mission in the Spirit: Towards a Pentecostal/Charismatic Missiology* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2010), 202.

²Eim, "Pentecostalism and Public School," 6.

³Rebekka Horlacher, "Vocational and Liberal Education in Pestalozzi's Educational Theory," *Pedagogía y Saberes* 50 (January 2019): 111. In this article, Pestalozzi states that holistic education should develop the "head, hand, and heart" evenly. However, this does not mean that the "three parts must be developed equally." It also does not mean that the "harmony of the heart, head, and hand has equal value." But, it can be seen as meaning balance that is not biased to one side. She continues that one should not focus on just one of the head, heart, and hand. However, the most "central education should be focused on the heart"; and education of the head and hand should be based on this.

⁴Eim, "Pentecostalism and Public School," 6.

⁵Ma and Ma, 202. Pyongyang Orphanage was the first orphanage established by Christians in Pyongyang.

refugee students in 1953.⁶ According to Wan Suk Do, this is the “original model of the Daesung Christian School,” which is also a pioneering model for schools for orphans and homeless people.⁷ Later, Eim adds that this initial school continued to grow, “growing into six schools with over eight thousand students and over four hundred teachers.” Ahn had a passion for teaching young students. However, her Lord continued to give her a full-time ministerial calling. And in 1966, she left her husband and her five children behind, obeyed her Lord’s calling, and went to the United States.⁸

Eim concludes that Ahn studied theology in Portland, Oregon, for three years before she moved to Los Angeles. In 1968, a Korean pastor told Ahn about Dr. Rolf K. McPherson, the President of the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel at that time. But as soon as Ahn saw McPherson, she was startled. Ahn was surprised because she had already seen McPherson in a vision three two years earlier. When Ahn first came to America in 1966, she saw in a vision a gentleman who gave her a certificate of preaching. And two years later, Ahn met McPherson in Los Angeles, the gentleman she had seen in that vision. Ahn asked McPherson to send missionaries to Korea; and, he sent missionaries Arthur and Evelyn Thompson from

⁶Eim, “Pentecostalism and Public School,” 6.

⁷Wan Suk Do, “Utilizing Role Play in the Bible Teaching Principles for Youth Mission Training (YMT),” (D. Min. proj., Oral Roberts University, May 1995), 3, *ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global* (5 September 2021).

⁸Eim, “Pentecostalism and Public School,”7.

the Philippines to Korea in 1969.⁹ Thus, Eim defines this process of Ahn's connection with the Church of the Foursquare Gospel as "the definite leading of the Holy Spirit."¹⁰

Eim continues that Ahn returned to Korea in 1970 as a full-time ordained minister of the Foursquare Church. And together with the Thompsons, she jointly started the ministry of the Student Foursquare Gospel Church. At that time, the mainstream denominations in Korea were Presbyterian, Methodist, and Baptist. So, the Foursquare denomination was completely unfamiliar to the Koreans. Also, due to the influence of Buddhism and Confucianism, Korea was a male-centered culture. Female pastors were not accepted in society; and the spiritual leadership of female pastors was completely denied. However, Ahn prayed day and night for change; and, the Lord answered her prayer. Where the Gospel was preached, people were healed, and demons were cast out. Teachers began to be converted first; and, the number of students turning to the Lord exploded. The early Student Foursquare Gospel Church became the foundation. Then, Ahn changed the name of this church to Daejeon Foursquare Gospel Church.¹¹

⁹Yeol Soo Eim, "South Korea," *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, ed. Stanley M. Burgess and Ed M. Van der Maas (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 775-77.

¹⁰Yeol Soo Eim, "The Worldwide Expansion of The Foursquare Church," (D. Miss. diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 1986), 219, *ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global* (5 September 2021).

¹¹Eim, "Pentecostalism and Public School," 8. However, the church is renamed as Jesus Garden Church now.

Eim further notes that Ahn established the Youth Mission Training Institute (YMTI) in 1990, to deliver the love of God to young men and women, and further produce Youth ministers, which centered on the Daejeon Foursquare Gospel Church. In the midst of this, Ahn sent spiritual leaders abroad for leadership training. After they received degrees from abroad and returned to Korea, she established the Gospel Theological Seminary in 1996. God also gave her the opportunity to serve in prison ministry. In prisons, she preached Jesus Christ to those affected by socialist ideas. And, the Gospel of Jesus brought hundreds back to the Lord. Later, she sent missionaries to Sakhalin, Russia and China, followed by the establishment of an agricultural school to expand the Gospel in socialist countries and to send out missionaries.¹²

Ahn has dedicated her life not only to her ministry, but also to managing her spirituality. According to Ma and Ma, Ahn has spent her whole life developing her spirituality in fasting and prayer.¹³ Eim describes Ahn as “a prayer warrior,” and notes how she approached the Lord in prayer and fasting in difficult moments. In particular, Eim emphasizes that Ahn fasted and prayed for forty days at the age of sixty.¹⁴ Although her family and those around her were greatly concerned, Ahn

¹²Yeol Soo Eim, “Ahn, Seen Ok (Kim),” 948.

¹³Ma and Ma, 203.

¹⁴Eim, “Pentecostalism and Public School,” 9.

explains that she did it by the grace of the Lord.¹⁵ The next section will present the ministry of Rev. Ahn.

Ministry of Rev. Ahn

This section will describe three notable ministries of Rev. Ahn. The first one is the education ministry. She was an educator who educated refugees during the war. She also believed that her students discover their identity and mission through education. Lastly, she was an evangelist who delivered the gospel of Jesus Christ even in prison.

Educational Ministry

Ahn can be defined as an educator who has taught and trained people throughout her life. As mentioned above, the passion she possesses has taught refugee students even during war time. According to Eim, she was convinced that even amid the ruins of war, the only hope of Korea was to provide young people with an education based on the Christian faith.¹⁶ Ma and Ma add that her husband Kee-Seuk Ahn also supported her conviction; and, they started Daesung School together. Ahn added chapels to the school curriculum and regularly taught the Bible to children in the classroom. This was the result of not only believing students, but also non-believers, being able to listen to the Bible naturally and planting the Lord in

¹⁵Seen-Ok Ahn, *Fasting Prayer*, audio tapes, 15 January 1988 (November 8, 2021).

¹⁶Eim, "Pentecostalism and Public School," 6.

their hearts naturally.¹⁷ Eim explains that for over thirty-five hours a year, Ahn provided the students an opportunity to study the Bible systematically. The Bible study was conducted through the school's chaplain, with the aim to save souls; and, many students were able to meet the Lord. Eim reports that among freshmen entering Daesung School for the first time, less than 15% were Christians; but, up to 80-85% of them accepted the Lord by the time they graduated.¹⁸

Eim further explains that Ahn started training spiritual leaders who would be used in the growth of Daejeon Gospel Church in 1972. Even when it was difficult to train spiritual leaders in Korea due to the pressure of the Korean government, Ahn sent students abroad to help them get training.¹⁹ Specifically, in 1990, Ahn sent twelve potential spiritual leaders to Oral Roberts University to be trained in Pentecostal theology, and to receive master's level theological training. After that, Ahn sent young people to England, the Philippines, and South Africa to study theology; and, she continued to work for the theological development of the Korean Church and the development of the Daejeon Foursquare Gospel Church.²⁰

¹⁷Ma and Ma, 202.

¹⁸Yeol Soo Eim, "The Life Story of Rev. Seen-Ok Ahn," unpublished paper, Taejon, Korea: Foursquare Bible College, 1984, 4.

¹⁹Eim, "The Worldwide Expansion of The Foursquare Church," 223. At that time, the Korean government limited the number of Bible College or Seminary students, and even members for all church organizations. Due to the strict law, several schools were closed.

²⁰Eim, "Pentecostalism and Public School," 16.

Through an interview with the author, Ahn explained that she had a vision to teach students by building a seminary of the Foursquare denomination in the future. When the students Ahn sent abroad returned to Korea after completing their studies, her students and Ahn established Gospel Seminary in 1996, which grew into a school that could award five degrees (M. Div., M. A. in Counseling, M.A. in Children's Education, Th. M., and a Ph. D.) in 1998. When Ahn founded the Graduate School of Gospel Theology, she declared that she would "evangelize Asians through Asians." Therefore, although it required a lot of financial and material commitment, she invited young people from Asia to train. With this passion of Ahn, students from China, India, Myanmar, and Ghana in Africa came to study theology, returned to their home countries, and dedicate themselves to the expansion of the Kingdom of God. Not only did Ahn train spiritual leaders through Gospel Seminary, but she also provided teachers at her school with the opportunity to receive training through short-term theological training. Ahn said that she "koreanized" the Theological Education by Extension (TEE) Program; so that ten people with teaching licenses could study the Bible and theology to be used as ministers.²¹ The next section will address Ahn's passion and heart toward the Korean Youth through Youth Mission Training.

²¹Seen-Ok Ahn, Pastor Emeritus of Jesus Garden Church, interview by author, Daejeon, South Korea, 1 November 2021.

Youth Mission Training

As mentioned above, Ahn has devoted everything to youth missions, education, and training. Eim says Ahn's whole heart, passion, and prayer were focused on the salvation of the souls of her students. And after Ahn returned from America, she said that early in the morning of October 1970 she was praying in a church, when she saw thousands of people falling from the sky into the bottomless pit. Ahn was startled, and shouted, "These are mine." And at that moment, the people stopped falling and floated in the air. Then a voice came from heaven, "forty thousand." The vision soon disappeared; and, she found herself muttering that "five times eight equals forty." She prayed that she would realize the meaning of this vision; and, the inspiration of the Holy Spirit came upon her. The interpretation of the vision was as follows. Each Daesung School student had an average of five family members. And, the number of the original six Daesung School students was expected to reach approximately eight thousand in the future. Therefore, if Ahn trains one student well, the Gospel can flow naturally to the five family members of each student. And if eight thousand students are trained in this way, they could eventually return forty thousand souls to the Lord. This was a prophecy for the Youth Mission Training Program (YMT). And from that point on, Ahn poured out

everything to return forty thousand souls to the Lord.²² Ahn's special experience is reminiscent of Aimee Semple McPherson's vision of "waterfall."²³

Wan Suk Do defines YMT as a professional mission program that "trains the spirituality of young people and stimulates them" to become missionaries in Asia. According to Do, Ahn hoped that through YMT, she would ultimately train students as Pentecostal missionaries. This program is a four-day intensive spiritual training program with mandatory attendance.²⁴ Considering that Korean education systems for middle schools and high schools have up to the third grade each, students attend once a year for a total of three times. Eim adds the program is organized so that the first year is centered on "conversion to Christianity"; the second year aims for students to be "baptized with the Holy Spirit"; and the third year allows students to receive an individual calling as a missionary.²⁵ The next section will explain the prison ministry of Rev. Ahn.

Prison Ministry

Ma and Ma state that Ahn did a lot of education-related ministry; but, God extended her to do another important ministry. Ahn has been in prison ministry for over

²²Eim, "Pentecostalism and Public School," 19-20.

²³Daniel M. Epstein, *Sister Aimee: The Life of Aimee Semple McPherson* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Jovanovich, 1993), 54. In the vision there was a large river running through it, sweeping away millions of people and pouring them down a waterfall. Then, in a vision, Aimee heard a voice from God saying, "become a winner of souls."

²⁴Do, 1-2. This project specifically shows how YMT works, and its results. For general details and results of YMT, please refer to this paper.

²⁵Eim, "Pentecostalism and Public School," 19-20.

twenty years. And she has preached the Gospel to people who been taught a communist ideology.²⁶ Ahn explains that she was invited by the Daejeon Correctional Service to serve on an advisory board, since she studied economics in Korea after she defected to South Korea.²⁷ While on the advisory board, Ahn preached the Gospel of Jesus to the unconverted leftists and spies who were “saturated with communist ideas and philosophies,” Eim explains. The leftists initially believed that Ahn had received special orders from the South Korean government and had approached them with a political purpose. But her constant visits, love, and touch of the Holy Spirit began to change them.²⁸ According to Ahn, some received salvation, some had visions, and some recognized the Bible and the Holy Spirit. Some even studied theology in prison.²⁹

Eim states that Ahn also preached the Gospel to communist countries, and established Shinkwang Agricultural Junior College in Sakhalin, Russia, in 1988, which taught not only agricultural techniques, but also the Bible and theology.³⁰ Ahn continued that another country of her overseas missions was Uzbekistan. Like Sakhalin, this place was communist in the past. Ministry there was also done through the YMT program. In

²⁶Ma and Ma, 202.

²⁷Ahn, interview by author, n. p.

²⁸Eim, “Pentecostalism and Public School,” 14.

²⁹Ahn, interview by author, n. p.

³⁰Eim, “Ahn, Seen Ok (Kim),” 948.

particular, the miracle of healing occurred there, making people aware that Jesus is the Living One.³¹ The next section will compare the ministry of Paul and Ahn.

Comparing the Ministries of Ahn and Paul

As one compares of the ministry of Ahn and Paul, four connections can be found. First of all, their ministries all experienced attraction through the holy interception of the Holy Spirit. Second, they expanded their ministry through converts, protégés, and disciples. Third, they emphasized teaching and educated people around seminars or schools. Finally, they preached the gospel of Jesus Christ even in prison.

Guidance of the Holy Spirit

Paul and Ahn's ministry were entirely led by the Holy Spirit. In particular, Paul and Ahn experienced the Holy Spirit changing them from the direction they wanted to go to a direction they had never thought of. Two times Paul was prevented from going to Asia by the Holy Spirit/the Spirit of Jesus (Acts 16:6-7). He traveled to many places; but God prevented him from going to the place he had planned to go (Acts 16:7-8). Also, Ahn wanted to live her life as an ordinary educator in Korea, but the Holy Spirit led her to America to train her as a full-time minister. It is noteworthy that they both had God's calling confirmed through dreams or visions when the Holy Spirit. Paul saw a Macedonian man appearing to him and asking for help (Acts 16:9). Paul had a certain direction he wanted to go; but through that vision he acknowledged that it was the Lord's calling and headed for Macedonia (Acts 16:10).

³¹Ahn, interview by author, n. p.

The Lord guided the direction of Ahn's ministry through a detailed vision. Through her vision, she was connected to the Foursquare Church, which she had never heard of. And as a result, the Foursquare Gospel was able to enter Korea for the first time.

Discipleship Ministry

Another parallel is that both Paul and Ahn established spiritual leaders and expanded their converts, protégés, disciples. In Paul's second missionary journey, only Lydia can be found. But there are five more people who may have been his converts/disciples and helped his ministry: Timothy, Titus, Epaphroditus, Lydia, Andronicus and Junia.

First of all, Paul raised Timothy and made him a faithful minister. Stacy E. Hoehl reveals that Paul recognized the importance of preparing a protégé to carry on the Gospel message even after his life and ministry were over.³² Paul sent Timothy when he was limited to visit people, or when he felt that the church he founded needed protection and teaching from an "authoritative representative of the apostle."³³ By sending Timothy on his behalf, he was able to continue to care for and expand his ministry. Timothy ministered in at least four churches (Thessalonians; 1 Thessalonians 3:1-2, Corinthians; 1 Corinth 4:17, Philippians; Philippians 2:19-22, and Ephesians; 1 Timothy 1:3).

³²Stacy E. Hoehl, "The Mentor Relationship: An Exploration of Paul as Loving Mentor to Timothy and the Application of This Relationship to Contemporary Leadership Challenges," *Journal of Biblical Perspectives in Leadership* 3, no. 2 (Summer 2011): 35.

³³Jeffrey A. D. Weima, *1-2 Thessalonians*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2014), 299.

Paul sent Timothy who is called “our brother and co-worker for God in proclaiming the gospel of Christ” because of the difficulties of the Thessalonians church (1 Thessalonians 3:2-3). The exact nature of the suffering of the Thessalonian believers is not described, but Weima explains that this suffering represents an external oppression. And while the specifics of this extrinsic suffering are less clear, Weima is more likely to point to socially serious levels of “harassment and ostracism,” while not implying physical death or martyrdom.³⁴ Robert L. Thomas explains that Paul could not continue in ignorance of how his converts were enduring persecution. Thomas believes that Paul may have asked Timothy to “strengthen and encourage” the faith of the Thessalonian believers, as Paul himself usually did (Acts 14:22; 15:32, 41; 18:23; Rom 1:11; 16:25; 1 Thess 3:13).³⁵

Paul sent Timothy to the Corinthian church so that the members could more easily imitate Paul. Timothy’s core mission, sent to Corinth, is to remind them of “my [Paul’s] way in Christ” (1 Cor 4:17). Paul is interested in teaching his way as well as his ideas and doctrines to the Corinthians. According to David E. Garland, the term “my way” is the way of Christ and reflects the soul of the Christian faith. In other words, Garland concludes that Paul wanted to teach the Corinthians through Timothy to teach practical manners to live as Christians rather than to focus on education in the “cognitive sense of

³⁴Weima, 159

³⁵Robert L. Thomas, *1 & 2 Thessalonians*, The Expositor’s Bible Commentary, vol. 11 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 103.

knowing Christ.”³⁶ Peter T. O’Brien states that the imprisoned Paul also sent Timothy to the Philippian church (Philippians 1:1).³⁷ According to Silva, when Paul sent his ambassador, his purpose was to give him encouragement and advice on issues that the church generally faces.³⁸ However, when Paul sent Timothy to Philippi, conversely, it was that Paul himself may have been cheered by news of them (Phil 2:19).

Finally, Paul was able to continue his ministry by sending Timothy to Ephesus. Hoehl reveals that Paul spent much of his time developing the church in Ephesus. Hoehl adds that Paul was also concerned about the spread of false doctrines and heresies among the church members, so he wanted to send Timothy to fight the false teachings and give them the right ones again.³⁹ According to Andreas Köstenberger, the region of Ephesus was both the capital and the religious center of the province of Asia. The area of Ephesus was famous for the worship of Artemis, achieved through sensual and orgy practice. Thus, Köstenberge explains that the

³⁶David E. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2003), 183.

³⁷Peter T. O’Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 346.

³⁸Moisés Silva, *Philippians*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1992), 169.

³⁹Hoehl, 38.

church at Ephesus was so important to Paul's missionary strategy that Paul sent Timothy to eradicate false doctrines from this key area.⁴⁰

Paul even entrusted his disciple Titus to take over the unfinished work of his ministry. Paul left Titus in Crete to correct what remained unfinished (Titus 1:5). Gordon D. Fee explains that Titus' mission was to complete what Paul himself had left unfinished (literally: "what is lacking") in Crete that he had not finished.⁴¹ First, there are instructions regarding the appointment of elders (Titus 1:6-9). Second, the "unfinished business" and "disorder" mentioned above are dealing with things that arise from disobedient religious people (Titus 1:10-16).

Next, Paul was able to expand his mission in Philippi through the converted Epaphroditus. According to Michael F. Bird, and Nijay K. Gupta, the name of "Epaphroditus" was a common Greek name associated with the goddess Aphrodite. They reasonably speculate that Epaphroditus may have been a follower of the cult of Aphrodite before following Jesus Christ.⁴² Paul describes Epaphroditus not only as a brother, but also as Paul's "co-worker and fellow soldier, your messenger and minister to my need" (Phil 2:25). According to Silva, this description does not

⁴⁰Andreas Köstenberger, *1 & 2 Timothy, and Titus*, The Expositor's Bible Commentary, vol. 11 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 49.

⁴¹Gordon D. Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 169.

⁴²Michael F. Bird and Nijay K. Gupta, *Philippians*, New Cambridge Bible Commentary (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 102.

necessarily refer to any previous ministry, but it can be inferred how Epaphroditus faithfully worked in fulfilling “Paul’s Philippian mission.”⁴³

Paul also influenced the Philippian church and Europe through Lydia. Paul preached the Gospel to a group of women he met in Macedonia (Acts 16:13). Fee explains that among the crowd, a woman named Lydia accepted Jesus, and later “became the first pastor of the Philippian church.”⁴⁴ Moisés Silva adds that Paul’s jailer in Philippi (Acts 16:27-30) seems to have joined this congregation.⁴⁵ The church in Philippi is the first fruit of the European mission produced by Paul’s evangelism.

Paul mentioned Andronicus and Junia in Romans 16:7 and introduced them as his relatives who had been in prison with him. Paul added that they were outstanding among the apostles. According to Rena Pederson, Paul would have known Junia on his first or missionary trip. It is speculated that Paul would have been imprisoned in Philippi (Acts 16:23) or Ephesus (1 Cor 15:32) along with Junia and Andronicus.⁴⁶ Leon Morris states that Clement of Rome later states that Paul was in prison seven times, so Paul, Andronicus, and Junia would have been

⁴³Silva, 172.

⁴⁴Fee, 534. At that time, heads of households took charge, the same role as in the church.

⁴⁵Silva, 28.

⁴⁶Rena Pederson, *The Lost Apostle: Searching for the Truth About Junia* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006), 33.

imprisoned together.⁴⁷ According to Yii-Jan Lin, it is very likely that Andronicus and Junia were literally imprisoned together rather than metaphorically fellow prisoners.⁴⁸ Pederson also adds that Junia was one of the first believers to travel the Mediterranean to preach the gospel of Jesus and as apostles “Andronicus and Junia were the “hands and feet” of early Christianity.”⁴⁹ Morris reveals that in the New Testament that there was a wider range of apostles than the Twelve, and this couple (Andronicus and Junia) appears to belong to a wider range.⁵⁰ Thus, Pederson concludes that the majority of scholars view Junia as one of the early apostles, a respected missionary.⁵¹

Similar to Paul, Ahn sent her protégés and disciples to places such as Sakhalin and Uzbekistan. Ahn sent missionary Youngwon Kim and Wan suk Do to Sakhalin and supported their mission.⁵² Michael Gelb explains that Sakhalin was the area in which the first generation of Koreans and their descendants unable to return to their homeland, lived as foreigners under Japanese colonial rule after being

⁴⁷Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), 509.

⁴⁸Yii-Jan Lin, “Junia: An Apostle before Paul,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 139, no. 1 (2020): 204.

⁴⁹Pederson, 33.

⁵⁰Morris, 509.

⁵¹Pederson, 43.

⁵²Ahn, interview by author, n. p.

dragged into forced labor.⁵³ Ahn thought that such people also needed the gospel, so she sent ministers. As mentioned above, Eim states that she built the Shinkwang Agricultural School, teaching them agricultural techniques, while at the same time opening up the opportunity for them to learn the Bible.⁵⁴ According to Ahn, these delinquent youths who had gone to prison at the time also learned agriculture at this school and their lives changed.⁵⁵ Yeol Soo Eim and Hong Sik Chac relate that Ahn was able to effectively spread the gospel in Uzbekistan through Valentino Kim and Igor Lim.⁵⁶ In August 2000, Ahn went on a mission to Tashkent, Uzbekistan. There, she specifically conducted Youth Mission Training (YMY). After YMT, Kim and Lim were called to evangelize in Uzbekistan, and Kim established a church in Samarkand and Lim in Tashkent.⁵⁷ In the next section, the teaching ministry of Paul and Ahn will be addressed.

⁵³Michael Gelb, “An Early Soviet Ethnic Deportation: The Far-Eastern Koreans,” *The Russian Review* 54, no. 3 (1995): 409.

⁵⁴Eim, “Ahn, Seen Ok (Kim),” 948.

⁵⁵Ahn, interview by author, n. p.

⁵⁶Yeol Soo Eim and Hong Sik Chac, *Leadership, Spirituality and Theology: Commemorating the 33 Years of Ministry of Rev. Dr. Seen Ok Ahn* (Daejeon, South Korea: Asia Life University, 2005), 1032.

⁵⁷Ahn, interview by author, n. p.

Teaching Ministry

Another similarity between Ahn and Paul is that they both emphasized the educational ministry of teaching people in classroom setting. For two years, Fitzmyer states that Paul taught in the hall of Tyrannus, which is regarded as a lecture hall or a school building.⁵⁸ Longenecker states that through teaching in the hall of Tyrannus, Paul's disciples and converts carried the Gospel from Ephesus to the "villages of Asia Minor."⁵⁹ So, all the Jews and Greeks who stayed in Asia also heard the Gospel of Christ from them (Acts 19:10). Keener points out that even though Paul was prevented by the Holy Spirit in his second missional journey (Acts 16:6-7), now Paul's Gospel delivered in the province of Asia (Acts 19:10,17,20).⁶⁰

According to Eim, Ahn had a great passion and heart of teaching.⁶¹ Eim notes that she taught children even during the war, and wanted to build a school and spread the gospel of Christ through teaching.⁶² She founded six Daesung Schools, and later a university, where she taught her students—not only Koreans, but also students from China, India, Myanmar, and Ghana in Africa were taught the Bible, Ahn

⁵⁸Fitzmyer, 648. He explains the term σχολῆ usually refers to a school building or a lecture hall.

⁵⁹Longenecker, *Luke-Acts*, 1301.

⁶⁰Keener, Acts, 491.

⁶¹Eim, "Pentecostalism and Public School," 19-20.

⁶²Eim, "Pentecostalism and Public School," 6.

believed that they would later be sent as missionaries to their countries.⁶³ In the following section, the preaching ministry of Paul and Ahn will be addressed.

Preaching in Prison

There is a similarity in that both Paul and Ahn preached the gospel of the Lord even in prison. Of course, Paul was imprisoned because of the gospel, and Ahn voluntarily went into the prison, and preached the gospel. However, in preaching the Gospel, the two were not limited to the prison. According to Conzelmann, Paul was in a Roman prison at the time he wrote the epistle to Philippians.⁶⁴ Nevertheless, he did not hesitate to share the gospel with the members of the church in Philippi. Also, Paul's trials were an opportunity to preach the gospel before Herod, Felix, and Festus. Eim states that Ahn also preached the gospel in prison for those affected by leftist ideology.⁶⁵ There are many difficulties when a woman enters prison and ministers, but Ahn preached Jesus Christ through these difficulties.

Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis was to exegete Paul's second missionary journey in Acts 16:6-15 and see how it to the ministry Rev. Seen-Ok Ahn compares with it. By comparing the work of Paul and Seen-Ok Ahn, it was to reveal the work of being led by the Holy Spirit. Chapter 1 provided an overall background and setting to help the

⁶³Ahn, interview by author, n. p.

⁶⁴Conzelmann, 129.

⁶⁵Eim, "Pentecostalism and Public School," 14.

reader understand the content and characteristics of the book of Acts. Chapter 1 also showed that Luke's understanding of the Holy Spirit and the use of dreams and visions in Acts played an important role in Paul's ministry as well as in Ahn's ministry. Chapter 2 contained the exegesis of Acts 16:6-10, starting with the genre and literary analysis of Acts. Although there is some scholarly debate on the genre, this thesis agrees that Acts is a selective historical record. But it is "a historical monography" that contains objective historical facts rather than being highly subjective.⁶⁶ In Acts 16:6-8, Paul's missionary journey was prevented twice by the Holy Spirit. However, this blockage eventually led Paul and his companions to Macedonia. Luke shows that the Holy Spirit can block some direction and open it again later. Chapter 3 provided an exegesis of Acts 16:11-15, showing Paul's first missionary journey in Europe. Chapter 3 also showed Paul's meeting with Lydia, and the Holy Spirit opening her heart. This event shows that the Holy Spirit plays an important role in evangelism. Finally, chapter 4 showed the life and ministry of Rev. Seen-Ok Ahn, and provided a parallel with Paul's ministry. Through this thesis, in conclusion, an example of the work of being led by the Holy Spirit was presented. It can be inferred that a life led by the Holy Spirit is not limited to a specific biblical period nor to a certain gender, but continues to take place in modern times through God's chosen people.

⁶⁶Hengel, 36.

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