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ABSTRACT

MOTIVATIONS FOR THE SHARING OF MATERIAL POSSESSIONS IN ACTS,
PHILO'S *DE VITA CONTEMPLATIVA* AND *THE DIDACHE*:
A COMPARATIVE STUDY

by

Lena V. Toews

Adviser: Robert Johnston

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Dissertation

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: MOTIVATIONS FOR THE SHARING OF MATERIAL POSSESSIONS IN ACTS, PHILO'S *DE VITA CONTEMPLATIVA* AND THE *DIDACHE*: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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Date completed: July 2019

Luke, in the book of Acts, depicts the sharing of possessions as a practice in the Jerusalem community of the first century. Several pericopes, occurring primarily in the first part of the book of Acts, embody the idea of shared property and seem to have important parallels to other sources of the time, including the Jewish author Philo's work *De vita contemplativa*, where he describes a group he calls, "Therapeutae," and in the Jewish Christian document *Didache*. This study seeks to identify beliefs correlated with the material sharing practices in the community of Acts and compare them with *De vita contemplativa* and the *Didache* with the goal of better understanding the motivations for material sharing in the early Jerusalem community as described by Luke in the book of Acts.

Chapter 1 introduces the three documents to be examined. It also outlines the reasons for the selection of these three different sources. In addition, it describes the literary methodology that is used as the basis for the study.

Chapter 2 analyzes various passages in Acts related to sharing of material possessions. The descriptor “everything in common,” is first found in Acts 2:41–47 where it describes the life of the first Christians where *κοινωνία* functions as a pivotal term used to describe the practice of material sharing by the Jerusalem community. This is further illustrated in Acts 4:32 where “no one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had.” The story of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5:1–12 narrates a negative experience of material sharing. However, this passage clarifies that the sharing practices in Acts did not lead to a loss of private property rights. In Acts 6:1–7 the administrative structure for sharing is altered in response to a disagreement within the community. While exponential growth in membership takes place in the context of material sharing, the growth contributes to changes in administrative structures. Acts 6 is the last time in the book where the community-wide daily sharing is described. In Acts 11:27–30 the need for the church in Antioch to share with the believers in Jerusalem brings into question the effectiveness of the earlier models described in Acts 2, 4, and 6.

A key motivation for sharing in the Acts community is their belief in the “last days” as indicated by Peter’s quotation of Joel 2 and its connection to the Spirit in Acts 2:17 and also in 2:38 which provides the setting for the *κοινωνία* described in 2:42–44. This belief in the parousia is not contrary to the belief in the Spirit but works along with it. The miraculous sharing of possessions happens under the transformative influence of the Holy Spirit as highlighted in the promise for the last days found in Acts 2:17.

Chapter 3 analyzes the description of the Therapeutae in Philo’s *De vita contemplativa*. Among this community, *κοινωνία* is also significant. However, the term is used differently than in Acts. For Philo, *κοινωνία* is an important philosophical concept related to humanity’s search for the ultimate experience of seeing and knowing God

through the life of the soul. Material sharing happens primarily in the context of joining the Therapeutae when the initiate gives away all of their belongings. While an underlying practice of common things in relationship to weekly meals and celebrations exists, the goal of spiritual self-realization among the community of the Therapeutae distinguishes their material sharing from the practice described in Acts.

Chapter 4 studies the Christian community who were the recipients of the anonymous document, the *Didache*. While the *Didache* has some descriptive elements, it mostly gives instructions on the life of the community. In this document, the community is instructed to practice material sharing. It appears here in a different form than in the early chapters of Acts, being a form of personal alms giving rather than a daily, community-wide practice of having “all things in common.” In the *Didache*, the κοινῶνι are those who are fellow believers in the community rather than those sharing material possessions.

In the concluding chapter 5, the three different communities are compared and contrasted as to their practice of material sharing. The unique outpouring of the Holy Spirit for the last-days led the community described in Acts to radically reorient their approach to material possessions. This organic ministry model stands in contrast to that of the inner-life focus of the Therapeutae and the instructional exhortations to material sharing found in the *Didache*.

Andrews University
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

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PHILO'S *DE VITA CONTEMPLATIVA* AND *THE DIDACHE*:
A COMPARATIVE STUDY

A Dissertation
Presented in Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

by
Lena V. Toews
July 26 2019

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Text editions from well-known series are not listed in the bibliography, but the series and volume will appear in footnotes. Abbreviations are those used by the Society of Biblical Literature.

ANF	The Ante-Nicene Fathers
ANRW	Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt: Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung. Edited by H. Temporini and W. Haase. Berlin, 1972–
BDAG	A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature.
JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LXX	The Septuagint
PG	J. Migne, Patrologia Graeca
SC	Sources chrétiennes. Paris: Cerf, 1943–
<i>TDNT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i> . Edited by G. Kittel and G. Friedrich. Translated by G. W. Bromiley. 10 vols.
TDOT	Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament
ZNW	Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Luke, in the book of Acts, depicts the sharing of possessions as a practice in the Jerusalem community of the first century, at least at the very beginning of its formation.¹ Several pericopes, occurring primarily in the first part of the book of Acts, embody the idea of shared property and seem to have important parallels to other sources of the time, including the Jewish historian Philo's writing *De vita contemplativa*,² where he describes a group he calls, "Therapeutae," and in the Jewish Christian document *Didache*. All three documents report sharing of material possessions. All three documents have roots in the teachings of Judaism and

¹For a discussion on the nature of the community as described in these verses see below "Background of the Problem: Community as Described in Acts 2:44 and 4:32," and also chapter 2 "Sharing as Described in the Book of Acts."

²Philo, *De vita contemplativa*, ed. G. P. Goold, trans. F. H. Colson, The Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968), 112–169. Or: David Winston, *Philo of Alexandria: the Contemplative Life, the Giants, and Selections* (New York, NY: Paulist Press, 1981), 21. Philo also has a description of the communal living of a group of people called θεραπευται θεου in *Quod Omnis Probus Liber Sit* 75–87 and another group he refers to as the Essenes in *Apologia* 11.4 (From Eusebius, *Preparation of the Gospel* 8.5.11ff) where the Essenes are described as having "common stock" in reference to material sharing of some kind.

For a recent study on the Essenes and communal living, see Catherine M. Murphy, "The Disposition of Wealth in the Literature and Practice of the Qumran Community and Its Relevance for the Study of the New Testament" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Notre Dame, 1999), 294–310. Whether the Therapeutae were part of the Essene movement or not will be discussed later in the study.

the Hebrew Bible.³ All three documents use the Greek derivatives of the root κοινός in describing material sharing in their communities.⁴

All three documents express material sharing. But the driving force behind the sharing in each of the documents has not been sufficiently clarified. Below is a brief summary of the history of scholarly discussions on the types of, and motivations for, sharing and some reasoning behind it as described in Acts, in *De vita contemplativa* and the *Didache*.

Background of the Problem

Community and Sharing in the Book of Acts

Commentaries on the book of Acts vary in their explanations of community living and sharing in 2:44 and 4:32. Some claim that the description of Luke's community of goods is

³The *Didache* community is probably of a Jewish-Christian nature. On the discussion of the nature of the *Didache* see Background of the Problem.

⁴In Acts 2:44 and 4:32 and their contexts, both the expression ἅπαντα κοινὰ and the word κοινωμία are used. In *Did.* 4.8 the word κοινωμία is used. And in *De vita contemplativa* the word κοινωμία is used in the context of fellowship and living arrangements (Philo, *Contempl.* 24).

For a discussion of the meaning of κοινωμία in Philo's description of the Essenes, the Therapeutae and Acts 2:42 see Stuart Dickson Currie, "Koinonia in Christian Literature to 200 A.D." (Ph.D. dissertation, Emory University, 1962), 27. For more discussions on the use of the word in the New Testament and Acts see Jaroslav Pelikan, *Acts* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2005), 59; Currie, 62. For a discussion of κοινωμία in *Didache*, Josephus and Philo see Huub van de Sandt and David Flusser, *The Didache: Its Jewish Sources and its Place in Early Judaism and Christianity* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2002), 183.

A recent monograph by Fiona Gregson on the sharing of possessions in the New Testament was too recently released for a detailed analysis and inclusion in this study. Gregson appears to have done a comparison of the accounts found in Acts as well as a comparison with similar accounts as found in the rest of the New Testament. She does not focus on an analysis of κοινωμία as done in this study nor does she provide much comparison with the wider cultural practice of sharing such as described by Philo's *De vita contemplativa* nor the *Didache*. Fiona Gregson, *Everything in Common? The Theology and Practice of the Sharing of Possessions in Community in the New Testament* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2017).

idealized.⁵ J. Pelikan calls it a “utopian idealism.”⁶ Utopian can mean that it never happened and it is fictional.⁷ Or utopian can mean as holding up past events as ideal⁸. Luke Timothy Johnson states that Luke’s portrait of the first Christian community is idealized in a literary sense, “the picture of the sharing of possessions drawn here by Luke can be seen as idealized. . . . The idealized picture stands as utopian in the best sense—it presents an image from the past of a kind of spiritual sharing and unity against which later communities could measure themselves.”⁹

⁵J. Bradley Chance, *Acts*, Smyth and Helwys Bible Commentary (Macon, GA: Smyth and Helwys Publishers, Inc., 2007), 59; J. Downey, “The Early Jerusalem Christians,” *Bible Today* 91 (1977): 1295–1303; David L. Mealand, “Community of Goods and Utopian Allusions in Acts 2–4,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 28 (1977): 96–99; Pelikan, *Acts*, 80; Josep Rius-Camps and Jenny Read-Heimerdinger, *The Message of Acts in Codex Bezae: A Comparison with the Alexandrian Tradition: Acts 1.1–5.42: Jerusalem*, ed. Stanley E. Porter, Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 257 (New York, NY: T & T Clark International, 2004), 281; Richard I. Pervo, *Profit with Delight: The Literary Genre of the Acts of the Apostles* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1987), 69, 70; Hans Conzelmann, Eldon Jay Epp, and Christopher R. Matthews, *Acts of the Apostles: a Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1987), 24; Philip Francis Esler, *Community and Gospel in Luke-Acts: The Social and Political Motivations of Lucan Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 196; G. A. Krodel, *Acts*, Augsburg Commentary on the New Testament (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 1986), 94, 117; Luke Timothy Johnson, *Sharing Possessions: Mandate and Symbol of Faith* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1981), 129.

⁶Pelikan, *Acts*, 80.

⁷E. Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), 193–196.

⁸Brian J. Capper, “The Palestinian Cultural Context of Earliest Christian Community of Goods,” in *The Book of Acts in its Palestinian Setting* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994), 4:323–356.

⁹Johnson, *Sharing Possessions: Mandate and Symbol of Faith*, 129. Later, in his commentary on Acts he clarifies, “I do not mean to suggest that the ideal of *koinonia* was simply a literary theme in earliest Christianity; evidence for the intense sharing of possessions (although probably not in an institutionalized ‘community of possessions’), is found in Paul (Gal 2:10; 1 Cor.16:1–4; 2 Cor 8, 9; Rom 15:25–31; Phil 4:15–20), and in other early Christian literature (such as the *Didache* 4.5–8 and the *Letter of Barnabas* 19:8), and is even given grudging recognition from an outsider (Lucian of Samosata, *Passing of Peregrinus* 13). But Luke’s appropriation of this ideal in his description of the Jerusalem church has had an unparalleled

Richard Pervo calls it “a utopian community in which an entire society operates like a band of friends (or an extended family) by eliminating the barriers imposed by the unequal distribution of wealth.”¹⁰ Many scholars agree that Luke’s portrait of the first Christian community is somewhat idealized but “there is no good reason to think Luke’s narrative summaries are figments of his creative imagination, written only for his readers’ religious edification or moral instruction.”¹¹ James Dunn summarizes the paradox of the comparison of the ideal and the actual and describes the first Christian community as the community that followed the command of Jesus. “That it remains an ideal, however, is evident from the larger movement of early Christian history.”¹² But Dunn continues, “the community, however, has begun to live in such a way as to overturn these norms. . . . To live in this way is . . . commanded by Jesus.”¹³

Some say it was a real community with the first Christians participating in communal life with various degrees, from sharing surplus to sharing all.¹⁴ For example, Andreas Lindemann

impact on later Christians who looked back to the Apostolic age as the time when the Church was most perfectly realized.” Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, Sacra Pagina (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 61, 62.

¹⁰Richard I. Pervo, *Acts: A Commentary*, Hermeneia—A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2009), 90.

¹¹Robert W. Wall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, The New Interpreter’s Bible (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2002), 71.

¹²James D. G. Dunn and John W. Rogerson ed., *Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible*. (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 2003), 1221.

¹³*Ibid.*, 1226.

¹⁴Bruce M. Metzger, *The New Testament: Its Background, Growth, and Content* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2003), 211, 212; Gerd Lüdemann, *The Acts of the Apostles: What Really Happened in the Earliest Days of the Church* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2005), 58, 74, 75; C. H. Talbert, *Reading Luke-Acts in its Mediterranean Milieu* (Leiden: Brill, 2003); C. H. Talbert, *Reading Acts: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles* (New York, NY: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1997), 42–50; Jerome Murphy-

calls it “a realistic picture despite its ‘utopian’ framework.”¹⁵ Craig Keener, in view of Acts 6:1–6 and Paul’s collection of resources for the Jerusalem church in 1 Corinthians 16, states, “Despite occasional scholarly speculation that the passage lacks historical basis, the history of movements suggests that it is more likely that the church would move away from radical ideals on possessions as it incorporated more members than that it would have invented ideals it never practiced.”¹⁶ Bradley Chance says that “A community of sharing where people give to others ‘as any had need’ is a goal, idealized or not, to which the covenant community of God’s people should strive.”¹⁷

According to Justo L. González the texts describe “not a regime in which all go at once and sell what they have, put it in the common coffer, and then live off it. Rather it describes a community in which mutual love is such that if someone has need others go and sell their real

O’Connor, *The Cenacle and Community: The Background of Acts 2:44–45*, ed. Michael D. Coogan, J. Cheryl Exum and Lawrence E. Stager, *Scripture and Other Artifacts* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994), 305, 306; Gerd Lüdemann, *Early Christianity according to the Traditions in Acts* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1989), 61; Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 193–195; R. H. Finger, *Of Widows and Meals: Communal Meals in the Book of Acts* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2007), 244, 277, 280; Currie, 62. According to Bruce, “they might have [even] formed themselves into a synagogue of the Nazarenes.” F. F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles: The Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990), 132.

¹⁵Andreas Lindemann, “The Beginnings of Christian Life in Jerusalem according to the Summaries in the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 2:42–47; 4:32–37; 5:12–16),” in *Common Life in the Early Church: Essays Honoring Graydon F. Snyder*, ed. Graydon F. Snyder et al. (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1998), 218.

¹⁶Craig S. Keener, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary Introduction and 1:1–2:47* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012), 1026, 1027.

¹⁷Chance, *Acts*, 59.

estate in order to respond to those needs.”¹⁸ Alan Thompson echoes González and Ernst Haenchen in saying that the focus of the community of Acts is “on meeting needs as an expression of the unity of the community in common allegiance to the Lord Jesus.”¹⁹ This group of scholars consider the first Jerusalem community as a real community which practiced generous sharing or almsgiving, but not the common purse.²⁰ According to Beverly Gaventa, sharing of property in Acts 4:32 means that “those who did possess property did not claim it as such but thought of it as property to be shared with those in need.”²¹

According to Metzger, the apostles “formed a common fund from which the poorer members of the community were assisted (Acts 2:45; 4:34, 35). . . . But it lent itself to abuse (Acts 5:15; 6:1)” and “the earlier methods [of sharing resources with the poor] adopted at Jerusalem were modified through experience.”²² He calls it “an experiment in communism” with private control of property.²³ Everett Harrison mentions that a common fund “was built up by the voluntary sale of ‘lands’ and ‘houses.’ This meant that eventually the resources of the more

¹⁸Justo L. González, *Acts: The Gospel of the Spirit* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2001), 72. See also, Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 192, 231.

¹⁹Alan J. Thompson, *One Lord, One People: The Unity of the Church in Acts in its Literary Setting*, ed. Mark Goodacre, Library of New Testament Studies (New York, NY: T&T Clark, 2008), 67.

²⁰Chance; Beverly Roberts Gaventa, *The Acts of the Apostles*, Abingdon New Testament Commentaries (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2003), 81, 100; Kyoung-Jin Kim, *Stewardship and Almsgiving in Luke’s Theology*, ed. Stanley E. Porter, Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 155 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 232.

²¹Gaventa, 100.

²²Metzger, *The New Testament: Its Background, Growth, and Content*, 211, 212.

²³*Ibid.*, 211.

affluent members would be drained, and the common fund would have to be replenished from other sources or be abandoned.”²⁴ Carsten Colpe calls it a “‘consumer cooperative’ – yet with the absolute restriction that participation was voluntary (5:4) and the relationship between supply and demand was not regulated by contract.”²⁵

For Reta Finger the sharing mainly happened at meal times. She looks at the interpretations of possessions through history and concludes that “representative commentators since Augustine demonstrate that these texts have been interpreted throughout church history in ways that betray numerous cultural and ideological biases against literal property-sharing and daily commensality.”²⁶ For her “one basic mode of sharing community . . . is through regular communal meals.”²⁷ She compares Christian property sharing and communal meals with “the reconstruction of the fictive kin group (from the group defined by blood relations to a fictive kin group as those who follow Jesus as Messiah).”²⁸ This meant “physical as well as spiritual

²⁴Everett F. Harrison, *Acts: The Expanding Church* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 66, 90. See also R. J. Sider, *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1977), 101; J. A. Ziesler, *Christian Asceticism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1973), 110.

²⁵Carsten Colpe, “The oldest Jewish-Christian Community,” in *Christian Beginnings: World and Community from Jesus to Post-Apostolic Times*, ed. Jurgen Becker (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), 90, 91.

²⁶Finger, *Of Widows and Meals: Communal Meals in the Book of Acts*, vii.

²⁷Reta H. Finger, “Cultural Attitudes in Western Christianity toward the Community of Goods in Acts 2 and 4,” *The Mennonite Quarterly Review* 78, no. April (2004): 270.

²⁸Finger, *Of Widows and Meals: Communal Meals in the Book of Acts*, 277. Also, Scott Bartchy, who calls the Christian group of Acts a fictive kin group, practicing general reciprocity not based on blood ties (S. Scott Bartchy, “Community of Goods in Acts: Idealization or Social Reality?,” in *The Future of Early Christianity* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1991), 309–318).

survival, since without it the lack of relationships and connections doomed first-century Mediterraneans to destitution and starvation.”²⁹

A different group of scholars sees in Acts a real community³⁰ influenced by Greek sources. One suggestion is that this should be seen as a community of friends sharing with each other based on Greek ideals. This is hinted at by Luke’s usage of “ἅπαντα κοινὰ” and “κοινωνία” which are well-known terms from Greek philosophy indicating friendship.³¹ Another example is Hauck who considers the idea of “everything in common” as Hellenistic rather than biblical.

The formula πάντα κοινὰ εἶχον which Luke uses in an ideal (2:44: πάντες; 4:34: ὅσοι, though cf. 4:36; 5:1, 4) depiction of the perfect common life in this early period, is Hellenistic rather than biblical. It is found neither in the OT, nor in the Gospels, nor elsewhere in the NT, whether as requirement or depiction. The Hellenist Luke, influenced by the Greek ideal, uses it to express the fact that the ideal which the Greeks sought with longing was achieved in the life of the primitive community.³²

Other scholars see both a Greek and biblical influence behind the Jerusalem community sharing. According to Lüdemann the above mentioned verses combine “biblical expressions

²⁹Finger, *Of Widows and Meals: Communal Meals in the Book of Acts*.

³⁰The use of the word “community” in this document implies a description of the community as described in the relevant documents. It is recognized that the community and the description of the community are two different things.

³¹Lüdemann, *Early Christianity according to the Traditions in Acts*, 61; Jurgen Becker, *Christian Beginnings: Word and Community from Jesus to Post-Apostolic Times* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), 90–92. Also, Gaventa mentioned Plato, *Republic* 449C; Plato, *Leges* 5.739C; Philo, *De Abrahamo* 235; Seneca, *Epistulae* 90.3; Strabo, *Geographica* 7.3.9 (Gaventa, 81). Van de Horst thinks that “the motif of community of goods . . . seems to be of Pythagorean origin: Iamblichus, *Vita Pythagorae* 167. . . (cf. Plato, *Respublica* 462c and *Leges* 739b–d).” (Pieter W van der Horst, “Hellenistic Parallels to Acts,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 35 [1989]: 46.)

³²Friedrich Hauck, “κοινός,” *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (TDNT)*, ed. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006), 3:796.

(‘one heart and one soul,’ cf. Deut 6.5) with Greek ideals (for *hapanta koina* cf. *koina ta philon*, Aristotle *NE* IX 8,2) – this ideal probably goes back as far as Pythagoras (see Epicurus in Diogenes Laertius X 11 and Timaeus, *ibid.*, VIII 10).³³ For him, “it was probably a Jewish-Christian interpretation of a Greek ideal where “individual members of the community continued to have possessions. . . , but that the owners resigned their rights of ownership to the community.”³⁴ Like Lüdemann, J. Becker sees “the basic coloration” of Acts 2:44–47 and 4:32–37 as stemming “both from Jewish prophecies about future disappearance of poverty (here from Deut. 15:4, yet repeatedly from then on) and from the Greek community ideal (from Plato *Crit.* 121a; *Polit.* 421a, 451, 2, 464; to Jamblichus *Vita Pyth.* 30.168).³⁵ Becker says, “we see a reality in which the eschatological indifference to possessions, an active demonstration of one’s spiritual poverty before God, individual neighborly love, and organized social welfare are ambiguously mixed.”³⁶ C.H. Talbert also describes the fellowship of Christian community “as the realization of both pagan and Jewish ideals” on friendship³⁷ and “the reason for this

³³Lüdemann, *Early Christianity according to the Traditions in Acts*, 61.

³⁴*Ibid.*, 60, 61.

³⁵Becker, *Christian Beginnings: Word and Community from Jesus to Post-Apostolic Times*, 90.

³⁶*Ibid.*, 90, 91.

³⁷C. H. Talbert, *Luke-Acts: New Perspectives from the Society of Biblical Literature Seminar*, ed. C. H. Talbert (New York, NY: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1984), 23. For Greco-Roman and Jewish ideas Talbert cited the following sources: Aristotle *Ethics* 8:11; 1159B, 31; Plutarch *Dialogue on Love* 21:9, 967E; Deut. 15:4; Seneca *Epistle* 90:38; *Epistle of Barnabas* 19:8; Diogenes Laertius *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 5:20; Cicero *On Friendship* 25:92; *Didache* 4.8. For the analysis of the community of goods in Greco-Roman, Jewish and Christian environments see also H. J. Klauck, “Gutergemeinschaft in der Klassischen Antike, in Qumran und im Neuen Testament,” *Revue de Qumran* 11, no. 42 (1983).

fulfillment of cultural ideas was the empowering of the Spirit (4:31; chap. 2).³⁸ Thus, “the sharing of material possessions with one another was the outward manifestation of a deeper spiritual unity.”³⁹

As seen from the above summary, different ideas have been proposed concerning sharing and the beliefs behind it as described in the book of Acts.

Philo’s *De vita contemplativa* and the *Didache*

Sharing or possible communal living in the other two contemporary communities, the community of the Therapeutae and the community of the *Didache* has not been a prominent area of research by modern scholarship. This does not mean that there are not important issues related to this that scholars have debated.

The research on sharing in Philo⁴⁰ and in particular among the Therapeutae he describes is scarce. Much of the discussion that has taken place regarding the Therapeutae has focused on

³⁸Talbert, *Luke-Acts: New Perspectives from the Society of Biblical Literature Seminar*, 23.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰There are four major scholars of Philo significant in current research: David Runia (*Philo of Alexandria and the Timaeus of Plato* [Leiden: Brill, 1986]; “Philo and the Early Christian Fathers,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Philo*, ed. Adam Kamesar [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009]; “Philo of Alexandria and the Greek *Hairesis*-Model,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 53 [1999]; “The Reward for Goodness: Philo, *De Vita Contemplativa* 90,” *The Studia Philonica Annual* 9 [1997]; “Philo of Alexandria and the Beginnings of Christian Thought,” *The Studia Philonica Annual: Studies in Hellenistic Judaism* 7, no. Brown Judaic Studies 305 [1995].) Peder Borgen (“Eschatology and Heilgeschichte in Luke-Acts” [Ph.D. dissertation, Drew University, 1956]; Peder Borgen, Kare Fuglseth, and Roald Skarsten, *The Philo Index: A Complete Greek Word Index to the Writings of Philo of Alexandria* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000]; “Heavenly Ascent in Philo: An Examination of Selected Passages,” in *The Pseudepigrapha and Early Biblical Interpretation*, ed. James H. Charlesworth et al., Journal for the Study of Pseudepigrapha. Supplement Series. [Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1993]; “‘There Shall Come Forth a Man’: Reflection on Messianic Ideas in Philo,” in *The Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity*, ed. James H. Charlesworth

the identification of the group and issues related to making that determination. David Mealand⁴¹ and Ewald Schmidt⁴² have argued over the exact social position of Philo, seeing this as important in deciding whether the Therapeutae were to be understood as a real community or instead a fictitious one of Philo's own creating. The question is whether Philo was part of some aristocracy and thus quite affluent or whether he was someone who, while being of some means, was not extravagantly wealthy. Gerald Downing and Thomas Phillips have added to this debate, suggesting that Philo's writings do show that he was not against wealth per se but more the unrelenting pursuit of it.⁴³

[Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1987]; "Philo of Alexandria," in *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period: Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Qumran, Sectarian Writings, Philo, Josephus*, ed. Michael E. Stone [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984].) David Hay ("Things Philo Said and did not Say about the Therapeutae," in *Society of Biblical Literature 1992 Seminar Papers*, ed. E. H. Jr. Lovering [Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1992]; "Foins for the Therapeutae: References to other Texts and Persons in Philo's 'De Vita 'Contemplativa'," in *Neotestamentica et Philonica. Studies in Honor of Peder Borgen*, ed. D. A. Aune et al. [Leiden: Brill, 2003]; "The Veiled Thoughts of the Therapeutae," in *Mediators of the Divine. Horizons of Prophecy, Divination, Dreams and Theurgy in Mediterranean Antiquity*, ed. R. M. Berchman [Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1998].) David L. Mealand ("Community of Goods and Utopian Allusions in Acts 2-4."); "The Paradox of Philo's Views on Wealth," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 24 (1985); "Philo of Alexandria's Attitude to Riches," *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 69 [1978].).

⁴¹Mealand, "Philo of Alexandria's Attitude to Riches."

⁴²T. Ewald Schmidt, "Hostility to Wealth in Philo of Alexandria," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 19 (1983).

⁴³F. Gerald Downing, "Philo on Wealth and the Rights of the Poor," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 24 (1985); Thomas E. Phillips, "Revisiting Philo: Discussion of Wealth and Poverty in Philo's Ethical Discourse," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 83 (2001).

Troels Engberg-Petersen⁴⁴ argues that the Therapeutae should be understood as fictional while Joan Taylor and Manuel Alexandre suggest that this is too extreme of a position.⁴⁵ An argument to identify the Therapeutae with the Essenes began with Dupont-Sommer and Geza Vermes after the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, and some have followed this view.⁴⁶ Others, such as Catherine Murphy and Winston, have seen them as ultimately two separate groups.⁴⁷

Sharing in the *Didache* appears in 1:5, 6, 4:5–8 and 13:1–7. In 1:5, 6 giving to everyone who asks is commanded. In 4:5–8 sharing with your brother is urged. And 13:1–17 encourages sharing with wandering prophets. But it has not been clarified what beliefs motivated the sharing as described in all three passages.

There has been much less research on sharing in the *Didache* compared to that on sharing in the book of Acts and Philo's *De vita contemplativa*.⁴⁸ Milavec reads this document as an

⁴⁴Troels Engberg-Pedersen, "Philo's *De Vita Contemplativa* as a 'Philosopher's Dream,'" *Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic and Roman Period* 30, no. 1 (1999).

⁴⁵Joan E. Taylor, *Jewish Women Philosophers of First-Century Alexandria: Philo's 'Therapeutae' Reconsidered* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Manuel Alexandre Jr., "The Eloquent Philosopher in Philo's *De Vita Contemplativa*," *Euphrosyne* 29 (2001).

⁴⁶A. Dupont-Sommer, *The Dead Sea Scrolls. A Preliminary Survey* (New York, NY: McMillan, 1959), 105–117; Geza Vermes, "Essenes-Therapeutai-Qumran," *The Durham University Journal* 52, no. 3 (1960): 105–113. This view as well as whether it was a real or fictional community and the community's organization and practices will be discussed in detail below (chapter 3 on Philo's *De vita contemplativa*).

⁴⁷Winston, *Philo of Alexandria: the Contemplative Life, the Giants, and Selections*, 41; Catherine Murphy, 294, 295.

⁴⁸The main representatives on the research on the *Didache* are Jonathan A. Draper ("Barnabas and the Riddle of the *Didache* Revisited," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, no. 58 [1995]; "The Jesus Tradition in the *Didache*," in *The Didache in Modern Research*, ed. Jonathan A. Draper [Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996]; "Christian Self-definition against the 'Hypocrites' in *Didache* VIII," in *Society of Biblical Literature: 1992 Seminar Papers*, ed. E. H. Lovering [Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1992]; "The *Didache* in Modern Research: An Overview," in *The Didache in Modern Research*, ed. Jonathan A. Draper [Leiden: E.J. Brill,

introductory training manual for new converts to Christianity.⁴⁹ Read this way, the early call for sharing in *Did.* 1:5, 6 then differs from a later reference to sharing in *Did.* 4:5–8. Niederwimmer, however, does not follow this reading.⁵⁰ There has been some discussion on *Did.* 1:5, 6, specifically on what the saying “sweat in your hand” refers to.⁵¹ Some see a connection to a similar saying in Sir 12:1 that would limit the necessity to give while others disagree and see a reinforcement of a call to share with everyone that asks.⁵²

Various methods of interpretation applied to New Testament studies have been applied also to the study of the *Didache*. These include analyzing the document based on orality and rhetoric⁵³ and more recently, sociological and anthropological methodologies along with

1996]; “Social Ambiguity and the Production of Text: Prophets, Teachers, Bishops, and Deacons and the Development of the Jesus Tradition on the Community of the *Didache*,” in *The Didache in Context: Essays on Its Text, History and Transmission*, ed. Clayton N. Jefford [Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995].) Clayton N. Jefford (*The Sayings of Jesus in the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* [Leiden: Brill, 1989]; “Did Ignatius of Antioch Know the *Didache*?,” in *The Didache in Context: Essays on Its Text, History and Transmission*, ed. Clayton N. Jefford [Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995].) Marcello Del Verme (*Didache and Judaism* [New York: T & T Clark International, 2004].).

⁴⁹Milavec, *The Didache: Faith, Hope and Life of the Earliest Christian Communities, 50–70 C.E.*, 176.

⁵⁰Niederwimmer, *The Didache*, 81–86.

⁵¹“For it has also been said concerning this: ‘Let your gift to charity sweat in your hands until you know to whom to give it’” *Did.* 1.5, 6 (trans. Ehrman, LCL 1:419). It has been well noted that this saying has some similarity to Sir. 12:1. See Steven L. Bridge, “To Give or not to Give: Deciphering the Sayings of *Didache* 1.6,” *Early Christian Studies* 5, no. 4 (1997): 560, 561. Bridge is one who sees this statement a call to give more rather than to give less.

⁵²For a detailed discussion of this, see Chapter 4 “*Didache* 1:5, 6.”

⁵³I. H. Henderson, “*Didache* and Orality in Synoptic Comparison,” *Journal of Biblical Literature*, no. 111 (1992); John S. Kloppenborg, “The Transformation of Moral Exhortation in *Didache* 1–5,” in *The Didache in Context: Essays of Its Text, History and Transmission*, ed. Clayton N. Jefford (Leiden: Brill, 1995); J. Reed, “The Hebrew Epic and the *Didache*,” in *The Didache in Context: Essays of Its Text, History and Transmission*, ed. Clayton N. Jefford (Leiden: Brill, 1995); I. H. Henderson, “Style-switching in the *Didache*: Fingerprint or

research on the Jewish roots of the document.⁵⁴ Scholars have also focused on connections between the *Didache* and the gospel accounts.⁵⁵

The Problem

Acts, *De vita contemplativa* and *Didache* all describe some form of sharing, whether it was sharing in the form of almsgiving or some form of cohesive communal life or another model of shared possessions or property.⁵⁶ The scholarly debate has not clarified just what the beliefs of all the three groups were that motivated them to practice sharing material possessions.⁵⁷

Argument,” in *The Didache in Context: Essays of Its Text, History and Transmission*, ed. Clayton N. Jefford (Leiden: Brill, 1995).

⁵⁴Del Verme, *Didache and Judaism*; Draper, “Social Ambiguity”; Draper, “Christian Self-definition against the ‘Hypocrites’ in *Didache* VIII”; J. W. Riggs, “The Sacred Food of *Didache* 9–10 and Second Century Ecclesiologies,” in *The Didache in Context: Essays of Its Text, History and Transmission*, ed. Clayton N. Jefford (Leiden: Brill, 1995); Aaron Milavec, *The Didache: Faith, Hope and Life of the Earliest Christian Communities, 50–70 C.E.* (New York, NY: The Newman Press, 2003); R. S. Ascough, “An Analysis of the Baptismal Ritual of the *Didache*,” *Studia Liturgica*, no. 24 (1994); M. Jack Suggs, “The Christian Two Way Tradition: Its Antiquity, Form, and Function,” in *Studies in New Testament and Early Christian Literature: Essays in Honor of Allen P. Wikgren*, ed. David E. Aune (Leiden: Brill, 1972).

⁵⁵See, for example, the collection of articles in *Matthew and the Didache: Two Documents from the Same Jewish-Christian Milieu?*, ed. Huub van de Sandt (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2005).

⁵⁶Acts does not mention the sharing of goods after the first four chapters. If it ceased it is not clear why. Some believe that not all the members of the community practiced sharing and it quickly ceased after the first attempts. Murphy-O’Connor, for example, states that the community included only Jesus’ immediate companions which was supported by the females of Luke 8:1–3 and did not have its communal practices for very long (Murphy-O’Connor, *The Cenacle and Community: The Background of Acts 2:44–45*, 305, 306.). In Philo’s *De vita contemplativa* the members did not share their possessions among themselves at first as they entered the community, they gave it all to their relatives and friends. But they lived in shared buildings and had simple meals to eat and clothes to wear.

⁵⁷As demonstrated in the chapters on Philo and the *Didache* along with the book of Acts, *De vita contemplativa* and the *Didache* seem to describe communal living somewhat similarly in organization and practice. Living separate from other men, the Therapeutae described in *De vita*

Purpose of Study

Earlier studies have focused on parallels between Philo's writings, the *Didache* and the New Testament involving similarities in language, motifs and ideas in the letters of Paul, the Gospel of John and Hebrews.⁵⁸ The purpose of this study is to find out and compare the beliefs presented as motivating material sharing in the community of Acts, *De vita contemplativa* and the *Didache* with the goal of better understanding the motivations for sharing in Acts. This research will demonstrate that the practice of sharing material possessions by the three communities is similar in outward form but in each case is based on different beliefs that motivated that sharing. As a result, the actual function of the sharing for each community's life will be shown to have been quite distinct.

Justification for the Research

The survey of literature provided above leaves us with a number of unanswered questions about similarities and diversities of different communal groups in the first century. From an

contemplativa formed a group, giving all the property to other people and living the impoverished life of contemplation and studying the Jewish Scriptures (Francesca Calabi, "On the Contemplative Life," in *Encyclopedia of Religious and Philosophical Writings in Late Antiquity: Pagan, Judaic, Christian*, ed. Jacob Neusner et al. [Leiden: Brill, 2007], 292, 293). The group described in the *Didache* appears also as a distinct community: "the outsiders are characterized negatively and separation is emphasized. . . . On the other hand, strong internal community interaction is commanded. Community members are to be loved more than one's life (2.7). . . . Members are to share their material possessions without reserve (1.5; 4:5–8) on the principle that those who share in spiritual things should share still more in material things (4:8)." Draper, "Social Ambiguity," 288. Draper came to believe that *Didache* 1.1–11.2 refers to initiation ritual and in that light came to see the command to give found in 1.5 to refer to insiders. *Ibid.*, note 13.

⁵⁸For an example, see David T. Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993), 63–86.

initial overview of the three documents, the communities described in the book of Acts, in Philo's *De vita contemplativa* and in the *Didache* each practice a sharing of goods. These groups consist of communities both inside and outside of Jerusalem, though in each case, there is a recognized connection back to Jerusalem, either to Judaism in the case of the Therapeutae or to Jewish Christianity with the community described by the *Didache*.

The experience of the first Christians in Jerusalem as described in the book of Acts may not have been as “unique” as it might appear at first glance. As some view the first church as being the “mother of all churches” and that “which was in its spirit to be an example for all Christians,”⁵⁹ it is important to understand to what extent the Lucan description of Christian common life was related to the later community described by the *Didache*. And how does the Jewish Christian practice of sharing described in Acts compare to the Jewish community described in *De vita contemplativa*? Ultimately, in order to understand the meaning of Luke's description in Acts, one should seek to understand the beliefs behind this practice. Studying and comparing both the beliefs and the differing practices of sharing in the Philonic and *Didache* communities will prove helpful in clarifying the beliefs that motivated sharing as described in the book of Acts.

Using Philo to help understand the early Christian community is an established practice in New Testament studies. Philonic scholars like Roberto Radice, David Runia and others demonstrate “Philo's usefulness in helping to see more clearly the New Testament writing and earliest Christianity in the first-century religious and cultural environment, and more specifically

⁵⁹M. F. Sadler, *The Acts of the Apostles* (London: George Bell and Sons, 1894), 49.

in the context of second-temple Jewish traditions.”⁶⁰ Larry W. Hurtado examines Philo’s writings from a historical perspective and he writes: “I regard Philo as probably the single most important first-century Jewish *writer* for understanding the Jewish religious setting of earliest Christianity.”⁶¹

The connections between the *Didache* and the New Testament are also well documented. While this has been more commonly seen with the Gospels specifically, nevertheless, scholars such as Marcello Del Verme have described the importance of studying the parallels between the community of New Testament writings and the community of the *Didache*.⁶²

Beyond the acknowledged scholarly importance of Philo and the *Didache*, there are other reasons for selecting these two documents. The choice of different geographical locations,

⁶⁰Larry Hurtado, “Does Philo Help Explain Christianity?,” in *Philo und das Neue Testament (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament)*, ed. Jörg Frey (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 74. See also David T. Runia, “Philo of Alexandria: An Annotated Bibliography 1937–1986,” in *Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae* (Leiden: Brill, 1988); David T. Runia, “Philo of Alexandria: An Annotated Bibliography 1987–1996,” in *Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae* (Leiden: Brill, 2000). For annual bibliographical essays see, *Studia Philonica Annual 1989–2002* (Atlanta, GA: Scholar’s Press). Runia has traced the extent of our direct indebtedness to Philo for understanding early Christianity: “Christianity emerged as a religious movement from the matrix of Second Temple Judaism, of which Philo was a part. Philo and the NT thus 1) share a common background, 2) They both use the same language” (Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature*, 64). G. E. Sterling has explored the connections between the Philonic corpus and Jewish literary works and concluded that Philo is significant for three different worlds: Judaism, Christianity and Hellenistic Philosophy (G. E. Sterling, “Recluse or Representative? Philo and Greek-Speaking Judaism Beyond Alexandria,” in *Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers*, ed. E. H. Jr. Lovering [Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1995]). For more information see Kenneth Schenck, *A Brief Guide to Philo* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005); Samuel Sandmel, *Philo of Alexandria: An Introduction* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1979), 30; Pieter W. Van der Horst, “Hellenistic Parallels to the Acts of the Apostles 2:1–47,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 25 (1985): 95.

⁶¹Hurtado, “Does Philo Help Explain Christianity?,” 74.

⁶²Del Verme, *Didache and Judaism*. He considered the community of the *Didache* as a Jewish community

Jerusalem in the case of Acts and the Diaspora⁶³ in the case of the *Therapeutae* and the *Didache*, will give a broader picture of first century communal groups.⁶⁴

In addition, Philo of Alexandria is a major representative of Hellenistic Judaism. A large body of his writings is preserved, and they were written before the middle of the first century CE. That puts his writing into very close chronological proximity with the book of Acts. The writing of the *Didache* is also in close proximity chronologically to the writings of the New Testament.⁶⁵

⁶³In view of recent research “Diaspora Judaism represents a . . . phenomenon extremely variegated and widespread” (ibid., 2.) Also, see John M. G. Barclay, *The Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora from Alexander to Trajan (323 B.C.E.–117 C.E.)* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988); John M. G. Barclay, *Early Christian Thought in Its Jewish Context*, eds. John M. G. Barclay et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); A. F. Segal, *Rebecca’s Children: Judaism and Christianity in the Roman World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986); G. Boccaccini, *Middle Judaism: Jewish Thought, 300 BCE–200 CE* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1991).

But at the same time, Edrel Arie, in the *Encyclopedia of the Jewish Diaspora*, states that Judaism of that time period had some common features and the Diaspora communities of the time could be described in the following way, “Jewish communities outside the Land of Israel could be traced first and foremost by their communal life, their adherence to Jewish law and beliefs, and their adherence to Jewish Scripture” (Edrel Arie, “Diaspora in the Hellenistic Period,” in *Encyclopedia of the Jewish Diaspora*, ed. M. Avrum Ehrlich [Oxford: ABC-CLIO, 2009], 8). Having stated the above, Arie adds that in spite of the common linkage of Diaspora Judaism to the Jewish Scripture, “to the Holy Land and to the Temple” (before the destruction of the temple) as the main elements in Jewish theology in the Diaspora, it does not “necessarily contradict the extent to which Jews were syncretistic in their organizational systems and spiritual life” (Ibid., 9). See also L. I. Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue. The First Thousand Years* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000).

⁶⁴There were other shared property communities similar to the community of the book of Acts. Catherine Murphy, in her recent study, explores the nature of wealth in the Qumran community and makes some possible connections with the book of Acts and Philo’s writings. She considers the Therapeutae as part of the Essene movement. (Catherine Murphy, 340–342.) But still the question of motivations and purpose of sharing in the book of Acts is left open for future research. For the review of literature and the Essene/Therapeutae discussions see the chapter on Philo below.

⁶⁵The dating of the *Didache* is discussed in Appendix A.

The Diaspora composition of the first Jerusalem community is also seen by the larger context of Acts 2:9–11 which describes Judaism from all over the world, and by Peter’s promises to the ones far and near in 2:39 and by having a large number of responses in 2:41.⁶⁶ Thus, it is interesting to examine and compare all three documents as they represent three similar but unique groups.

Scope and Delimitations

It should be noted from the outset that a search for motivations to ancient practices is difficult for various reasons. It seems that there are multiple possible motivations for most human actions and often they are not always consciously articulated in thought or speech. This notwithstanding, the present study will attempt to probe the possible beliefs behind the unique material sharing practices of the early Christian community described in Acts.

To accomplish this, the present study will analyze the examples of sharing in the book of Acts and then compare these with Philo’s writing *De vita contemplativa* and the Christian-Jewish document the *Didache*. The study will not be concerned with the redactional history of these documents but will treat the texts as they stand in standard editions.⁶⁷ Why the choice of Philo

⁶⁶S. G. Wilson, *The Gentiles and the Gentile Mission in Luke-Acts*, New Testament Studies Monograph Series (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 121–124; Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Literary Function of Possessions in Luke-Acts*, ed. Howard C. and Douglas A. Knight Kee, Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series (Missoula, MO: Scholars Press, 1977), 183, 184.

⁶⁷The Greek New Testament texts are taken from Kurt Aland and others ed., *Novum Testamentum Graece*. (Stuttgart, Germany: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012). The text of *De Vita Contemplativa* is taken from F. H. Colson ed., *Philo* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1929). The text of the *Didache* is taken from Bart D. Ehrman ed., *The Apostolic Fathers: I Clement, II Clement, Ignatius, Polycarp, Didache* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003). Also, for the text of the *Didache* see Milavec, *The Didache: Faith, Hope and Life of the Earliest Christian Communities, 50–70 C.E.*, Introduction.

and the *Didache*?⁶⁸ Many modern “scholars no longer regard the distinction between Palestinian Judaism and Hellenistic Judaism as a basic category for our understanding of Judaism.”⁶⁹ Instead, research is more focused on the differences within every Jewish community of some size, whether it was located in Palestine or in the Diaspora. Thus, Philo’s writings “reflect different situations and varying attitudes within Alexandrian Jewry.”⁷⁰ As far as a place of composition of the *Didache*, many suggest Egypt because of the connection to the *Epistle of Barnabas*.⁷¹ But others say the *Didache* was composed in Syria-Palestine.⁷² In either case, it is a

⁶⁸Consideration was given at the outset to including in this study the Essenes of the Qumran community. However, when this study was in its infancy, Catherine Murphy had recently finished her PhD dissertation on them (“The Disposition of Wealth in the Literature and Practice of the Qumran Community”). Since this study intended as part of its methodology a focused analysis of textual documents, it was determined that as the Qumran documents had been given thorough attention in Murphy’s work, this study would focus on the other two documents as points of comparison with Acts.

⁶⁹Soren Giversen and Peder Borgen ed., *The New Testament and Hellenistic Judaism*. (Denmark: Aarhus University Press, 1995), 11.

⁷⁰*Ibid.*, 11, 12.

⁷¹Niederwimmer, *The Didache*, 20. See also *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* Third Revised ed. (2005), s.v. “Epistle of Barnabas.” The *Epistle of Barnabas* is dated early and contain expositions similar to the Two Ways section in the *Didache*. Some believe that both documents drew from the same Jewish tradition. The argument is based on Clement of Alexandria’s use of the *Didache*, its dependence on *Barnabas* and *Shepherd of Hermas* in the Two Ways section and on the passage about the wandering brothers in chapter 11 (A. Harnack, *The Mission and Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries* [London: William & Norgate, 1908], 319–368). See more discussion on the dating in Appendix A.

⁷²Tixeront, for example, thinks that it was written in the East, but it is not certain whether it was Egypt, Syria or Palestine (J. Tixeront, *A Handbook of Patrology* (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co, 1920), 21. See also Burton Mack, *Who Wrote the New Testament?: The Making of the Christian Myth* (San Francisco, CA: Harper, 1995), 241, 242; Sandt and Flusser, *The Didache: Its Jewish Sources and its Place in Early Judaism and Christianity*, Preface; *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* Third Revised ed. (2005), s.v. “Didache.” Knopf dates the *Didache* between 90 and 150 A.D. in Syria-Palestine because of the reference to mountains and he leads the scholarly consensus that the Two Ways section is not taken from *Barnabas* and

“goldmine of information on the nascent Christian church and early Judaism”⁷³ The believing people of the Jerusalem community “which formed around the core of Galilean disciples was a people drawn from all the historic Israel, including the Diaspora.”⁷⁴

Methodology

This study will primarily be a textual-linguistic investigation carried out by the traditional literary analysis of source documents. Also, the texts from the book of Acts, Philo’s *De vita contemplativa* and the *Didache* will be treated as literary units as they stand in their immediate context and in the context of the entire documents. The Greek text of Acts is taken from Nestle-Aland 28th edition *Novum Testamentum Graece* and of Philo’s *De vita contemplativa* and the *Didache* from the Loeb Classical Library Series.⁷⁵

The study will do a thorough analysis of the related passages on sharing in the original sources in Greek and specifically the words and ideas related to the concept of sharing in the book of Acts, in Philo’s *De vita contemplativa* and the *Didache*. This will include structural analysis, analysis of grammar and word usage, the analysis of the pericopes and their immediate and larger context, and also the historical-cultural background. All of the above-mentioned analyses will allow a comparative study of the three documents from a critical exegetical perspective. Finally, based on the above-mentioned investigations, conclusions will be drawn as

Hermas, but “from common source in a Jewish proselyte catechism, which contained chs. 1–6 without 1:3–2:1, and probably most of ch. 16 as an eschatological conclusion.”(

⁷³Sandt and Flusser, *The Didache: Its Jewish Sources and its Place in Early Judaism and Christianity*, Preface.

⁷⁴Ibid.

⁷⁵Kurt Aland and others ed., *Novum Testamentum Graece*. 28th ed. (Stuttgart, Germany: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012); Colson ed; Ehrman ed.

to the similarities and differences of the three documents and their value for the study of the community of Acts.

CHAPTER II

SHARING AS DESCRIBED IN THE BOOK OF ACTS

The book of Acts has multiple pericopes regarding the sharing of material possessions that deserve detailed study. The first statement about sharing or having “everything in common,” is Acts 2:44, located in the pericope of Acts 2:41–47.¹ This unit describes the life of the first Christians. A second similar passage about sharing is Acts 4:32 where “no one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had.” This verse continues the theme of sharing everything among the first believers and is found in the wider pericope of Acts 4:32–5:10. In between these two instances of community sharing, Peter exclaims in Acts 3:6 that he does not have silver or gold, but he has God’s power to heal the man and in so doing, gives an example of sharing that provides the miracle of healing rather than the expected sharing of material possessions. Acts 5:1–12 demonstrates a negative example of sharing when Ananias and

¹There are two opposite views as to whether 2:41 belongs with the rest of the unit of 2:41–47 or not. Most of the discussions involve source theory in analyzing the units/patterns along with textual evidence. Maria Anicia Co, “The Major Summaries in Acts: Acts 2,42–47; 4, 32–35; 5, 12–16 Linguistic and Literary Relationship,” *Ephemerides theologicae Lovanienses* 68 (1992): 58–63; Kirsopp Lake and Henry Cadbury, *The Acts of the Apostles*, eds. F. J. Foakes Jackson et al., *The Beginnings of Christianity* (London: MacMillan and Co, 1933), 27, 143, 144; G. E. Sterling, ““Athletes of Virtue”: An Analysis of the Summaries in Acts,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 113, no. 4 (1994): 680–682. On the textual and contextual connections see verse by verse discussion (Acts 2:41–47) below.

Sapphira lied to God and withheld some of their possessions. In Acts 6:1–7 seven men were chosen to help in daily sharing of food. In Acts 11:27–30 the church in Antioch shares material goods with the believers in Jerusalem. In Acts 20:33–35, Paul exhorts the leaders of the church to work in order to provide for the weak while in Acts 24:17, he mentions his Jerusalem collection.

In order to understand what motivated the beliefs behind all of these instances of sharing it is important to examine each passage. What follows is a study of the key phrases and words in the passages about sharing in Acts 2:41–47, 3:1–6, 4:32–5:10, 6:1–7, 11:27–30, 20:27–30 and 24:17. Most of the variants in the above mentioned passages are minor and do not affect the interpretations advocated by this study. Thus only variants that have some bearing on the interpretation suggested by this study will be discussed.

Acts 2:41–47

In order to understand the beliefs that motivated sharing, it is important to see the larger context in which the sharing is described. The verses about sharing in Acts 2 are placed in the larger context of community life. This entire section of Acts 2:41–47 “stresses the solid community start the earliest church enjoyed. It still lived and reflected its Jewish context, going to temple, but, beyond, gathered in homes for instruction, prayer, fellowship, and the breaking of bread together. The early believers cared so much for each other that they sold or gave personal items to meet those needs.”² This section

²Darrell L. Bock, “Acts,” in *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*, ed. Robert W. Yarbrough et al. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 157.

seeks to detail just what these verses imply about material sharing in the early Christian community at Jerusalem.

As some note, there is a “vital connection between the account in Acts 1, 2 and the description of the early Christian community in 2.42–47.”³ This “vital connection” is indicated firstly by the link “μέν . . . δέ” appearing in verses 41 and 43 which connects 41, 42 and 43–47. As Runge notes, “In spite of the multiplicity of senses claimed, μέν signals the presence of one common constraint: anticipation of a related sentence that follows.”⁴ Thus “those who had received his word” in verse 41 anticipates the fear or awe and miracles of verse 43. Secondly, the use of προσκαρτερέω in verses 42 and 46 connects back to 1:14. In addition, προσεύχη is used both in 2:42 and 1:14. Also, the use of ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ in 2:44 and 4:47 recalls 2:1. Προστίθημι is used both in 2:41 and 2:47. And finally, the connection of 2:42–47 to the broader context of chapter 2 is indicated by “the use of σώζω in 2.40 and 2.47.”⁵

Thompson notes that “the emphasis in 2.42–47 on the unity of the messiah’s community in common submission to him is indicated by the believers being devoted to

³Thompson, *One Lord, One People: The Unity of the Church in Acts in its Literary Setting*, 65.

⁴Steven E. Runge, *Discourse Grammar of the Greek New Testament: A Practical Introduction for Teaching and Exegesis* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2010), 75.

⁵Thompson, *One Lord, One People: The Unity of the Church in Acts in its Literary Setting*, 65, 66. Haenchen lists multiple thematic connections between verses 41 and 42 and the surrounding pericopes: “In content and form, verse 41a is related to (4.4), 8.12; verse 41b to 2.47b, 4.4, 5.14, 6.7, 11.24b, 12.24 and 16.5; verse 42 to 1.14 and 2.46; verse 43a to 5.5b and 5.11; verse 43b to 5.12a; verses 44ff. to 4.32 and 4.34f; verse 46a to 1.14a and 5.12b; verse 46b to 2.42; verse 47a to (4.33?), 5.13; verse 47b to 5.14.” (Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 195, 196.)

Jesus' teachings (τῆ διδαχῆ τῶν ἀποστόλων), practicing common meals (τῆ κλάσει τοῦ ἄρτου) in connection to Jesus' practice in Luke, having prayer together (ταῖς προσεθχαῖς) and practicing community (τῆ κοινωνία) by "having all things in common" (εἶχον ἅπαντα κοινωνά)."⁶ And the contribution of the concluding phrase of 2:47 (ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ) "is to note that the 'togetherness' or unity of the community in common allegiance to Christ (as emphasized in 2.42–47) is brought about by the reigning of the Lord himself (whose present reign has been emphasized in 1.1–2.41). . . . Thus, . . . Acts 2.42–47 draws attention to the kingship of Jesus, the unity of his community and, more specifically, his role in uniting his people."⁷

The verbal connections established between chapters 1, 2 and 2:41–47 will serve to highlight several points. First, the activities that take place in 2:42 happen because they are Spirit-led activities. Peter promises in 2:38 that if the hearers repent and are baptized, they will receive the Holy Spirit. This reception of the Holy Spirit is quite prominent in the discourse. It clearly was the basis for Peter's preaching to the multitudes as the Spirit's activity of being poured out on the disciples created the attraction to draw the crowds. Thus, with their baptism as recorded in verse 41, what they are still waiting for is the gift of the Holy Spirit. Verse 42 comes as the descriptor of that outpouring.

In addition, the connection being discussed here between chapters 1, 2 and 2:41–47 highlights the eschatological nature of these events.⁸ The Old Testament premise for

⁶According to Thompson there is no language of friendship here, and the focus is not on the community of goods but on the meeting the needs of the believers as an expression of the unity of the community. (Thompson, *One Lord, One People: The Unity of the Church in Acts in its Literary Setting*, 66, 67.)

⁷Ibid., 68.

⁸Cf. Chance, 58.

the outpouring of the Holy Spirit is given in 2:17–21 where Peter quotes the prophet Joel. Thus, the united community, being driven along by the Holy Spirit, is compelled into eschatological preparations. This chapter will look more closely at the material sharing activities described in 2:41–47 as a Holy Spirit led community functioned under the hope of an eschatological salvation brought about by following their Lord, Jesus Christ.

Verse 41

οἱ μὲν οὖν ἀποδεξάμενοι τὸν λόγον αὐτοῦ ἐβαπτίσθησαν καὶ προσετέθησαν ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ ψυχαὶ ὡσεὶ τρισχίλια.

As just noted, Acts 2:41–47 is part of the larger unit of Acts 1 and 2 which has clear connections to chapters 4 and 5. Acts 2:41, 42 is located at a dividing point in the text. Some scholars treat these two verses as belonging to two different sections, verse 41 belonging to the previous section of Peter’s address and verse 42 belonging to the following section describing the fellowship of believers.⁹ The flow of the text suggests that verse 41 is a bridge between Peter’s address and the larger context of sharing found in 2:42–47. Clarifying which pericope it more closely connects with will help give understanding to the nature of the sharing taking place in verses 42–47.

⁹For example, see John B. Polhill, *Acts*, New American Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 1992), 118; Jacob Jervell, *Die Apostelgeschichte* Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament 3 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998), 51-55; Alfons Weiser, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, Ökumenischer Taschenbuhkommentar zum Neuen Testament 5/1 (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1981), 94-101.

Grammatically Acts 2:41 is connected to the previous passages of Acts 1, 2 and to the following description of the community in 2:42–47 by μὲν οὖν.¹⁰ When οὖν occurs in the narrative of Acts, it is to show “the close consequential relationship that exists between the elements it links. The second event is the direct result of the first, and closely conforms to its demands and implications.”¹¹ According to Lüdemann “*men oun* is a favorite particle of Luke’s.”¹² The example of μὲν οὖν in Acts “when a new unit is begun in continuity with what precedes it” can be found in 1:6; 5:41; 8:4, 25; 9:31; 11:19; 13:4; 15:3, 30; 16:5; 23:31.¹³ This connectedness of verse 41 to the ideas expressed in chapters 1 and 2 and the ideas that follow in Acts 2:42–47 highlights both the material sharing and unity aspects of the community within the wider motifs of the power of the Holy Spirit amid eschatological hopes.¹⁴

In verse 41, the new believers received (ἀποδεξάμενοι) Peter’s word. Peter’s address, beginning in 2:17, has him quoting the prophet Joel. “‘In the last days,’ God

¹⁰Ibid., 65.

¹¹Stephen H. Levinsohn, *Textual Connections in Acts* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987), 139.

¹²Lüdemann, *Early Christianity according to the Traditions in Acts*, 47.

¹³Finger, *Of Widows and Meals: Communal Meals in the Book of Acts*, 223. Also see C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Acts of the Apostles*, The International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments 1 (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1994), 159. Cf. Pervo, *Acts*, 85, 86. He argues that while the syntax suggests that verse 41 should go with the following verses, the narrative supports the opposite direction noting that this is the dominant view among scholars. NA28, in its paragraph marking, sees verse 41 as the conclusion of the previous section.

¹⁴For an example of a commentator connecting verse 41 with what follows, see Gaventa, *Acts of the Apostles*, 81.

says, ‘I will pour out my Spirit on all people,’” laying out Luke’s eschatological vision and the miracle of the Spirit. And in verse 19 he talks about “wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below.” This connection of what takes place in verse 41 with Peter’s exhortation is further highlighted with the signs and wonders produced by the Spirit described in 2:43.

The word ἀποδεξάμενοι is a participle in the aorist tense. The temporal sense of the aorist highlights the acceptance of the message before baptism. The Western text has πιστευσαντες, also an aorist participle (having believed his word), instead of ἀποδεξάμενοι. The insertion of the idea of believing is “doubtless motivated by theological concern that faith in, and not merely reception of, the word preached by Peter is prerequisite to receiving baptism.”¹⁵ Some manuscripts (E P 614 cop^{G67} Augustine *al*) and *Textus Receptus* add ἀσμένως (gladly/with gladness) before ἀποδεξάμενοι. This “is an obvious accretion, deriving either from 21:17 or from a feeling that such a description would be eminently appropriate for Peter’s hearers.”¹⁶ In any case, it is clear from the manuscript witnesses and the narrative itself that baptism happens after receiving and/or believing the preaching of Peter, with its promise of the Holy Spirit and given in eschatological overtones.

Those believers who received Peter’s word were baptized (ἐβαπτίσθησαν) and three thousand souls were added (προσετέθησαν) that day. The “added” here resembles

¹⁵Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (New York: American Bible Society, 1994), 262. See also Lake and Cadbury, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 27.

¹⁶Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 262.

“the Lord was adding to the ones being saved” (προσέτιθει) in verse 47 and appears to form a unit.¹⁷ It thus further connects verse 41 to the verses that follow and highlights the fact that verses 41–47 happen as a fulfillment of chapters 1 and 2. While the text does not indicate what they are being added to, the word προσετέθησαν can mean “the incorporation of men into a society.”¹⁸ Luke’s usage of this particular verb highlights his vision of community. Those who believed and were baptized were added to the existing community.

These new believers were baptized in large numbers, became disciples and joined a community where they shared possessions. The implications of 3,000 new community members taking part in the activities described in the following verses highlights the necessity of the power of the Holy Spirit in bringing these about. To imagine 3,000 people being united in one mind sharing together their material possessions highlights the miraculous character of these activities.¹⁹ As will be seen in the following verses, this sharing was taking place alongside new believers being converted and baptized. Understanding verse 41 as part of the 42–47 pericope brings the issue of the size of the community more closely into the interpretation of what happens next.

¹⁷Sterling, ““Athletes of Virtue”: An Analysis of the Summaries in Acts,” 680 fn. 7. In opposition, Co believed that the unit starts with 2:42 rather than 41. Co, “The Major Summaries in Acts: Acts 2,42–47; 4, 32–35; 5, 12–16 Linguistic and Literary Relationship,” 58–63.

¹⁸Christian Maurer, “Τίθημι, Ἀθετέω, Ἀθέτησις, Ἐπιτίθημι, Ἐπίθεσις, Μετατίθημι, Μετάθεσις, Παρατίθημι, Παραθήκη, [παρακαταθήκη], Προτίθημι, Πρόθεσις, Προστίθημι,” *TDNT*, ed. Gerhard Friedrich, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1972), 8:168.

¹⁹On the issue of the size of the multitude, see Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 188, 189.

The translation of verse 41 would be, “So then having received favorably his [Peter’s] word, they were baptized and about three thousand people were added that day.”²⁰

Verse 42

ἦσαν δὲ προσκατεροῦντες τῇ διδαχῇ τῶν ἀποστόλων καὶ τῇ κοινωνίᾳ, τῇ κλάσει τοῦ ἄρτου καὶ ταῖς προσευχαῖς.

Verse 42 continues the description of the first believers from verse 41 (οἱ ἀποδεξάμενοι) as the ones who devoted themselves or persisted in the teaching (τῇ διδαχῇ) of the apostles and in τῇ κοινωνίᾳ. The periphrastic construction ἦσαν δὲ προσκατεροῦντες is used “to highlight verbal aspect”²¹ and perhaps emphasizes “the continuous idea.”²² Robert W. Funk mentions that “the reason for periphrasis is the emphasis on duration.”²³ It seems that the continuous idea is emphasized here in several way. The participle is anarthrous and is part of an imperfect periphrastic construction. In addition, the meaning of the verb itself, which is to “persist in, continue, persevere”²⁴ lends itself lexically to the continuous idea. Finger points out that “προσκατερέω

²⁰For biblical translations not given in the text as the author’s translation, the version of choice is NRSV.

²¹David Alan Black, *It’s Still Greek to Me* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2002), 109.

²²William D. Mounce, *Basics of Biblical Greek Grammar* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 283.

²³Robert W. Funk, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1961), 180.

²⁴Barrett, 162.

connotes remaining faithfully attached to a person or applying oneself to a certain thing, devoting oneself to it tirelessly.”²⁵ In other words, “they were continuously persisting in the teaching of the apostles and in τῇ κοινωνίᾳ.”²⁶

The use of προσκατεροῦντες here also echoes προσκατεροῦντες ὁμοθυμαδόν (continuing with one accord) in prayer in Acts 1:14 and is then repeated in Acts 2:46 where the believers προσκατεροῦντες ὁμοθυμαδόν in the temple.²⁷ This verbal repetition highlights the connection between Acts 1–2:41 and Acts 2:42–47.²⁸

The apostle’s teaching is “emphasizing the continuity between the mission of Jesus and his church.”²⁹ The apostles continue the ministry of Jesus by teaching (Luke 4:15, 31, 32; 5:3, 17; 6:6; 13:10, 22; 19:47; 20:1, 21; 21:37; Acts 1:1).³⁰ Before the ascension (Matt 28:20) Jesus gives authority to the apostles to teach.³¹ The word διδασκίη is also used in Acts 5:28, 13:12, and Acts 17:19 and it indicates (especially in 5:28 and

²⁵Finger, *Of Widows and Meals: Communal Meals in the Book of Acts*, 225.

²⁶For the translation of the imperfect periphrastic construction see Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 647, 648. For the discussion on how the four elements, the apostle’s teaching, fellowship, breaking bread and prayers are connected or disconnected, see below.

²⁷Thompson, *One Lord, One People: The Unity of the Church in Acts in its Literary Setting*, 66.

²⁸The expression προσκατεροῦντες ὁμοθυμαδόν will be studied later while discussing Acts 2:46.

²⁹Keener, 1002.

³⁰Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 58.

³¹Simon J. Kistemaker, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the Acts of the Apostles* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1990), 110.

17:19) “the whole of what the apostles ἐδίδασκον.”³² Luke also uses the verb διδάσκω multiple times including Acts 4:2, 18; 5:21, 25, 28, 42. Many distinguish teaching as instruction from proclamation as seeking converts.³³ The verb διδάσκω is “evangelistic in 4:2, 18; 5:21, 25, 28, but it refers to instruction in 18:25, probably refers to instruction in 11:26; 15:1, 35; 18:11; 20:20; 21:21, includes instruction in 1:1, and is unclear in 5:42; 21:28; and 28:31.”³⁴ The new believers hear the teaching and are now continuously devoted to them. Thus, in this context, “The teaching of the apostles refers to further instructions beyond the common proclamation.”³⁵ The genitive case in the phrase τῆ διδαχῆ τῶν ἀποστόλων (teaching of the apostles) is “a subjective genitive: it is the apostles who were teaching the new converts.”³⁶

So “they continuously persisted in the teaching of the apostles and in κοινωνία, in the breaking of the bread and in the prayers.” The nouns τῆ διδαχῆ, τῆ κοινωνία, τῆ κλάσει and ταῖς προσευχαῖς are all in the dative case. There is a textual variant here with some manuscripts having καί between τῆ κοινωνία and τῆ κλάσει (ℵ² D¹ E Ψ 33 323^s 614 945 1175 1505 1739 m sy). With the presence of καί between τῆ κοινωνία and τῆ κλάσει

³²Karl Heinrich Rengstorff, “διδάσκω, διδάσκαλος, νομοδιδάσκαλος, καλοδιδάσκαλος, ψευδοδιδάσκαλος, διδασκαλία, ἑτεροδιδασκαλέω, διδαχή, διδακτός, διδακτικός,” *TDNT*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans. Geoffrey Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006), 2

³³Joseph Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Bible 31 (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 270.

³⁴Keener, 1002.

³⁵B. J. Malina, *Social-Science Commentary on the Book of Acts* (Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 2008), 36. So also Fitzmyer, 270.

³⁶Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Acts*, ed. Clinton E. Arnold, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 178.

it is clear that all these nouns relate to four different activities, the teaching of the apostles, the fellowship, the breaking of the bread and the prayers. However, the older and more reliable manuscript evidence favors no καί there (N* A B C D* 81 lat). Without the conjunction, as the older manuscripts read, it is not clear whether the breaking of bread and prayers are an explanation of κοινωνία or whether κοινωνία is something separate on its own.

The absence of καί leaves us with several possibilities. The nouns τῆ κλάσει τοῦ ἄρτου καὶ ταῖς προσευχαῖς can stand in apposition to τῆ κοινωνία exegetically explaining what τῆ κοινωνία refers to, i.e. “breaking of the bread” and “prayers.” In this case it should be read, “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teachings and fellowship, that is, breaking of bread and prayers.”³⁷ Or since all four nouns (τῆ διδασκαλίᾳ, τῆ κοινωνίᾳ, τῆ κλάσει καὶ ταῖς προσευχαῖς) are dative objects of προσκαρτερέω,³⁸ they may each stand for “four different (though related) activities to which the new members are devoted.”³⁹ A lot of scholars recognize four parts in the community life as described in Acts 2:42, the teaching of the apostles, fellowship, breaking of bread and prayers.⁴⁰

³⁷Ben Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI, 1998), 160.

³⁸Martin M. Culy and Mikeal C. Parsons, *Acts: A Handbook on the Greek Text* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2003), 45, 46.

³⁹Finger, *Of Widows and Meals: Communal Meals in the Book of Acts*, 226. Also see Kistemaker, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the Acts of the Apostles*, 110, 111.

⁴⁰Keener, 1000; Schnabel, *Acts*, 178–180; Bock, “Acts,” 149–151; Conzelmann, Epp, and Matthews, 23; Kistemaker, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the Acts of the Apostles*, 110, 111; Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 58.

And as Finger adds, τῆ κοινωνίᾳ then “stands by itself as a characteristic of the Christian life together with ‘the teaching of the Apostles, the breaking of bread and the prayers, . . . a life of companionship and of readiness to impart to one another the means of subsistence, . . . an effort to continue the life of discipleship and companionship with Christ.’”⁴¹

In a third possibility, the arrangement of the words falls into two pairs, τῆ διδαχῆ καὶ τῆ κοινωνίᾳ and τῆ κλάσει καὶ ταῖς προσευχαῖς.⁴² Grammatically there is still one more possibility that would include three elements, τῆ διδαχῆ τῶν ἀποστόλων as the first one, καὶ τῆ κοινωνίᾳ which includes τῆ κλάσει τοῦ ἄρτου as the second one and καὶ ταῖς προσευχαῖς as the third one.⁴³

Based on these different possibilities, scholars propose different interpretations of the meaning of κοινωνία. For Carr, because κοινωνία is located between “the teaching of the apostles” and “the breaking of the bread,” “the Christian fellowship [or κοινωνία], the result of Apostolic teaching, leads on to its highest expression in the Eucharistic ‘breaking of bread.’”⁴⁴ The Vulgate translates τῆ κοινωνίᾳ and τῆ κλάσει τοῦ ἄρτου as

⁴¹Finger, *Of Widows and Meals: Communal Meals in the Book of Acts*, 226. Arthur Carr argued for this as early as in 1913. Arthur Carr, “The Fellowship (κοινωνία) of Acts II.42 and Cognate Words,” *The Expositor* 5 (1913): 459, 460.

⁴²Malina, *Social-Science Commentary on the Book of Acts*, 35.

⁴³Keener lists it as a grammatical possibility (Keener, 1000.) This is the understanding preferred by this study. The explanation for it appears below in the section “The Breaking of Bread.”

⁴⁴Carr, 461.

one phrase “*et communicacione fractionis panis*” (“communion of bread-breaking”)⁴⁵ and thus ties it to the concept of the Eucharist.⁴⁶ But there are instances in Luke’s writings where the breaking of the bread (τῆ κλάσει) seems to describe more common meals and not particularly the Eucharist.⁴⁷ Currie notices that “there is no clear example in the first two centuries on the noun *koinonia* as the designation of the sacramental meal, such as one finds later, e.g., in Chrysostom, Homilies on I Corinthians, XXVII, 5.”⁴⁸

Joachim Jeremias suggests that teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayers describe the stages of a worship service and *κοινωνία* stands for the contribution of offerings.⁴⁹ But as Hans Conzelmann notices, “the character of the summary, the concepts themselves, and their sequence all argue against this interpretation.”⁵⁰

According to Haenchen “τῆ κοινωνία was not limited to the offering of gifts in worship

⁴⁵Vg. For a detailed criticism of this translation see M. Manzanera, “*Koinonia en Hch 2,42: Notas sobre su interpretacion y origen historico-doctrinal*,” *Estudios Eclesiasticos* 52 (1977).

⁴⁶See also Finger, *Of Widows and Meals: Communal Meals in the Book of Acts*, 49, 50.

⁴⁷On the discussions of the verb κλάω and its meaning see below.

⁴⁸Currie, 60. Several other commentators reject this position. Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer, *Handbook to the Acts of the Apostles*, trans. Paton J. Gloag (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1889), 68.

⁴⁹Joachim Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus* (New York, NY: Scribner, 1966), 118–121.

⁵⁰Conzelmann, Epp, and Matthews, 23. See discussions on “the breaking of bread” below.

but embraced at least the entire collection and distributions of gifts in money and kind (see on 6.1ff.).”⁵¹

According to Kirsopp Lake and F. J. Foakes Jackson τῆ κοινωvία should be translated as “fellowship” with the interpretation of either fellowship of the apostles as compared with Gal 2:9 or almost equivalent to almsgiving as in Rom 15:26.⁵² According to them these two interpretations are “supported by the arrangement of the words which seem to fall into two groups, τῆ διδασχῆ καὶ τῆ κοινωvία of the apostles, τῆ κλάσει καὶ ταῖς προσευχαῖς.⁵³ But this order does not define what τῆ κοινωvία means.⁵⁴

Since the word κοινωvία is translated differently in different texts (in Rom 15:26, 1 Cor 1:9, 1 John 1:3, 6, 7 as fellowship, in 1 Cor 8:4 and Phil 3:10 as sharing) and its meaning is interpreted differently by different scholars, a closer look at what κοινωvία and its derivatives (κοινός, κοινωvός) mean in different contexts in both the New Testament and earlier documents may clarify the meaning more.

Excursus on the Meaning of κοινός and Its Cognates

The idea and practice of common ownership was not new at the time when the community of Acts 2 was organized. The basic understanding of the cognate group is

⁵¹Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 191.

⁵²Lake and Cadbury, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 27.

⁵³Ibid., 28.

⁵⁴Finger, *Of Widows and Meals: Communal Meals in the Book of Acts*, 228. On the usage of the κοιν- word group among the Essenes and the *Didache* community, see Sandt and Flusser, *The Didache: Its Jewish Sources and its Place in Early Judaism and Christianity*, 185. On the relationship to the *Didache* community, see below on *Did.* 4.8.

understood. However, there has been debate over the last century regarding several key issues.⁵⁵ One question that needs to be clarified is how the κοιν- word group relates to money as this aspect is part of the Acts 2 and 4 discussion.⁵⁶ This section will look some at this debate, noting where it impacts this study's focus on material sharing in Acts.

When this practice was described in antiquity, κοινός was the word most often used. However, this was not its only meaning. In Greek literature, it could have meanings such as “common,” “ordinary,” “shared,” “partner,” “companion,” “close associations with humans,” and “fellowship with gods.”⁵⁷ In a very early usage, Hesiod uses it to refer to a common feast to which everyone contributed.⁵⁸ Hauck, referencing earlier German studies, describes one usage as “common property of the married couple, P. Amh., 78, 11, κοινὰ ὑπάρχοντα.”⁵⁹ In addition to the usage of κοινός to refer to having common

⁵⁵Andrew Lincoln notes regarding one of the key issues that, “The question, then, is whether the κοινών- wordgroup has in view the commonality of the relationship between partners or whether it also specifies the nature of the relationship to objects held in common beyond that of their commonality to the partners.” Andrew T. Lincoln, “Communion: Some Pauline Foundations,” *Ecclesiology* 5, no. 2 (2009): 139.

⁵⁶Julien Ogereau notes that “the term κοινωνία never has the concrete significance of ‘(monetary) contribution’ in surviving ancient sources” (“The Jerusalem Collection as κοινωνία: Paul’s Global Politics of Socio-economic Equality and Solidarity,” *New Testament Studies* 58, no. 3 [2012]: 368). On the connection between κοινωνία in Paul and Luke, see *ibid.*, 373.

⁵⁷Moises Silva ed., “κοινός,” *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 2:707; Henry G. Liddell and Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon (LSJ)* (1996), s.v. “κοινός.”; Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature (BDAG)* (2000), s.v. “κοινός.”

⁵⁸*Op*, 723.

⁵⁹Hauck, “κοινός,” *TDNT* (2006), 3:789, 790.

things, he also describes two other general categories of usage, “that which concerns all . . . of the state” as well as the idea of something being “of little worth.”⁶⁰

Plato writes extensively on κοινός in his descriptions of the private and the common in his political treatise. He discusses one individual working in common for all.⁶¹ In referencing individuals, he uses it to refer to people who are together either in their actions or thoughts.⁶²

In Greek philosophy the concept of common property, or κοινός, was at times very influential, especially in the discussions of the ideal state.⁶³ For Pythagoras, in the ideal state there is no private property and all things are in common (κοινός).⁶⁴ Hauck notes that in Iamblicus the Pythagoreans went beyond just theory and actually renounced all of their possessions and had everything in common (κοινά).⁶⁵ In agreement with this, Plato quotes what he describes as an old saying that “friends have all things really in

⁶⁰Ibid., 790. For an example of κοινός used in reference to common things, Dionysius of Halicarnassus using it to refer to boy’s first name. *Rom. Ant.* 4.1.3.

⁶¹*Resp.*, II, 369e. This is the context of Plato discussing the division of labor in an ideal society.

⁶²See for example, *Protagoras*, where it is stated, “It is not for us to contend on either side for Socrates or for Protagoras, but jointly to request them both not to break off our conference unconcluded.” Plato, *Prot.* 336e–337a.

⁶³For a helpful overview on this, see Hauck, “κοινός,” TDNT (2006), 3:791–796.

⁶⁴Neo-pythagoreanism had some following in the first century. In fact, followers at this time and earlier attributed a status of divinity to Pythagoras. See Johan Thom, “‘Don’t Walk on the Highways’: The Pythagorean *akousmata* and Early Christian Literature,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 113, no. 1 (1994): 102, 103.

⁶⁵Iamblichus *Vit. Pyth.*, 5.29; 19.92.

common.”⁶⁶ Plato also suggested the abolition of property and family especially for the guardians and the soldiers in a state.⁶⁷ The Cynics also idealized the notion of common things among friends, extending even to wives and children.⁶⁸

In summary, there was a range of ideas and practice in the Greco-Roman world regarding κοινός in relation to common ownership, material contribution or material sharing. There were multiple authors who argued for the actual practice of a common life of some form, but there were very few if any, groups that actually lived this way. In addition to the known usage of common sharing or ownership of material goods, it often implies togetherness in actions or thoughts and is used also to describe profane or simple things. The Greek concept of the ideal of friendship being most fully expressed in having things in common is one that may provide some background to the Acts community.

In the LXX κοινός is found only in the book of Proverbs and is used to translate two different Hebrew words, אֶחָד and אֶחָד. In Prov 1:14 the word אֶחָד, commonly translated as “one,” is used in the context of joining together with sinners by having a common (κοινόν) purse with them. In Prov 21:9 and 25:24 the word אֶחָד is used in the

⁶⁶“ὄντως ἐστὶ κοινὰ τὰ φίλων.” Plato, *Leg.* V, 739c. Cf. *Resp.* IV.424a. On Plato’s idea of the commonality of wives and children, see *Leg.* V.449c ff. Aristotle also takes up these ideas in *Pol.* 1262a. Ogereau suggests that to a certain degree, this concept of friendship being behind the Acts community is a plausible explanation for the Jerusalem community. (“The Jerusalem Collection as κοινωμία: Paul’s Global Politics of Socio-economic Equality and Solidarity”, 376).

⁶⁷*Resp.*, III, 416d. On this, see Cinzia Arruzza, “The Private and the Common in Plato’s *Republic*,” *History of Political Thought* 32, no. 2 (2011).

⁶⁸Diogenes Laertius reports that Antisthenes had a similar saying, “When brothers agree, no fortress is so strong as their common life” (VI.6.) Hauck suggests that a correct reading leaves one understanding that Antisthenes also had the platonic idea of common wives and children though this is not for certain. Hauck, “κοινός,” TDNT (2006), 3:794.

context of sharing a common house (οἶκῳ κοινῷ) with a quarrelsome wife. These texts show that the word κοινός in the LXX carries the meaning of having money or property together amongst people such as between a husband and wife.

There are multiple appearances of κοινός in the Apocrypha. It refers to the “common air” we breath (Wisdom Sol 7:3) as well as everything God created (Sir 18:1). In the Maccabean documents, it gains the usage of “unclean” in reference to food, which will be repeated in the NT.⁶⁹ In the twenty other references in 1–4 Maccabees, κοινός is understood as common, shared or public, all standard usages compared to the older Greek literature.

The New Testament uses of κοινός carry the meaning of “common” though often with a negative connotation and often understood by scholars in the sense of “unclean,” “unholy” and “impure.”⁷⁰ It is of note that in Liddell and Scott’s lexicon, a new meaning is introduced in the NT. “Profane” is shown to often be used there referring to unclean food. This is a new usage as no examples are given of this usage in ancient Greek literature.⁷¹ Of the NT usages, three of the fourteen uses are translated as “common” in the NRSV.⁷² Acts 2:44 and 4:32 both use it in the sense of common or shared in the

⁶⁹1 Macc 1:47, 62.

⁷⁰Bauer, BDAG, s.v. “κοινός.”

⁷¹Liddell and Scott, *LSJ*, s.v. “κοινός.” On this NT usage in the context of food, see the discussion on Eike Mueller’s dissertation below.

⁷²The NRSV translates these appearances three times as “unclean” (Mk 7:2, 5; Rev 21:27), three times as “common” (Acts 2:44; 4:32; Rom 14:14), four times as “profane” (Acts 10:14, 28; 11:8; Heb 10:29), and two times as “share” (Titus 1:4; Jude 3). As a comparison, the NASB translates the fourteen appearances of κοινός five times as “unclean” (Rom 14:14; Heb 10:29; Rev 21:27), four times as “common” (Acts 2:44;

material sense. Titus 1:4 has a sense of a shared or common faith while Jude 3 is similar, describing a common salvation.

A recent study by Eike Mueller has convincingly argued that *κοινός* should be understood as “defiled” because of “touch contamination” in situations where it is used in NT food contexts.⁷³ He writes, “*Κοινός*, on the other hand, with the meaning of ‘defiling,’ has no background in the Hebrew Bible and is first mentioned in the Second Temple period (1 Macc 1:47).”⁷⁴ In Mark 7:2, 5 the meaning is “unclean” in the context of eating with unwashed hands. In Acts 10:14, a voice tells Peter to kill and eat from among a group of animals contained together in a sheet. Peter’s reply is that he has not eaten anything unclean (*κοινόν*). In Acts 11:8, Peter retells his vision to the circumcised believers. And in Acts 10:28 Peter said that the Lord told him not to call any man “impure” (*κοινόν*). In Rom 14:14, again relating to food, Paul declares that in the Lord Jesus nothing is unclean (*κοινόν*) in the context of not judging others.

Mueller builds on House’s conclusion⁷⁵ arguing for a “touch contamination” meaning in Mark 7, Acts 10 and 11, and Rom 14:14. In seeking a theological implication, he suggests that after the Christ’s death and resurrection, the “*κοινός* barrier is no longer

4:32; Titus 1:4; Jude 3), three times as “unholy” (Acts 10:14, 28; 11:8), and two times as “impure” (Mk 7:2, 5).

⁷³Eike Mueller, “Cleansing the Common: A Narrative-Intertextual Study of Mark 7:1–23” (Th.D. dissertation, Andrews University, 2015), 185, 186.

⁷⁴Ibid., 153. For an in-depth study of *κοινός* as it relates specifically to the concepts of clean and unclean, see *ibid.*, 136–186.

⁷⁵Colin House, “Defilement by Association: Some Insights from the Usage of *Κοινός*/*Κοινώω* in Acts 10 and 11,” *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 21, no. 2 (1983): 151–153.

relevant”⁷⁶ and there is no more touch defilement between Jews and Gentiles. Heb 10:29 and Rev 21:26 both employ κοινός in a clearly negative connotation, referring to counting Christ’s blood as common in Hebrews and asserting that “nothing unclean/impure” (κοινὸν) can enter into the New Jerusalem. This negative view of κοινός as profane is a usage that is not found in the Old Testament or in Greco-Roman literature.

In summary, κοινός retains much of its earlier meaning of “common” or “shared.” It is used both in relation to material and spiritual things in the NT. In addition, the negative connotations of “defiled” or “profaned” are further developed from the Apocrypha literature. This novel usage, while clearly expanding on earlier meanings, does not appear to significantly impact the passages receiving attention in this study.

The noun κοινωνός does not appear in the Acts passages being analyzed in this chapter, however a brief review will show that its usage in the literature is similar to κοινός and κοινωνία as it is of the same root. Its general meaning is “partner,” “companion.”⁷⁷ “The main element in κοινωνός is that of fellowship. Hence the word is esp. adapted to express inner relationship.”⁷⁸ In the LXX the word κοινωνός is used

⁷⁶Mueller, 167.

⁷⁷Hauck, “κοινός,” *TDNT* (2006), 3:797; Liddell and Scott, *LSJ*, s.v. “κοινωνός.”; Bauer, *BDAG*, s.v. “κοινωνός.”; Moises Silva ed., “κοινός,” *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 2:706–713. For a recent review of the history of interpretation of κοινωνός, see Julien Ogereau, “A Survey of κοινωνία and its Cognates in Documentary Sources,” *Novum Testamentum* 57 (2015): 275–277. Ogereau does a complete study on the documentary usage of the κοιν- root while Baumert does an exhaustive review in the literary sources. Norbert Baumert, *Koinonein und Metechlein–Synonym?: eine umfassende semantische Untersuchung*, Stuttgarter biblische Beiträge 51 (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2003).

⁷⁸Hauck, “κοινός,” *TDNT* (2006), 3:797. It is used variously throughout Greek literature, though not nearly as often as κοινός. See for example Aeschylus *Ag.* 1352

several times with no changes to its earlier usage.⁷⁹ In the New Testament, the noun *κοινωνός* has the meaning of “partners” used variously of partnership with demons to being partners with the divine. One can be described as sharing in the blood of someone, implying guilt, or be listed as a coworker.⁸⁰ The word *κοινωνός* is sometimes compounded with *συγ-* as a prefix to form both a noun and a verb (*συγκοινωνός* and *συγκοινωνέω*), further highlighting the “together with” idea of the *κοιν-* root. The NT usages confirm this.⁸¹

where it is used of one sharing in a plan (*γνώματος κοινωνός ὄν*) with others. Dionysius of Halicarnassus uses it multiple times in his *Ant. rom.* An example is in *Ant. rom.* 4.79.2 where he refers to a wife as *τέκνων κοινωνόν* with her husband, speaking of their children. Xenophon, in *Cyr.* writes of one person speaking to another as an ally (*πρὸς συμμάχους καὶ κοινωνοὺς διαλέγομαι*). Plato also uses the term multiple times with a similar understanding of companion, partner or sharer. See, for example *Tim* 20d εἰ' καὶ τῷ τρίτῳ κοινωνῶ Τιμαίῳ συνδοκεῖ; *Leg.*, III, 699d *κοινωνόν τῆ τῶν πατέρων γεγονότα φύσει*).

⁷⁹4 Kgdms 4:11; Prov 28:24; Isa 1:23; Mal 2:14; Sir 6:10; 41:18; 42:3; Add Est E.13.

⁸⁰In Luke 5:10 the word means “sharers in ministry” (*οἱ ἦσαν κοινωνοὶ τῷ Σίμωνι*). In Matt 23:30 it is also used as “sharers” or “partakers.” The Pharisees deny being “the sharers of the blood of the prophets” (*κοινωνοὶ ἐν τῷ αἵματι τῶν προφητῶν*). In 1 Cor 10:18 eating meat sacrificed to idols means being “sharers in the altar” (*κοινωνοὶ τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου εἰσίν*), while in 1 Cor 10:20 one is described as being partners with demons (*ὑμᾶς κοινωνοὺς τῶν δαιμονίων γίνεσθαι*). In 2 Cor 1:7, Paul shares in suffering (*κοινωνοὶ ἐστε τῶν παθημάτων*) while in 2 Cor 8:23, Paul refers to Titus as his partner (*ὑπὲρ Τίτου, κοινωνός ἐμός*). In Heb 10:33 the word means “sharers with those who persevere” (*κοινωνοὶ τῶν οὕτως ἀναστρεφομένων γενηθέντες*). In 1 Pet 5:1 the meaning is “a partaker of the glory that is to come” (*δόξης κοινωνός*) while in 2 Pet 1:4, believers can even be partners of the divine nature (*ἵνα διὰ τούτων γένησθε θείας κοινωνοὶ φύσεως*).

⁸¹The noun *συγκοινωνός* and the verb *συγκοινωνέω* are both used with the meaning of participation. In Eph 5:11 *συγκοινωνέω* means “do not participate in the unfruitful works of darkness (*συγκοινωνεῖτε τοῖς ἔργοις τοῖς ἀκάρποις τοῦ σκότους*). In Revs 18:4, do not be partakers of the sins of Babylon (*ἵνα μὴ συγκοινωνήσητε ταῖς ἀμαρτίαις αὐτῆς*). In Phil 1:7 the believers are partakers of the grace (*συγκοινωνοὺς μου τῆς χάριτος*), in 4:14 they are sharers in affliction (*συγκοινωνήσαντές μου τῆ θλίψει*). In

After looking at the above examples it is clear that *κοινωνός* and its compounds convey the meaning of a partner and being a sharer or participant in a range of contexts, indicating both abstract notions such as guilt and human relationships such as being a coworker. It is used in both positive and negative associations, both in the spiritual realms as well in the material.

The word *κοινωνία* has the meaning of association (in law and commerce), communion, fellowship, and close relationship (as in marriage) in Greek literature.⁸² In

1 Cor 9:23 Paul is a partaker of the gospel (ἵνα συγκοινωνός αὐτοῦ γένωμαι). In 1 Tim 5:22 there is a warning not to have a part in the sins of others (κοινωνεῖ ἁμαρτίας ἄλλοτριαις). 2 John 11 talks about anyone who does not bring the teaching of Christ, and anyone who welcomes such person participates in his evil works (κοινωνεῖ τοῖς ἔργοις αὐτοῦ τοῖς πονηροῖς).

⁸²Bock, “Acts,” 150; Bauer, BDAG, s.v. “κοινωνία.” In the sense of marriage, it is used in Plato *Leg.* IV.721a, *Resp.* V.466c. Diodorus Siculus in *Hist.* 1.59.2 writes of a man sharing the nature of his father (διὰ τὴν πρὸς τὸν πατέρα τῆς φύσεως κοινωνίαν). On the legal and commercial connotations, see J. Paul Sampley, *Pauline Partnership in Christ: Christian Community and Commitment in Light of Roman Law* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980). On the consequent ambiguity of this term in the NT, see Catherine Gunsalus González, “And the Communion of the Holy Spirit,” *Journal for Preachers* 40, no. 4 (2017): 26, 27. For a look at its further development into the early Christian era especially as it relates to communion in the context of the Eucharist and doctrine of the Church Fathers, see Mark Sheridan, “The Church as Communion in early Christian Thought: The Terminology and its Meanings,” *One in Christ* 51, no. 1 (2017). On its usage in the documentary evidence of papyri and inscriptions, see James H. Moulton and George Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament (MM)* (1930) s.v. “κοινωνία.” Ogereau argues for the importance of the documentary evidence over and against the literary evidence suggesting that “documentary sources generally reflect more accurately than literary sources the vocabulary, syntax and register of the New Testament, and are more representative of oral language and popular culture” (“Paul’s *κοινωνία* with the Philippians: Societas as a Missionary Funding Strategy,” *New Testament Studies* 60, no. 3 [2014]). For a history of the interpretation of *κοινωνία* in NT literature, see Lincoln, “Communion: Some Pauline Foundations,” 135, 143; Julien Ogereau, *Paul’s Koinonia with the Philippians: A Socio-Historical Investigation of a Pauline Economic Partnership*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2. Reihe (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 120–150. Relying on Baumert’s study, Lincoln says that *κοινωνία* has two primary meanings in the Greek literature: “(i) the activity of having something in common with others or being in partnership with

reviewing the documentary evidence for the κοιν- word group, Julien Ogereau writes that the, “sense of cooperation or partnership in some kind of enterprise, be it political, commercial or otherwise, is often conveyed by one of these three terms.”⁸³ Pythagoras saw common fellowship extending to having all property in common with friends as the highest ideal.⁸⁴ Greek philosophy regards fellowship with the divine as the highest fellowship of all (Plato *Symp.* 188b).⁸⁵ The Stoics talk about κοινωμία between individuals as well as κοινωμία between humans and the gods.⁸⁶ Plato perhaps gives one of the clearest ways of seeing the different meanings between κοινός, κοινωνός, and

others or (ii) the communicating or contributions between parties that can be either in word or some form of deed, including material giving.” Lincoln, “Communion: Some Pauline Foundations,” 141. Baumert, in his study, uses the German words Gemeinschaft and Mitteilung for these two main categories. Under each of these, he further classifies both action noun (*nomen actionis*) usages and result of action noun (*nomen rei actae*) usages. He argues that κοινωμία does not have the idea of participation. Baumert, *Koinonein und Metechlein—Synonym?: eine umfassende semantische Untersuchung*, 141. However, Ogereau argues that Baumert is not entirely correct and that κοινωμία, in the context of contracts, often “entitled the contracting parties to a share of the responsibilities and benefits.” Ogereau, *Paul’s Koinonia with the Philippians: A Socio-Historical Investigation of a Pauline Economic Partnership*, 142.

⁸³Ogereau, “Paul’s κοινωμία with the Philippians: Societas as a Missionary Funding Strategy,” 364.

⁸⁴Diodorus Siculus in *Hist.* 10.8.2 writes of the Pythagoreans and those who join their fellowship of life (ἀφικνουμένοις εἰς τὴν τοῦ βίου κοινωμίαν). So Diogenes Laertius in his *Vit. Phil.* 10.6.11 says that Epicurus thought this requirement to have common property with friends to be a sign of distrust and so Epicurus, with his many friends, did not practice common property. (In this context, Diogenes reports Epicurus’s words using κοινός rather than κοινωμία for common property with Pythagoras.)

⁸⁵See also Epictetus, *Diss.*, 1.9.5, 2.19.27. For a brief discussion on Plato’s idea of common property, see above under κοινός. According to Plato, the gods set up the early Athenians military so that it had all things in common, owning no property and only taking what was required for their living (*Crit.* 110c–d).

⁸⁶Hauck, “κοινός,” *TDNT* (2006), 3:800.; M. Ant., XI, 8, 4; Cicero *Leg.*, 1.7.23.

κοινωνία in *Resp.* 1.333b when talking about justice.⁸⁷ In this section he uses all three terms, with κοινός referring to common money, κοινωνός referring to a partner and κοινωνία to describe the relationship between the partners. While it is clear in the context that money is one of the things to be had in common, it is not the only kind of relationship to have with someone. The verb κοινωνέω “in a majority of inscriptions dating between IV BC and AD II, . . . is used . . . to express participation in religious festivals (including the partaking of sacrifices), in athletic or artistic contests, or in the politeia of a city.”⁸⁸

The Jewish writer Philo uses κοινωνία as sharing and fellowship between God and men in *Mos.*, 1.158.⁸⁹ In *Spec. Leg.*, I, 221 Philo uses it in a sense of “giving a share.” Josephus uses κοινωνία as fellowship/relationship between people in *C. Ap.*, 1.35, and *B.J.*, 7.264.

⁸⁷“ἄρ’ οὖν ὁ δίκαιος ἀγαθὸς καὶ χρήσιμος κοινωνὸς εἰς πεττῶν θέσιν, ἢ ὁ πεττευτικός; ὁ πεττευτικός. ἀλλ’ εἰς πλίνθων καὶ λίθων θέσιν ὁ δίκαιος χρησιμώτερός τε καὶ ἀμείνων κοινωνὸς τοῦ οἰκοδομικοῦ; οὐδαμῶς. ἀλλ’ εἰς τίνα δὴ κοινωνίαν ὁ δίκαιος ἀμείνων κοινωνὸς τοῦ οἰκοδομικοῦ τε καὶ κιθαριστικοῦ, ὥσπερ ὁ κιθαριστικὸς τοῦ δικαίου εἰς κρουμάτων; εἰς ἀργυρίου, ἔμοιγε δοκεῖ. πλὴν γ’ ἴσως, ὃ Πολέμαρχε, πρὸς τὸ χρῆσθαι ἀργυρίῳ, ὅταν δέη ἀργυρίου κοινῆ πρίασθαι ἢ ἀποδόσθαι ἵππον.”

“Is it the just man, then, who is a good and useful associate and partner in the placing of draughts or the draught-player?” “The player.” “And in the placing of bricks and stones is the just man a more useful and better associate than the builder?” “By no means.” “Then what is the association in which the just man is a better partner than the harpist as an harpist is better than the just man for striking the chords?” “For money-dealings,⁶¹ I think.” “Except, I presume, Polemarchus, for the use of money when there is occasion to buy in common or sell a horse.” (Trans. Shorey)

⁸⁸Ogereau, “A Survey of κοινωνία and its Cognates in Documentary Sources,” 278.

⁸⁹See discussions of Philo’s usage of κοινωνία later in the chapter on Philo.

In the LXX, κοινωνία appears in Lev 6:2.⁹⁰ In this context, it is clear that it refers to some material possessions left with one person for another to care for. It also appears in Wis 8:18 in reference to the author's feelings and desire for wisdom and in 3 Macc 4:6 referring to marriage. In 2 Chr 20:35 the verb form is used about Jehoshaphat alliance with Ahaziah (ἐκοινωνήσεν). In the Hebrew Bible "we never find κοινωνία for the relations between God and man"⁹¹ as we find among the Greeks and their gods and in Philo.⁹² So, in the Greek and Rabbinic literature and the LXX, the word κοινωνία means spiritual, material and relational participation.⁹³

In the standard Bible translations, the word κοινωνία of Acts 2:42 is most often translated as "fellowship,"⁹⁴ within the idea of "community."⁹⁵ The word κοινωνία is used only once in Luke-Acts, here in Acts 2:42, though κοινός is used in Acts 2:44 (εἶχον

⁹⁰This usage also appears in a fragment from 4Q120.

⁹¹Hauck, "κοινός," *TDNT* (2006), 3:801.

⁹²This usage will appear, however, in the NT.

⁹³Clearly κοινωνία does not appear itself in Rabbinic literature. For a discussion on the typical Hebrew translations in Jewish literature, see George V. Jourdan, "Κοινωνία in I Corinthians 10:16," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 67, no. 2 (1948): 111–113.

⁹⁴So KJV, NKJV, NRSV, NASV, NIV. NASB95 translates it 12 times as fellowship (Acts 2:42; 1 Cor 1:9; 2 Cor 6:14; 13:14; Gal 2:9; Phil 2:1; 3:10; Phlm 6; 1 John 1:3, 6, 7), three times as sharing (1 Cor 10:16; Heb 13:16), two times as contribution (Rom 15:26; 2 Cor 9:13) and two times as participation (2 Cor 8:4; Phil 1:5). See also Gaventa, 81; Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles: The Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary*, 131.

⁹⁵Thompson, *One Lord, One People: The Unity of the Church in Acts in its Literary Setting*, 67.

ἅπαντα κοινὰ) and Acts 4:32 (ἅπαντα κοινά). All of the three occurrences in Acts are in the same context of sharing.⁹⁶

The word κοινωνία appears most often in the New Testament in the writings of Paul.⁹⁷ There are two points that are key from Paul's usage of this word. First, he has a usage that connects it to the Holy Spirit. Secondly in addition to the fellowship or relationship between believers, he uses it multiple times in the context of material

⁹⁶Stanislav Giet sees a connection both to the Essene community at Qumran and the Didache exhortations in *Did.* 4.8. He suggests that ultimately the Jerusalem community was not following the teachings of Jesus as much as they were following an older version of the Two Ways document prominent in the early section of the *Didache* which had already gained authoritative status for the Jerusalem community. Stanislav Giet, *L'Énigme de la Didachè* (Paris: Ophrys, 1970), 165, 166. Van De Sandt and Flusser see the two pericopes of Acts 2.42–47 and 4:32–35 as being additions to “generalize and idealize individual cases of sharing property in the early church.” Sandt and Flusser, *The Didache: Its Jewish Sources and its Place in Early Judaism and Christianity*, 185 note 142. Their argument is not convincing, however, and will be discussed below on *Did.* 4.8.

⁹⁷There are several occurrences of κοινωνία in the Johannine literature, though they add little to the understanding beyond the usage in Pauline literature. In 1 John 1:3, 6, 7 the word κοινωνία is used of the fellowship between fellow believers as well as between believers and God. On this, see PHEME PERKINS, “Koinōnia in 1 John 1:3–7: The Social Context of Division in the Johannine Letters,” *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 45, no. 4 (1983): 632–636.

sharing.⁹⁸ In 2 Cor 13:13⁹⁹ and Phil 2:1 it is used in the phrase “the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.” Some scholars take the genitive ἡ κοινωνία τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος in 2 Cor 13:13 as a subjective genitive or genitive of quality, “the fellowship with one another that is engendered by the Spirit.”¹⁰⁰ This understanding makes sense for a Spirit-led community and is in agreement with the description of the community in Acts 2:42–47 and 4:32. The community of Acts had fellowship together and everything in common

⁹⁸For a helpful analysis of Paul’s usage of κοινωνία, see Josef Hainz, “κοινωνία,” *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Horst R. Balz et al., (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990):303, 304. Paul uses κοινωνία to describe one’s relationships, whether with other people or with God and beyond this to other spiritual realities. In Phil 1:5 κοινωνία means “fellowship of the gospel” or “participation of the gospel.” Based on Phil 1:7 this should be understood as sharing in believing as they are the partakers of grace with Paul. In Phlm 6 it is “the fellowship of your faith.” In Phil 3:10, 11 the word κοινωνία is used as “the sharing of Christ’s sufferings.” In 1 Cor 10:16 the cup of blessing is the sharing in the blood of Christ and bread is the sharing of the body of Christ. In 2 Cor 6:14 it is used in asking, “What fellowship does light have with darkness?” In Gal 2:9 James, Cephas and John gave “the right of fellowship” to Paul and Barnabas as workers of Christ to go to the Gentiles and share their faith. So, in some parts of Pauline writing it is used with the sense of fellowship or partnership of God and faith.

⁹⁹Verse 14 in modern English translations.

¹⁰⁰Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005), 939. See also Victor P. Furnish, *II Corinthians: Translated with Introduction, Notes, and Commentary*, Anchor Yale Bible 32A (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 584; Jourdan, “Κοινωνία in I Corinthians 10:16,” 115, 116; Lincoln, “Communion: Some Pauline Foundations,” 141, 142. In giving support for the subjective genitive, Harris notes that Paul elsewhere does not have a notion of communion with the Holy Spirit, but he notes that in Eph 4:3, Paul does note the Spirit’s power to bring about communion. Harris, after a detailed discussion of the two possibilities, admits that it is difficult to choose which would be the better understanding, though he says he thinks the evidence slightly favors the objective genitive. Furnish also favors the objective genitive which would lead a translation of “participation in the Holy Spirit.” However, more recent research by Norbert Baumert of all appearances of κοινωνία in the Greek literary sources available on the Perseus database has led Lincoln to conclude that it must be a subjective genitive.

brought about by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. This connection of *κοινωνία* with the Holy Spirit is important for the comparison with the Jerusalem community.

But in other parts of the Pauline writings, *κοινωνία* and its verbal forms are used in the sense of material sharing. In Phil 4:14–16 *συγκοινωνήσαντές* describes the Philippian sharing in Paul’s troubles, seeming to hint at a material sharing in Paul’s time of need. In the next verse, *ἐκοινώνησεν* clearly refers to their financial sharing and support of Paul’s ministry through material sharing. In 2 Cor 8:4 *κοινωνία* is used in the context of material sharing. The church members are praised for sharing in the service to the saints.¹⁰¹ The service is material sharing with other believers. The sharing is voluntary, “For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what he does not have” (2 Cor. 8:12). The whole passage of 2 Cor 8:1–13 resembles the sharing among Christians in Acts 2:42–47 and Acts 4:32–35. “At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need” (2 Cor. 8:14, NIV). In 2 Cor 9:13 Paul praises the Corinthians for *ἀπλότητι τῆς κοινωνίας* (“sincerity/generosity of fellowship”). Some see the generous giving as “a visible token of *κοινωνία*—a common sharing in divine grace.”¹⁰²

¹⁰¹τὴν κοινωνίαν τῆς διακονίας τῆς εἰς τοὺς ἁγίους.

¹⁰²Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, Word Biblical Commentary 40 (Waco, TX: Word Books Publisher, 1986), 294. See also, Josef Hainz, *Koinonia: Kirche als Gemeinschaft bei Paulus*, Biblische Untersuchungen (Regensburg: Pustet, 1982), 141–144.

The word κοινωνία may have a meaning of “contribution” here in connection to Rom 15:26 and the contribution to the poor in Jerusalem.¹⁰³ Ogereau, in his recent work on κοινωνία in Paul’s Jerusalem collection, concludes that Paul’s intention was to foster socio-economic equality and establish a global and ethnically inclusive κοινωνία reminiscent of Acts 2 and 4.¹⁰⁴ But it is hard to imagine that it was that kind of community. There is no other mention of this happening again or an indication that this was expected by him with some degree of regularity, nor are there syntactical/grammatical indicators that the Gentiles shared consistently as in the Jerusalem community in the book of Acts. In addition, Paul has to urge them to contribute.¹⁰⁵ There is no indication in the text about an extensive organized distribution as in Acts 4 and 6. It appears more like a one-time contribution to help the believers in Jerusalem who have exhausted their resources during famine.

In Rom 12:13 the verb κοινωνέω is used to encourage sharing with the believers in need (saints), ταῖς χρείαις τῶν ἁγίων κοινωνοῦντες. This usage is in a material sense. The same verb κοινωνέω is used in Gal 6:6 in the context of sharing the burdens of others. In Phlm 1:6 it is about sharing of the faith (ἡ κοινωνία τῆς πίστεώς) as well as in Phil 1:6. But because the word κοινωνία is used only in Phil 1:6 and not in Rom 1:18 and

¹⁰³κοινωνίαν τινὰ ποιήσασθαι εἰς τοὺς πτωχοὺς τῶν ἁγίων τῶν ἐν Ἱερουσαλήμ. See Silva, 2:711.

¹⁰⁴Ogereau, “The Jerusalem Collection as κοινωνία: Paul’s Global Politics of Socio-economic Equality and Solidarity,” 377. He bases this on his study of κοινωνία in documentary sources. In addition to κοινωνία, he also looks closely at ἰσότης in 2 Cor 8:13 as a leading indicator of this “socio-economic equality.”

¹⁰⁵Ogereau himself notes this. Ibid., 363, 364.

1 Thessalonians 1:8 some believe that in Phil 1:6 it involves financial contributions, “When speaking of the Macedonians’ contribution to the Jerusalem saints (Rom. 15:26; 2 Cor. 8:4; cf. 9:13), Paul uses the same noun, *koinonia*, with the preposition *eis*, although the construction is not exactly parallel. Moreover, Paul uses the verbal form *koinoneo* with reference to financial contribution in Rom. 12:13; Gal. 6:6; and especially Phil. 4:15.”¹⁰⁶ The terms κοινός and κοινωνέω in Rom. 15:26, 2 Cor. 8:4, 9:13 and Rom. 12:13 are not referring to almsgiving but mutual sharing. “The Gentile churches now have a chance to repay their debt to the Jerusalem Christians, since it was from them that they first received the Gospel (e.g., Rom. 15:27; 2 Cor. 8:12–15). It is communal sharing practiced in one geographical location that is now adapted to a broader arena.”¹⁰⁷

Summary

In conclusion, in Greek literature the words κοινός, κοινωνός and κοινωνία are used in the sense of sharing not only between friends, companions, etc. but also with the sense of sharing with the gods. In the LXX, this group of words is used only in the sense of sharing with each other but never for the relationship between God and people. In Paul, the word κοινωνία and its derivatives express participation in the gospel, faith, Holy Spirit, Father, and Son. Sharing with God means participation in the life and suffering of Jesus. But at the same time the same words in Paul can have a clear material and financial connotation. Material sharing with other believers seems to be an extension of Christian faith and love implied in the word κοινωνία and its related roots.

¹⁰⁶G. Walter Hansen, *The Letter to the Philippians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), 44; Takesure Mahohoma, “Difficult Texts: Koinonia, Acts 2.42,” *Theology* 120, no. 5 (2017): 364.

¹⁰⁷Finger, *Of Widows and Meals: Communal Meals in the Book of Acts*, 228.

This evidence provides further support to see in the passages of Acts 2 and 4 material sharing while fellowshiping in faith. The first believers continued in the teachings, in the fellowship of material sharing and in the breaking of the bread and the prayers. Thus, when τῆ κοινωνία is used in 2:41–47, it is legitimate to understand that all of the four activities from verse 42 are further defined in this context. “The κοινωνία of verse 42, then, is shown to be ἅπαντα κοινὰ of verse 44, where property and possessions are concretely shared so that all believers have their needs met. The emphasis is nowhere implied to be charity for the poor but sharing by and for everyone.”¹⁰⁸

Since κοινωνία has a strong sense of material fellowship, then τῆ κοινωνία here seems to include the meaning “common life of the community” or “a communal form of life.”¹⁰⁹ However, it seems best to take τῆ κοινωνία as “life in common” since “communal” has a connotation of living together entirely.¹¹⁰ Using Stuart Dickson Currie’s vocabulary, τῆ κοινωνία refers to the post-Pentecostal, . . . “life in common.”¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸Ibid.; Manzanera, “Koinonia en Hch 2,42: Notas sobre su interpretacion y origen historico-doctrinal,” 313.

¹⁰⁹Thompson, *One Lord, One People: The Unity of the Church in Acts in its Literary Setting*, 67.

¹¹⁰Cf. Murphy-O’Conner who argues that Acts 2 describes a full communal experience. Jerome Murphy-O’Conner, “The Cenacle-Setting for Acts 2:44–45,” in *The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting*, ed. Richard Bauckham (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 320. This does not seem plausible, however, as will be seen after looking at the rest of Acts 2 as well as Acts 4. The issue of whether this “life in common” was a total renunciation of possessions or almsgiving will be discussed below under verse 44.

¹¹¹Currie, 62. See also Murphy-O’Conner, “The Cenacle-Setting for Acts 2:44–45,” 320. Murphy-O’Conner sees the Acts 2 setting as a communal living together with a complete community of goods.

“Acts 2:42–47 defines the character of that life, based on the teaching of the apostles and exhibited in shared meals, prayers and possessions.”¹¹² With this analysis, it seems clear that there is a definite a sense of connection on all levels, including material sharing, between the believers.¹¹³

The Breaking of Bread and Prayers

The breaking of bread (τῆ κλάσει τοῦ ἄρτου) is the third element listed in verse 42 which the first Christians participated in, along with teaching of the apostles (τῆ διδαχῆ τῶν ἀποστόλων), κοινωνία and prayers (ταῖς προσευχαῖς). They literally “persisted” in the breaking of the bread. The picture here is one that should not be glossed over. It is suggested by some that this is simply referring to eating a general meal.¹¹⁴ Others argue that this is the Christian beginnings of the Eucharist.¹¹⁵ And some say it is both.¹¹⁶ If so, it needs to be clarified what this implies for κοινωνία. This section will suggest that τῆ κλάσει τοῦ ἄρτου refers to a regular meal loosely connected with the notion of κοινωνία.

¹¹²Currie, 62.

¹¹³Fitzmyer, 270.

¹¹⁴Bock, “Acts,” 150.

¹¹⁵Keener, 1003, 1004; Manzanera, “Koinonia en Hch 2,42: Notas sobre su interpretacion y origen historico-doctrinal,” 310.

¹¹⁶Schnabel says, “The ‘breaking of bread’ in Acts 2:42 is best understood as a reference to the ordinary meals that the believers regularly shared, during which they remembered Jesus’ death on the cross for the forgiveness of sins and for the establishment of the new covenant, linked with the command to remember Jesus and his sacrifice during the meals (cf. Luke 22:14–22)” (Schnabel, *Acts*, 179).

The difficulty in deciding whether it was the Lord's Supper or an ordinary meal in Acts 2 is that the breaking of bread was probably part of a larger meal in the early church.¹¹⁷ Many suggest that breaking of bread in Acts 2:42 likely included the Lord's Supper.¹¹⁸ Johnson suggests that it refers to more than ordinary meals as "Luke emphasizes the connection between meals and Jesus' presence (Luke 24:41, 42; Acts 1:4; 10:41.)"¹¹⁹ In that culture "to eat with someone, to hold table fellowship, denotes close association. . . ."¹²⁰ Jesus, being part of that culture, was definitely present at different meal times and taught many things at the time of eating, as is recorded in Luke 5:30, 33; 7:36; 9:17; 14:1; 22:14–20. He had meals after his resurrection as is seen in Luke 24:41,

¹¹⁷Barrett, 163–165.

¹¹⁸Keener, 1003; Pelikan, *Acts*, 59, 60; John Paul Heil, *The Meal Scenes in Luke-Acts: an Audience-oriented Approach* (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 1999), 243; Barrett, 165; Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*, 160. Keener suggests, based on the literary level, that "If, for Luke, the Lord's Supper represented a meal believers shared together in memory of what Jesus had done for them (22:19), then ideally all early Christian meals together may have represented the Lord's Supper or at least been taken in the same spirit (cf. Acts 2:46; 20:7, 11)." Why grammatically the breaking of bread should be understood as fellowship but at the literary level it should include the Lord's Supper is not clarified by Keener.

¹¹⁹Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 58. However in these texts, κλάω is not used. In Luke 24:41, 42 Jesus appears to the disciples and asks for something to eat (βρώσιμον, literally "anything eatable."). In Acts 1:4 the word used is συναλίζω and can be translated as "stay with, assemble" and "eat with." In Acts 10:41 the word used for eating is συνεσθίω (eat with). Eating together in general was a vital part of cultural fellowship.

¹²⁰Johannes Behm, "ἐσθίω," *TDNT*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans. Geoffrey Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006), 2:689, 690.

43; Acts 1:4, 2:42, 46; 10:41.¹²¹ That all of these were to be understood as the Lord's Supper this early in the life of the church seems slightly anachronistic.

In Acts 2:42, the word used is κλάσις, a noun—though it does have a more common verb form (κλαω). Κλάσις is only used in the NT here and in Luke 24:35. There the two disciples from Emmaus report to those gathered in the upper room that they had seen and recognized Jesus “in the breaking of the bread.” So, both times that κλάσις appears in the NT, it is used in connection with eating bread. The Emmaus account clearly was a regular meal which began with the breaking of bread¹²² after which Jesus began giving the bread to the two fellow travelers. It was only at this point that their “eyes were opened,” which led to the disciples’ recognition of the Lord in their midst. There is no doubting the recognition of the Lord as the significant event in the pericope. This happened, though, as Jesus was giving them the bread, not even from Him breaking it. The focus seems to be on the opening of the two disciples’ eyes rather than a repetition of the meal Jesus had eaten with the twelve just a few days earlier. However, this recognition did not change the purpose for the meal. The disciples’ act of charity only gave them the privilege of knowing who it was who had been teaching them during their journey home, and it then inspired them to return immediately to those in Jerusalem. Whatever the motivation was that had led the two disciples back to Emmaus, it was no

¹²¹In the Jewish culture “eating and drinking in fellowship with God belongs also to the Jewish expectation of the eschatological banquet of God.” Ibid., 691; Keener, 1004. This theme will be explored later in the “Beliefs that Motivated Sharing” section.

¹²²Jeremias suggests that this is the standard formula to begin a Jewish meal. Joachim Jeremias, *Jesus als Weltvollender* (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1930), 78. See also Barrett, 164.

longer important. Being in the company of believers and to report what they had seen was paramount.

The verb form, κλαω as well as its derivative κατακλάω, is more common than the noun. In Luke 9:16 Jesus broke (κατέκλασεν) the bread and the fish and fed the five thousand with it. In Luke 22:19 Jesus broke (ἔκλασεν) bread during the Last Supper. This is the founding of the Christian Eucharist, patterned after the Jewish Passover meal, which itself was a feast laden with spiritual overtones and meaning. In Luke 24:30 and 35 Jesus met the disciples on the road to Emmaus, and He stayed with them and broke bread with them (κλάσας in verse 30 and κλάσει τοῦ ἄρτου in verse 35, when the disciples report on the event of verse 30). In Acts 2:46 (κλῶντές τε κατ' οἶκον ἄρτον) the breaking of bread is used in the same context as 2:42 (they broke bread from house to house), though this time with the verbal form. “The reference in 2:46 seems to be used broadly of meals.”¹²³ In Acts 20:7 the believers got together to break bread (κλάσαι ἄρτον), which could hint at the Lord’s Supper. But in Acts 20:11 Paul went upstairs again to break bread (κλάσας τὸν ἄρτον). It seems debatable whether it was the Lord’s Supper or table fellowship here. In Acts 27:35 Paul urged people to eat during the shipwreck, and he broke some bread (κλάσας). Here is a very clear instance of an ordinary meal for physical nourishment although the same verb (κλάω) is used.

Based on this review of the usages in Luke-Acts, in Acts 2:42 and Acts 2:46 table fellowship “has no liturgical character, but is full of religious content because of the

¹²³Bock, “Acts,” 150. Also see Barrett, 163–165.

recollection of the table fellowship which Jesus had with His followers during His earthly ministry.”¹²⁴

It is now possible to say more about the connections between the four activities the disciples hold fast to in Acts 2:42. There are four general views as to the grammatical and syntactical relationship of the four activities of verse 42, the apostles’ teachings, *koinonia*, breaking bread and prayers that were discussed earlier in this analysis of verse 42. In combination with the excursus on *κοινωνία* and its cognates just completed and this analysis of breaking of bread in Luke-Acts, this study argues for the fourth view, listed by Keener above, which understands the second and third elements in the list, *κοινωνία* and *τῆ κλάσει τοῦ ἄρτου*, as related.¹²⁵ That is, the disciples had *κοινωνία* which had as a key part of it, *τῆ κλάσει τοῦ ἄρτου*. At the level of semantic meaning, these two are not the same but neither are they unrelated. They should not be understood in either an exegetical or appositional sense. Rather, one can see here an example of a Hebraism, a chiasm.¹²⁶ In this proposed structure, *κοινωνία* and *κλάσει τοῦ ἄρτου* would be B and B’. This would place the first and the fourth elements in Luke’s list, *τῆ διδαχῆ*

¹²⁴Johannes Behm, “κλάω κλάσις κλάσμα,” *TDNT*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans. Geoffrey Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006), 3:730; cf. Bock, “Acts,” 151.

¹²⁵Keener at first does not commit to interpreting *κοινωνία* and *τῆ κλάσει τοῦ ἄρτου* as related, though when he comes to interpreting the latter, he notes that, “Because ‘breaking bread’ is so closely connected grammatically with ‘fellowship’ here, it seems likely that part of the disciples’ sharing of possessions included common meals at the expense of those who could afford the food.” Keener, 1003.

¹²⁶On this Hebraic structure, see P. Overland, “Chiasm,” *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Wisdom, Poetry and Writings*, ed. Tremper Longman et al., (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2008):55. Keener, while cautioning against seeing chiasms where they don’t exist, points out an “elaborate” chiasmus in Acts 2:22–36 and further suggests the possibility of one in 2:41–47, with the center focus in verses 44, 45. Keener, 991, 992. Talbert also finds a chiasm in Acts 2 arguing that verse 43 is the center rather than Keener’s suggestion of 2:44, 45. C. H. Talbert, *Acts* (Atlanta: J. Knox Press, 1984), 33.

τῶν ἀποστόλων and ταῖς προσευχαῖς in the position of A and A'. Structurally, they would appear as follows:

A τῇ διδαχῇ τῶν ἀποστόλων

B κοινωνία

B' κλάσει τοῦ ἄρτου

A' ταῖς προσευχαῖς

In this arrangement, the teaching of the apostles and prayers are related events of a clear spiritual nature. The sharing and breaking of bread would then function as related events of a material nature. The focus on eating in general, rather than an early worship experience, keeps the focus on the material sharing that is taking place rather than allowing a shift towards liturgical activities. This does not detract, however, from the Holy Spirit driven experience that both κοινωνία and τῇ κλάσει τοῦ ἄρτου appear in. Rather it places these two material events at the very heart of the spiritual life of the early Christian community.

In Acts 2:42 the eating of the meals goes along with the apostles' teaching and prayers and in the bigger context of baptisms (2:41), wonders and signs (2:43) and in general being of one mind and heart (2:46). All of these activities happened in the presence of the Holy Spirit that the believers received at the beginning of chapter 2. Ultimately, the breaking of the bread together should be understood as a daily practice (Acts 2:46) that "involved shared use of property."¹²⁷

Finally, in the last of the four activities of verse 42, the believers "persisted" in ταῖς προσευχαῖς (the prayers). In Acts 1:14 the Christians also devoted themselves to

¹²⁷Keener, 1003.

prayer (προσκαρτεροῦντες ὁμοθυμαδὸν τῇ προσευχῇ). Prayer was a part of Jewish life and the life of the first Christians mirrors this (Acts 3:1). “The corporate prayer meetings in which the largest number of the community’s members gathered were probably in the temple (Acts 2:46).”¹²⁸ They might have been set prayers or more spontaneous prayers. “The setting here of the community functioning by itself apart from a temple rite suggests . . . that the reference to prayer is broad, although it may well have included . . . set features.”¹²⁹ Some noticed that “Luke does not clarify whether private or communal prayers are in view, but 1:24 and 4:23–31 indicate that latter are certainly included.”¹³⁰

Summary

The “breaking of bread” mentioned in verse 42 should not be understood as referring to the Eucharist. While it has elements in it that are reminiscent of the Lord’s Supper, here in Acts 2 it should be understood as a part of the fellowship of the community. Luke presents κοινωνία and τῇ κλάσει τοῦ ἄρτου as part of a chiasm which connects them in together. They together constitute the material element which the believers continued in.

In the chiasm that Luke presents, prayers are coupled with the teaching of the disciples highlighting the spiritual activities which the believers engaged in daily. Both “breaking of the bread” and “prayers” involved the community’s daily participation.

¹²⁸Ibid., 1011.

¹²⁹Bock, “Acts,” 151; Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles: The Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary*, 132.

¹³⁰Schnabel, *Acts*, 180.

Summary

Verse 42 is a description of the daily activities of the early Christian community comprising both spiritual and material elements. Luke uses a chiasm as the basis for his description of those practices which the believers tirelessly devoted themselves to. In this structure, τῇ διδαχῇ τῶν ἀποστόλων and ταῖς προσευχαῖς form A and A'. This places κοινωνία and κλάσει τοῦ ἄρτου at the heart of the chiasm as B and B'. This structure places the material element of both κοινωνία and κλάσει τοῦ ἄρτου at the center of the life of the Jerusalem community. While the teaching of the apostles and prayers form the structure of the community from a spiritual standpoint, the practical spiritual discipline of material sharing forms its most visible and lasting image.

The word κοινωνία is used here to describe a fellowship which has at its core a clear material practice of sharing. The breaking of bread also highlights one of the most visible and practical aspects of κοινωνία. This connection of these two activities will be repeated again in 2:44–46 and 4:32–35 and will even to a greater degree demonstrate this important aspect of the Jerusalem community.

The translation of this verse would therefore be, “They continuously persisted in the Apostles’ instruction and in the common life and in the breaking of the bread and in the prayers.”

Verse 43

Ἐγένετο δὲ πάσῃ ψυχῇ φόβος, πολλά τε τέρατα καὶ σημεῖα διὰ τῶν ἀποστόλων ἐγένετο.

After the introduction in the previous verses to the miraculous community found in Jerusalem, Luke provides the reader with a clearer backdrop out of which those

activities arise.¹³¹ Here in verse 43, it becomes more evident that the supernatural power of God is at work in this community. Luke describes fear, signs and wonders in this verse. On the surface, it may not appear to be directly related to the context of common living and shared possessions described in Acts 2:41–47, Acts 4:32 and Acts 5:12–16. What Luke is highlighting here, though, is the role of God’s power in the actions of the community of believers. God’s fear¹³² is on all because of the signs and wonders done by the apostles. The fear that fell on the believers “was no momentary panic, but an enduring sense of awe inspired by the consciousness that God was at work in their midst, so that

¹³¹The textual evidence for this verse is divided. Some old and reliable manuscripts have διὰ τῶν ἀποστόλων ἐγίνετο (B D 81 945 1739 1891 Byz [P] *Lect*^{pt, AD} it^{d, g1g, p, r} syr^h cop^{sa} (arm) (eth) Chrysostom). Other manuscripts add ἐν Ἱερουσαλήμ after διὰ τῶν ἀποστόλων ἐγίνετο (33 1409 syr^p). But some other important and more ancient ones have διὰ τῶν ἀποστόλων ἐγίνετο ἐν Ἱερουσαλήμ φόβος τε ἦν μέγας ἐπὶ πάντα (P^{74vid} Ξ A C Ψ (326) 1175). The UBS Committee states that “it is exceedingly difficult to ascertain the original text of this passage” and they preferred to follow B D 81 945 1739 1891 Byz [P] *Lect*^{pt, AD} it^{d, g1g, p, r} syr^h cop^{sa} *al* version along with Nestle-Aland (διὰ τῶν ἀποστόλων ἐγίνετο). Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 262. The addition of “in Jerusalem” or the word “great” to the word “fear” or the seeming repetition of the beginning of 43a ἐν Ἱερουσαλήμ φόβος τε ἦν μέγας ἐπὶ πάντα do not change the meaning or the intention of the whole verse. From the wider context of chapter two, we know that the first believers were in Jerusalem. And any time there is divine presence perceived, the fear is positively great.

¹³²Luke talks about fear in his gospel. “Fear” (φόβος) was experienced by Zacharias in Luke 1:12, 65 and the shepherds when visited by an angel in Luke 2:9. The people were filled with fear when they witnessed the healing of a paralytic in Luke 5:26, the healing of a centurion’s servant in Luke 7:16 and the healing of a demon-possessed man in Luke 8:37. “Fear” (φόβος) also appears in Acts 5:5 (“and a great fear fell on all the ones who heard [of it]”) and 5:11 (“and great fear fell on the whole congregation”) when the believers witnessed the deaths of Ananias and Sapphira. “Such activity causes all to take careful, respectful, even nervous notice of what is happening inside the community (Acts 5:5, 11 [reaction to Ananias and Sapphira]; 9:31 [church walks in the fear of the Lord]; 19:17 [after the sons of Sceva’s failed attempt to imitate Pau]; 1 QH 4.26).” Bock, “Acts,” 151.

they were witnesses of the final drama, and indeed participants in it.”¹³³ While initially, the power of God was seen in Acts 2 through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the subsequent speaking in “tongues,” it now increases because of the attendant “signs and wonders” which the apostles are performing.

This fear seems to be primarily among the believers who were part of the community, or perhaps it might be added, “over all who heard of these things.”¹³⁴ Exactly who is covered by *πάση ψυχῇ* is not clarified by Luke.¹³⁵ It probably should be seen as focused primarily on the community itself, as they are the ones most intimately connected with the apostles, especially considering the immediate context of verses 41, 42 and 44 (“all believers”). This would refer to those who believed from verse 41 (the same word *ψυχή* is used) and consequently in verse 44 (*πάντες δὲ οἱ πιστεύοντες*) and verse 45 (*πᾶσιν*). The verb *ἐγίνετο* is in the imperfect tense, continuing Luke’s vivid description of the constantly moving life of the early church, which in this particular verse leads the believers and those in contact with them to a state of fear.

¹³³Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles: The Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary*, 132.

¹³⁴Acts 5:11. NASB. Acts 5:13 also has overtones of the feelings of those outside but nevertheless observers of the community of believers.

¹³⁵Some view this expression as a dative of possession which functions like a genitive of possession. The dative possesses the subject of such verbs as *εἶμί*, *γίνομαι*, and *ὑπάρχω*. “The first clause could be converted to ‘every soul became afraid.’ Once again, the dat. becomes the subject, and the subject is placed in the predicate (in this instance, it becomes a predicate adjective).” Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, 149. Contrary to Wallace, Culy and Parsons state that fear cannot be possessed and “the dative may be viewed as locative (and thus idiomatic: ‘fear was upon every soul’= ‘everyone was afraid.’)” Culy and Parsons, *Acts: A Handbook on the Greek Text*, 46.

The wonders and signs produced by the Spirit are significant as they show the power under which the actions of verse 42 happen. “Wonders and signs” is a common Old Testament phrase which means “miracles.”¹³⁶ It gives “the impression that the whole life of the primitive Church was filled with miracles.”¹³⁷ In Acts 2:19 Peter reminds the crowd of Joel’s prophecy about the last days, where God will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below (καὶ δώσω τέρατα ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ ἄνω καὶ σημεῖα ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς κάτω). This strengthens the eschatological backdrop of this verse.

“The ‘wonders’ of the apostolic age, like those performed by Jesus during his ministry, were ‘signs’ of the new thing that God was doing in the earth (cf. Lk 11:20).”¹³⁸ The “new thing” that God was doing, in the context of signs and wonders, points to an eschatological element in the pericope. Luke’s Gospel has an eschatological description in Luke 21:11, where there will be great signs from heaven (ἀπ’ οὐρανοῦ σημεῖα μεγάλα

¹³⁶Lake and Cadbury, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 28. Also, G. H. C. Macgregor, “The Acts of the Apostles,” in *The Interpreter’s Bible*, ed. George Arthur Buttrick (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1954), 52.

¹³⁷Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 192.

¹³⁸Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles: The Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary*, 132. Acts 3:1–10 describes the healing of a Lame Man, as one of those wonders and signs. In Peter’s speech in Acts 4:30 he asks the Lord to perform wonders and signs (σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα). And the place where they are is shaken and they all are filled with the Holy Spirit. And right after this they share their possessions. Almost the same phrase as in Acts 2:43 is used in Acts 5:12 concerning the signs and wonders done by the apostles, and in Acts 6:8 done by Stephen. In Acts 7:36 Stephen uses the same words τέρατα καὶ σημεῖα describing the wonders and signs done by Moses through God in Egypt. In Acts 14:3 God grants signs to be done by Paul and Barnabas in Iconium. And in Acts 15:12 Paul and Barnabas tell the multitudes about their miracles and wonders.

ἔσται). And in Luke 21:25 there will be signs in sun, moon and stars (Καὶ ἔσονται σημεῖα ἐν ἡλίῳ καὶ σελήνῃ καὶ ἄστροις).¹³⁹

Summary

The background for this summary section (2:41–47) is clarified in verse 43. The fellowship and communal sharing of verse 42 is happening in the context of the fear of God falling on the believers and signs and miracles being done by the apostles as predicted for the “last days.” Supernatural power is driving the community’s life. The fear that is experienced by the believers and those observers of these activities is the same fear that falls on the believers in Luke’s eschatological description (Luke 21:26).

The translation of the verse would be, “And fear came upon every soul and many signs and wonders were continuously done by the apostles.”

Verse 44

Πάντες δὲ οἱ πιστεύοντες ἦσαν ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ καὶ εἶχον ἅπαντα κοινὰ.

Verse 44, with the word κοινός, further expands on the word κοινωνία in verse 42 and explains the material element involved in the meaning. It is used here in the expression ἅπαντα κοινὰ. The verse begins by referencing all the ones believing. Πάντες is used as an adjective describing the οἱ πιστεύοντες, seemingly adding emphasis beyond what would be understood were the verse to leave the subject unmodified. Οἱ πιστεύοντες is clearly a designation for the followers of Jesus.¹⁴⁰ The word οἱ πιστεύοντες occurs in

¹³⁹In Matt 24:24 false Christs and false prophets will give signs to lead the people of God astray.

¹⁴⁰In general, the adjective οἱ πιστοί or a participle of πιστεύω in the present, aorist, or future tense represent “believers.” Henry Cadbury, “Names for Christians and

Acts in reference to Christians.¹⁴¹ The textual evidence of Acts 2:44 is divided whether it is a present participle¹⁴² or an aorist participle.¹⁴³ Πιστεύειν, especially in the aorist, describes conversion.¹⁴⁴ However, the present is preferred here to represent active believers compared to the aorist in verse 47 referring to converts.¹⁴⁵

The prepositional phrase ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ is difficult to translate. Cerfaux argues for a connection back to the ideas of Pythagoras and Plato going so far as to say that the text was mechanically transported from Plato's *Republic*.¹⁴⁶ There is an analogous Hebrew term קָהָל in the Qumran scrolls 1QS I, 1 and 1QS III, 7 which means "community."¹⁴⁷ After looking at קָהָל in the Psalms, Haenchen suggests that ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ expresses the same

Christianity in Acts," in *The Beginnings of Christianity*, ed. F. J. Foakes Jackson et al. (London: Macmillan, 1933), 382.

¹⁴¹Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 263. See Acts 4:32 and 5:14.

¹⁴²A C D E P most minuscules.

¹⁴³Ⲛ B 0142 28 88 104 431 it^p Origen *Speculum Salvian et al.*

¹⁴⁴Barrett, 167.

¹⁴⁵Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 263. Also Barrett, 167; Pervo, *Acts*, 94.

¹⁴⁶Lucien Cerfaux, "La première communauté chrétienne à Jérusalem (Act., II, 41–V,42)," *Ephemerides theologicae Lovanienses* 16, no. 1 (1939): 27.

¹⁴⁷For a discussion of the Hebrew term, see Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*, 161, 162; Capper, "The Palestinian Cultural Context of Earliest Christian Community of Goods," 336; Finger, *Of Widows and Meals: Communal Meals in the Book of Acts*, 231.

idea as ἅπῃ.¹⁴⁸ But Keener thinks “the Hebrew could be rendered differently, and the wording is not strong enough to make the inference a strong one.”¹⁴⁹

In Acts 2:1 it designates the same place. Acts 1:15 can be taken to refer to the multitude of the names “at the same place” or “together.” Since the number of one hundred and twenty is given, it probably designates “the multitude of the names altogether were about one hundred and twenty.” It would also make sense to say that they were at the same place though. In 2:47 the Lord adds to “the numbers of the ones being saved to ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ (together, or: to the assembly).” Since the sentence in verse 47 is a continuation of verse 46 and the whole context starting with Acts 2:42, it is clear they are all at the same place.¹⁵⁰

But being at the same place is not the emphasis in the verses 42–47. Rather, the emphasis is on unity and togetherness as Acts 2:46 indicates, “they were of one accord,” or “with one purpose” (ὁμοθυμαδὸν).¹⁵¹ While some argue that ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ should be taken as “‘in the same (place)’ (cf. 2:1),”¹⁵² the idea of togetherness seems much more important than their location.¹⁵³ This phrase is common enough in classical Greek and in

¹⁴⁸Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles*.

¹⁴⁹Keener, 1027 fn. 379.

¹⁵⁰In the New Testament, outside the book of Acts, it appears in Luke 17:35, Matt 22:34, 1 Cor 7:5, 11:20, 14:23. In all of these instances the phrase means “together.”

¹⁵¹Also, in Acts 2:44 ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ could be understood as “one entity,” so all the believers were one entity. G Panikulam, *Koinonia in the New Testament. A Dynamic Expression of Christian Life* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1979), 118.

¹⁵²Culy and Parsons, *Acts: A Handbook on the Greek Text*, 47.

¹⁵³Compare with Schnabel who said that this expression should not be understood in the local sense, but “Rather, it emphasizes the unity of the believers, which is

the LXX and it “acquired a quasi-technical meaning in the early church. This meaning, which is required in 1.15; 2.1, 47; 1 Cor 11.20; 14.23, signifies the union of the Christian body, and perhaps could be rendered ‘in church fellowship.’”¹⁵⁴

After the initial expression of togetherness, this spirit of the believers is now expressed in practical ways. They share possessions. It is important at this point to clarify what is meant by ἅπαντα κοινὰ as is often the case when the adjective ἅπας is used. Since the verb εἶχον is in the imperfect tense it portrays a continuous action. They “were having” or “continuously had” ἅπαντα κοινὰ. This echoes Acts 2:42, “They *continuously persisted* in the teachings of the apostles and in the life in common and in the breaking of the bread and in the prayers.”

Grammatically, ἅπαντα here functions as the object of εἶχον. Κοινά is an adjective in the accusative case and “could stand in apposition to ἅπαντα and have a function comparable to the predicate of an equative clause. It may be better, however, to interpret it as an accusative of manner.”¹⁵⁵ That is, they had all things in a common manner.

described in 2:46 with the term translated as ‘unanimously’ (ὁμοθυμαδόν).” (Schnabel, *Acts*, 181.) In Acts 4:26 it appears in a quotation from Psalm 2:1, 2, “the kings and the rulers were gathered together (ἐπι τὸ αὐτὸ).” It has a negative meaning of gathering together against the Lord. But still they were united together (ἐπι τὸ αὐτὸ).

¹⁵⁴Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 264. The majority of older readings have ἦσαν ἐπι τὸ αὐτὸ καί. (P⁷⁴ Ⲛ A C D E Psi 33 36 81 181 307 453 610 614 945 1175 1409 1678 1739 1891 2344 Byz [P] / 884 / 1178 it^{ar, c, d, dem, e, ph, ro, t, w} vg syr^h arm eth geo slav Basil Chrysostom.) Others have ἐπι τὸ αὐτὸ (B it^{p, r} Origen Speculum Salvian). One manuscript omits the phrase (it^{gig}). It seems more of a style usage rather than a practical difference in meaning.

¹⁵⁵Culy and Parsons, *Acts: A Handbook on the Greek Text*.

According to Culy and Parsons the expression εἶχον ἅπαντα is “clearly hyperbolic.”¹⁵⁶ If this reading is correct, then “everything” must not mean “completely everything.” However, the challenge with adopting the “clearly hyperbolic” viewpoint is that the extent of the sharing can be diminished. This surely is not the intention of Luke. This is further seen in the Ananias and Sapphira pericope which will be discussed later. While the fact of lying to the Holy Spirit is pivotal in Peter’s condemnation of the couple, nevertheless, the story itself gains much of its force from its clear contrast to the willing ἅπαντα κοινὰ of the community. While ἅπαντα κοινὰ may have limits and should not be seen as a mathematical formula where “all” must equal every single person without exception, it nevertheless implies a willingness on the part of the members of the entire community to share everything as needed. To apply the term hyperbole to this description seems to this author to minimize the community wide nature of the sharing that is in focus in Luke’s description. In Acts 2:42 κοινωνία appears along with διδασχῆ τῶν ἀποστόλων, τῆ κλάσει τοῦ ἄρτου καὶ ταῖς προσευχαῖς. These four activities make ἅπαντα a more defined rather than a more general “everything,” indicating the sphere to which ἅπαντα κοινὰ applied. The usage of κοινωνία in this connection again highlights the material aspect of Luke’s usage of this key term. Verse 45 continues the sentence from verse 44 explaining what ἅπαντα κοινὰ means, that is, καὶ τὰ κτήματα καὶ τὰς ὑπάρξεις ἐπίπρασκον καὶ διεμέριζον αὐτὰ πᾶσιν καθότι ἂν τις χρεῖαν εἶχεν. In other words, “everything” is defined as a limited set of τὰ κτήματα καὶ τὰς ὑπάρξεις.

¹⁵⁶Ibid., 47.

The expression πάντα κοινὰ in combination with τοῖς φίλοις and the expression ψυχὴ μία from Acts 4:32 are used by Hellenistic and Greek writers who describe ideal communities.¹⁵⁷ Iamblichus describes Pythagorean communities as sharing things.¹⁵⁸ But “written sources about the earliest Pythagoreans are generally so much later than the events they describe that we can compare only the ideal descriptions of both communities.”¹⁵⁹

Sharing possessions can happen while private property is still maintained. Several Greek writers seem to advocate the total renunciation of private property. In Judaism, the Dead Sea Scrolls and Josephus describe the Qumran community as practicing complete sharing of possessions.¹⁶⁰ The Qumran community members renounced all of their private property when they entered the community.¹⁶¹ However, Acts does not reveal a planned economy, or “a constitutional socialization of property” like the Essenes had nor

¹⁵⁷Here are several to name just a few. Plato, *Rep.*, 6.499C; Aristotle, *Nich. Eth.* 8.9, 1159B 31 and 9.8 1168B 78, *Pol.* 1263A; Pliny Ep 1.4.3; 6.28.3; Plutarch, *Amat.* 21; Philo, *Abr.*, 235, *I Macc* 12:23.

¹⁵⁸Iamblicus *Vit. Pyth.* 35.257

¹⁵⁹Keener, 1015.

¹⁶⁰1QS 1:11–13; 5:1–3, 14–16, 20; 6:17–22, 24, 25; 7:24, 25; 8:22, 23; 9:3–11; CD 9:10–15; 10:18–20; 12:6, 7; 13:14, 15; 14:20; 20:7; Josephus, *Ant.* 18.20, *B.J.* 2.122–125.

¹⁶¹A further comparison of the communities of Qumran and Therapeutae is conducted later in the chapter on Philo.

was it “philosophical.”¹⁶² Thus it seems Luke does not look to either Pythagorean¹⁶³ or Essene practice.

In the Hebrew life of the Old Testament, there is no exact expression like ἅπαντα κοινῶν, though there are clear instructions for taking care of the poor. Sharing is expressed as a blessing from God in Deut 15:1–8, where God’s providence is said to make it possible for there to be no poor among the Israelites. Verse 4 reads “There will, however, be no one in need among you, because the LORD is sure to bless you in the land that the LORD your God is giving you as a possession to occupy.” However, verses 7, 8 note that if there are poor among the Israelites, they must take care of them.¹⁶⁴ The Jerusalem community may also have been inspired by ideas from the year of Jubilee typology in Lev 25:10, where the same word κτήματα is used for possessions/property as is used in

¹⁶²Hauck, “κοινός,” *TDNT* (2006), 3:796. Manzanera argues for more similarities between the Essene and Jerusalem community practices, though noting there are definite differences, most strongly seen in the religious desire for separation from the surrounding culture. Manzanera, “Koinonia en Hch 2,42: Notas sobre su interpretacion y origen historico-doctrinal,” 320.

¹⁶³See Alan C. Mitchell, “The Social Function of Friendship in Acts 2:44–47 and 4:32–37,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 111 (1992): 257, 264–267.

¹⁶⁴Deuteronomy notes that they shall “lend” to them rather than share. These loans were, however, to be written off every seven years. (Deut 15:2, 9). This may be how Deuteronomy clarifies the utopian vision of “no poor among you.” On interpreting these verses, see Jeffrey H. Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, The JPS Torah Commentary (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1996), 144–147.

verses 44, 45.¹⁶⁵ There is also Isaiah’s “favorable year of the Lord” as quoted in Luke 4:19.¹⁶⁶ This hypothesis is argued for strongly by Montero.¹⁶⁷

The Gospels contain ideas that also provide a platform upon which the concept of ἅπαντα κοινὰ is based. In this vein, “common” could refer to “a continuation of the common life of Jesus and the disciples (Lk. 8:1–3; Jn. 12:4ff; 13:29).”¹⁶⁸ Keener says that “utopian” models fit the ideal call to discipleship described in Luke 3:11; 12:33; 14:3.¹⁶⁹ “Brotherly love is willing to forego its legal claim to ownership (4:32: ἴδιον εἶναι). All egotistic striving . . . is submerged by readiness to renounce earthly goods in obedience to the saying of Jesus (Lk. 12:33; 14:33; Mt. 6:19ff) and for the sake of helping brothers in need (Ac. 2:45; 4:35: καθότι κτλ.)”¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁵Wall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 72.

¹⁶⁶The idea of sharing possessions in the gospel of Luke and the beliefs behind the sharing is discussed later in this paper, under the section, “Sharing in the gospel of Luke.”

¹⁶⁷Roman A. Montero, *All Things in Common: The Economic Practices of the Early Christians* (Eugene, OR: Resource Publications, 2017), 83–103. While Montero goes to great lengths to discuss the Jubilee motives of the Old Testament and Luke’s usage of them in his gospel, he seems to fall short when arguing that the usage of κοινωνία means that Luke sees this as the motivating belief behind the Acts community’s practice of material sharing.

¹⁶⁸Hauck, “κοινός,” *TDNT* (2006), 3:796. See the section “Possessions and Sharing in the Gospel of Luke” below for a more detailed look at this concept.

¹⁶⁹Keener, 1018.

¹⁷⁰Hauck, “κοινός,” *TDNT* (2006), 3:796. Earlier, in the discussion on verse 42, the word κοινος was shown to have a meaning of “common” based on Acts 10 and 11 as well as in Titus 1:4, Jude 3 and Acts 4:32, though this usage does not appear to have any impact on Acts 2:44.

In order to further provide clarity to ἅπαντα κοινὰ, it is necessary to address the extent that the “all things in common” reached. The surrounding context may clarify whether the expression means that they sold everything they owned completely, or whether they still remained owners of their property while sharing with others as they needed. Based on the context of 4:32–5:10 some argue that it was the total renunciation of property, “it seems most likely that the narrator envisions the liquidation of property followed by presentation of the proceeds to the community—κτήματα and ὑπάρξεις are evidently equivalent to ‘real and personal property.’”¹⁷¹ On the other hand, using the same context of 4:32–5:10, others argue that the believers remained owners of their property and shared with others as the need arose.¹⁷² There is no explicit textual evidence to determine whether the sharing was a complete renunciation of property or partial sharing. But there is contextual evidence that points in the direction of sharing with those in need rather than total renunciation of property. In Acts 2:46 they broke bread from house to house (κλῶντές τε κατ’ οἶκον ἄρτον), which means that private people still owned and lived in separate houses. In Acts 4:34 the owners of houses and land are mentioned (ὅσοι γὰρ κτήτορες χωρίων ἢ οἰκιῶν ὑπῆρχον). Those owners would sell them (ὑπῆρχον) and distribute the proceeds to those in need. In Acts 5:42 the teaching and preaching happened at the temple and at people’s houses, ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ καὶ κατ’ οἶκον οὐκ ἐπαύοντο διδάσκοντες καὶ εὐαγγελιζόμενοι.¹⁷³

¹⁷¹Pervo, *Acts*, 94.

¹⁷²Schnabel, *Acts*, 181; Steve Walton, “Primitive Communism in Acts: Does Acts Present Community of Goods (2:44, 45; 4:32–25) as Mistaken?,” *Evangelical Quarterly*, no. 90 (2008): 99–111; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 272.

¹⁷³See also Schnabel, *Acts*, 181.

From these verses it seems evident that the first Christians still had private possessions. After the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and in the presence of wonders and signs done by the apostles and the fear of the Lord, the believers were willing to give and share material things. This practice of all things in common should be seen as something new. While it is true that the Greeks used this phrase in describing various communities, yet the practice here in Acts is different. In addition, the motif of taking care of the poor is strong in Old Testament, yet nowhere is there seen the extent of sharing described by the expression ἅπαντα κοινά. The model of Jesus' common life with His disciples as well as His calls to give all to the poor surely are a strengthening of the Old Testament commandments. Nevertheless, the activities described here in Acts put in practice even beyond what the Gospels describe of the life and teachings of Jesus.

Verse 44 with the word κοινὰ further expands on the term κοινωνία, highlighting the material focus of all things.¹⁷⁴ This concept of material sharing will be compared with the concept of sharing among the Therapeutae and the early Christians described in the *Didache* later in this study in order to shed further light on the understanding of the backgrounds of this expression and understand the beliefs that motivated the sharing.

The translation of the verse would be, “All the ones believing were at the same place together and they had everything in common.”

Verse 45

Καὶ τὰ κτήματα καὶ τὰς ὑπάρξεις ἐπίπρασκον καὶ διεμέριζον αὐτὰ πᾶσιν καθότι ἄν τις χρείαν εἶχεν.

¹⁷⁴Bock, “Acts,” 153; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 270.

Acts 2:45 introduces two new terms, τὰ κτήματα and τὰς ὑπάρξεις, to further elaborate on the previous verse's usage of ἅπαντα κοινὰ. This verse explains how the believers practiced having everything in common; they kept selling and distributing τὰ κτήματα and τὰς ὑπάρξεις to all. This section will clarify what is understood by τὰ κτήματα and τὰς ὑπάρξεις highlighting again the focus on sharing of material possessions.

In Greek literature κτήμα is fairly common.¹⁷⁵ Plato uses it multiple times in *Leg.* for possessions¹⁷⁶ as well as animals.¹⁷⁷ Aristotle uses κτήμα often in *Econ.* for property¹⁷⁸ or possessions.¹⁷⁹ In this same corpus, the verb κτάομαι means “to buy, acquire.” Silva notes “from the 4th cent. BC it is increasingly applied to landed property in specific.”¹⁸⁰

Κτήμα occurs several times in the LXX as a translation of several different Hebrew words. It is used twice as a translation for “inheritance” (הֵרֶשֶׁתַּ Job 20:29 and 27:13), twice as a translation for “vineyard” (בֵּיתֶיךָ Prov 31:16/Prov 29:34 LXX; Hos 2:15), once for “vinedresser” (בֹּרֵךְ Joel 1:11), once for “field” (הַשָּׂדֶה Prov 23:10), and

¹⁷⁵Liddell and Scott, *LSJ*, s.v. κτήμα; Moises Silva ed., “κτήμα,” *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 2:757, 758. The noun κτήμα, used mostly in the plural, refers to “that which has been gained,” thus “possessions” of every kind.”

¹⁷⁶*Leg.* 726a; 661b; 728c and many others.

¹⁷⁷*Leg.* 639a.

¹⁷⁸*Econ.* 1343a.10. Here he uses it conjunction with οἰκία and χώρα.

¹⁷⁹*Econ.* 1343b.4.

¹⁸⁰Silva, 2:757.

once for “wealth” (גִּיּוֹחַ Prov 12:27). As a verb κτάομαι occurs frequently as the translation for “to buy” (קָנָה). As the noun κτήσις, it occurs as a translation for “property” (מַטְבֵּיל) or “cattle” or “land” (מִקְנֵה). Another related word, κτήνος, occurs very frequently as a common translation for “cattle” (מִקְנֵה) and “property” or “livestock” (מִקְנֵה).¹⁸¹

In the New Testament there are only four occurrences of κτήμα, one of which is in Acts 2:45. In the encounter of the rich young ruler with Jesus in Matt 19:22 and in parallel Mark 10:22 some translate κτήματα as “possessions” and others as “property.” Taking into consideration the fact that it was an agrarian society, it seems to make more sense to interpret κτήματα as property/land. It is also used in Acts 5:1 when Ananias and Sapphira sell their property/land (κτήμα) and keep back part of the proceeds. Scholars seem to be in agreement that “Κτήματα is usually interpreted as ‘land or fields’ (Acts 5:1, 3, 8, where κτήμα is equivalent to χωρίον, a piece of land; see also Sir. 28:24; 51:21; Hos. 2:15; Joel 1:11).”¹⁸² Haenchen states that κτήματα denotes “property, with or without buildings.”¹⁸³ Barrett distinguishes κτήμα from ὑπαρξις, where “the former represents land, the latter personal possessions”¹⁸⁴ It seems clear, then, to take κτήμα as property/land rather than possessions in general.

¹⁸¹In Wis 8:5 κτάομαι refers to possessions in terms of riches. In Sir 28:24 it is used for property in the expression of “putting up a fence” around it. In Sir 51:21 it is used for property also.

¹⁸²Finger, *Of Widows and Meals: Communal Meals in the Book of Acts*, 233.

¹⁸³Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 192.

¹⁸⁴Barrett, 169.

The word ὑπάρξεις is a general word for possessions. Its original root idea is “the beginning” but this seems to change into a more general idea of being or ultimately, what one has.¹⁸⁵ It is used also in Acts 4:32, which identifies it as a key word for this study.¹⁸⁶

The verb ὑπάρχω is used in Acts 3:6 with a meaning of “having” or “possessing” when Peter mentions that he does not have (ὑπάρχει) silver or gold. It is used in the imperfect tense in Acts 28:7 with a meaning of possessing, “Now in the neighborhood of that place were lands belonging (ὑπῆρχεν) to the leading man of the island.”¹⁸⁷ It appears as a participle in Luke 8:3 where women supported Jesus out of their means (τῶν ὑπαρχόντων αὐταῖς). In Luke 11:21 τὰ ὑπάρχοντα is used to refer to the possessions of the strong man who guards his house, which suggests some distinction between the man’s house and his possessions. In Luke 12:33 Jesus instructs His disciples not to worry about their lives and tells them to sell τὰ ὑπάρχοντα. In the parable of the Unjust Steward, in Luke 16:1, Jesus talks about a man who wasted τὰ ὑπάρχοντα αὐτοῦ. In Luke 19:8 Zacchaeus was ready to give half of τῶν ὑπαρχόντων to the poor. From these usages, the

¹⁸⁵Moises Silva ed., “ὑπαρξίς,” *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 4:551–553.

¹⁸⁶There the phrase “having everything in common” is repeated as καὶ οὐδὲ εἶς τι τῶν ὑπαρχόντων αὐτῷ ἔλεγεν ἴδιον εἶναι ἀλλ’ ἦν αὐτοῖς ἅπαντα κοινά (And no one said that any of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had everything in common).

¹⁸⁷Outside of Luke/Acts the word τὰ ὑπάρχοντα as a participle is used in Matt 19:21 when Jesus spoke with the young rich ruler saying, “If you want to be perfect/complete, go sell what you possess (τὰ ὑπάρχοντα) and give to the poor. . . .” But in Matt 19:22 when the rich young ruler heard about what was required from him, he went away grieved for he was the one who had κτήματα πολλά. The parallel verse of Mark 10:22 also has the expression κτήματα πολλά describing the situation of the rich young ruler. In 1 Cor 13:3 τὰ ὑπάρχοντα is used with the same meaning, “if I give away all my possessions. . . .”

word ὑπάρξεις should be understood as a general term for possessions, not typically referring to land or houses. Taken together with κτήμα, these point to both landed property as well as general possessions.

As in verse 44 (ἦσαν, εἶχον) the verbs in verse 45 (ἐπίπρασκον, διεμέριζον, εἶχεν) are in the imperfect tense. The imperfect tense of both verbs is probably iterative, which highlights that “this sharing was done again and again.”¹⁸⁸ Another possibility of the imperfect is inceptive which would indicate the beginning of a continuous action. But in view of 2:42–44 and the emphasis on continuation, the iterative usage fits better in this verse. “Luke is describing a state which persisted for some time.”¹⁸⁹ In other words, “they *kept selling* and *kept dividing* them to all, as anyone had need,” (καθότι ἄν τις χρείαν εἶχεν). The iterative usage also suggests that the believers did not sell everything at once but more likely as there was need.¹⁹⁰ “The use of ἄν with τις χρείαν εἶχεν without an

¹⁸⁸Bock, “Acts,” 152. The ESV retains this element in its translation while the NASB95 and NET suggests an inceptive aspect here.

¹⁸⁹Barrett, 169. See also Lake and Cadbury, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 29.

¹⁹⁰Codex D moves καθ ἡμέραν from the beginning of verse 46 to the end of verse 45, connecting it with the dividing in this verse. Aland and others ed., 326. Metzger says the reason is not clear for this shift. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 263. The distribution could refer to daily distribution of food in 6:1 (τῆ διακονίᾳ) although a different word is used here (διεμέριζον). The addition of “daily” does not seem to alter the meaning that much. The imperfect tense of the verb already implies that they kept doing it for some time period, consistently. They could have done it daily based on the needs of fellow believers. But since verse 46 starts with “daily they continued in one accord, breaking bread from house to house and eating the food” it does seem reasonable to connect “daily” with food distribution.

optative means the iterative use reinforces the notion of continual action.”¹⁹¹ Barrett concurs saying that “the old iterative force of ἄν survives in the NT only here and at 4.35, and at 1 Cor. 12.2 (so M 1.167)—but the classical use of it with the optative has been dropped.”¹⁹²

The connection between the things that are sold (τὰ κτήματα καὶ τὰς ὑπάρξεις) and what is divided (αὐτὰ) is not entirely clear. One option is to understand the verse to mean that property and possessions were sold and the proceeds were divided up to whoever had need. Another possibility is that they sold “their κτήματα and divided up their ὑπάρξεις.”¹⁹³ Haenchen suggests, “whenever there is need of money for the poor of the congregation, one of the property-owner sells his piece of land or valuables, and the proceeds are given to the needy.”¹⁹⁴ But Finger suggests, that “it seems more likely that they sold whatever real estate or other possessions they had that would be of use to the community, keeping what was useful and distributing it to or sharing it with any who needed it.”¹⁹⁵ While the syntactic arrangement seems to support selling both property and

¹⁹¹F. Blass and A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, ed. Robert W. Funk (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 367.

¹⁹²Barrett, 169.

¹⁹³Lake and Cadbury, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 29.

¹⁹⁴Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 192. Schnabel stated that “the personal pronoun (αὐτὰ) does not refer to “possessions” (κτήματα) –there was no land distribution – or to “property” (ὑπάρξεις) – they did not give up the right of ownership of personal property. It refers to the money that resulted from the sale of the possessions.” (Schnabel, *Acts*, 182.) But grammatically it makes the most sense that αὐτὰ refers to both κτήματα καὶ τὰς ὑπάρξεις.

¹⁹⁵Finger, *Of Widows and Meals: Communal Meals in the Book of Acts*, 234.

possessions and dividing the proceeds, selling the property and dividing possessions as needs arose seems more practical.¹⁹⁶

For Finger, this was “socio-economic sharing” among the “fictive kin group.”¹⁹⁷ The kin groups were organized by belief in Jesus as Messiah and acted as a replacement of blood relationship/family groups.¹⁹⁸ Bock also sees the reason for sharing as social: “They are motivated by concern for the needs of the community (*χρεία*, *chreian*, need; perhaps as Jesus taught in Luke 6:30–36 or from the OT and Deut. 15:4–5). The picture is of a community that cares for all of its members, even those in material need.”¹⁹⁹

Socio-economic sharing was possible but in view of the broader context of chapter 2, with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the more immediate context of the believers’ devotion to the teachings along with the presence of the fear of God, the idea of sharing extends far beyond simple socio-economic sharing.²⁰⁰ There is nowhere else in the biblical narrative that a description of this kind of sharing as described in Acts 2 and Acts 4 is given.

The translation of verse 45 would be, “They used to sell their lands and possessions, continually selling and dividing them to all as anyone had need.”

¹⁹⁶Ibid.

¹⁹⁷Ibid., 236.

¹⁹⁸Ibid., 235.

¹⁹⁹Bock, “Acts,” 153.

²⁰⁰Barrett suggests that the sharing may have been motivated by eschatological reasons. Barrett, 168. The broader context seems to allow this possibility and will be discussed below in the section “Belief in the Last Days.” See also Conzelmann, Epp, and Matthews.

Verse 46

καθ' ἡμέραν τε προσκατεροῦντες ὁμοθυμαδὸν ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ, κλῶντές τε κατ' οἶκον ἄρτον, μετελάμβανον τροφῆς ἐν ἀγαλλιάσει καὶ ἀφελότητι καρδίας

The narrative moves from selling and distribution as needs arose to everyday activities. Καθ' ἡμέραν is a common idiomatic expression meaning “daily” or “every day.”²⁰¹ It is placed at the beginning of the sentence which probably means that it refers to the whole sentence with the following activities, continuing together in the temple, breaking bread and partaking of the food, with partaking of food being the main verb.²⁰² According to Bruce this construction applies as far as πρὸς ὅλον τὸν λαόν in verse 47.²⁰³

There are two participles, προσκατεροῦντες and κλῶντές, in this verse, both in the present tense. Προσκατεροῦντες means “continuing,” or “persisting.” They were persisting together (ὁμοθυμαδὸν). The word ὁμοθυμαδὸν appears a number of times in the book of Acts with positive or negative meaning. In Acts 1:14 the disciples continue together in prayer (ὁμοθυμαδὸν τῇ προσευχῇ). In Acts 2:1 the word ὁμοῦ is used along with the construction ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό. The believers were together in one accord (πάντες ὁμοῦ ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό) at Pentecost during the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. In Acts 4:24 the believers raised their voice together (ὁμοθυμαδὸν) in prayer. In 5:21 there were miraculous signs and wonders performed by the apostles and the believers were together

²⁰¹Culy and Parsons, *Acts: A Handbook on the Greek Text*, 47.

²⁰²Finger, *Of Widows and Meals: Communal Meals in the Book of Acts*, 236.

²⁰³Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles: The Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary*, 133.

(ὁμοθυμαδόν). In Acts 8:6 the crowds were paying attention to what Philip said in one accord (ὁμοθυμαδόν) when they heard and saw the signs he performed. In Acts 15:25 in the letter to the Gentile believers the apostles and οἱ πρεσβύτεροι wrote that they were ὁμοθυμαδόν (together or of one mind) concerning their decision to send Barnabas and Paul to them.²⁰⁴

There are several verses in Acts where ὁμοθυμαδόν is used in the negative context. In Acts 7:57 the religious leaders were in one accord against Stephen (ὄρμησαν ὁμοθυμαδόν ἐπ’ αὐτόν). In Acts 12:20 people of Tyre and Sidon were coming to Herod ὁμοθυμαδόν (together). In Acts 18:12 the Jews rose up in one accord/together (ὁμοθυμαδόν) against Paul. In 19:29 the city of Ephesus was in confusion and they rushed into the theater together (ὁμοθυμαδόν) while dragging Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul’s traveling companions.

After looking at all the instances of the usage of ὁμοθυμαδόν, it is clear that every time the word is used, some sort of inner unity among a group is indicated. Thus, Heidland remarks that in the New Testament the word ὁμοθυμαδόν is used “to stress the inner unanimity of the community.”²⁰⁵ People are united among themselves whether against God or for God, and they are united either by the Spirit of God or the spirit of anger. In most instances when the word is used positively there is supernatural power of God present along with signs and wonders. The believers are surrounded by the presence of the Holy Spirit. There is unity among the believers. And this is exactly how the word

²⁰⁴It is used only once outside of Acts. In Rom 15:6 Paul desires for the Roman church to glorify God and the Father with one accord (ὁμοθυμαδόν) and one mouth.

²⁰⁵Hans W. Heidland, “ὁμοθυμαδόν,” *TDNT*, ed. Gerhard Friedrich, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1967), 5:186. See also Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 59; Bauer, *BDAG*, s.v. “ὁμοθυμαδόν.”

is used in Acts 2:46. The unity is created by the supernatural, it is led by the Spirit. And in this unity, material sharing takes place. They were doing it with one mind, in one accord. They were continuing together in the temple, which was probably in Solomon's colonnade (compare with 5:12, and 3:11).²⁰⁶ They are together (ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό) as in Acts 2:44 and in one accord (ὁμοθυμαδὸν).

The second participle appears in the clause κλῶντές τε κατ' οἶκον ἄρτον –they were breaking bread at home or by households. The breaking of bread (τῆ κλάσει τοῦ ἄρτου) continues from Acts 2:42. There is a contrast here from being together in the temple and now breaking bread at home or in “a number of houses.”²⁰⁷ The word οἶκον is singular in number. Bruce suggests that “it took place ‘by households.’”²⁰⁸ He justifies his suggestion by adding that “from the earliest days the disciples in Jerusalem appear to have met in household groups.”²⁰⁹ Finger concurs and expands on it by stating the following,

²⁰⁶Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles: The Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary*, 133.

²⁰⁷Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 192. Also, Richard N. Longenecker, “Acts,” in *Zondervan NIV Bible Commentary*, ed. Kenneth L. Barker et al. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), 399.

²⁰⁸Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles: The Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary*, 133. See also Schnabel, *Acts*, 184.

²⁰⁹Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles: The Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary*, 133. For the New Testament evidence see Rom. 16:5, 1 Cor. 16:19, Col. 4:15, Phil. 4:22, 2 Tim. 4:19, 1 Cor. 1:11 and 16:15. Scott Bartchy proposed that breaking of the bread from house to house suggests “that the gift of the Spirit opened them up to regarding each other as kin. The later report in 12:12 of John Mark's mother opening her home for meetings of the believers further displays her leadership in practicing this kinship value, which had apparently become characteristic of the Jesus community at Jerusalem.” S. Scott Bartchy, “Divine Power, Community Formation, and Leadership in the Acts of the Apostles,” in *Community Formation in the Early Church and in the*

The possibility of the entire congregation eating in one place cannot be considered, since the size of the group and the small homes of ordinary citizens preclude this, even if the much smaller original group did meet in one large upper room. In light of what we know about first-century Palestine, the most accurate term for where bread-breaking took place is “by household.” The emphasis is on the group of people who live together, not on the house itself. This could mean several families who share the same courtyard and have invited previously homeless or out-of-town believers to live with them.²¹⁰

Meeting in households was important as it shows that private property still existed, although many sold possessions in response to the needs of other Christians.

Μετελάμβανον is an imperfect, active, indicative verb with the general gloss of “receiving a share of,” or “having share of.” Μετελάμβανον τροφῆς also appears in Acts 27:33, where Paul shares food with the passengers on a ship when they were hungry. In 2 Tim 2:6 the word is used in the context of hard work in the present that will pay off in the future. A hard-working farmer is the first to partake (μεταλαμβάνειν) of the crops. It emphasized the idea of believers having spiritual discipline and hard work that will bring rewards at the second coming.²¹¹ In Acts 2:46 the believers receive food ἐν ἀγαλλιάσει (with gladness) and ἀφελότητι καρδίας (with simplicity/humility/sincerity of heart). The Christians appear to be happy in breaking bread and receiving food under the miracle of the Spirit.

Church Today, ed. Richard N. Longenecker (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2002), 94.

²¹⁰Finger, *Of Widows and Meals: Communal Meals in the Book of Acts*, 238.

²¹¹Thomas Lea and Hayne P. Griffen, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, New American Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 1992), 204, 205; Philip H. Towner, *1–2 Timothy and Titus*, IVP New Testament Commentary (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994).

In conclusion, it must be said that the first believers had supernatural unity gifted to them by the Holy Spirit. While sharing with the needy believers, they maintained private property and used their houses or groups of houses for shared meals. Sharing food was not simply eating physically, but a big, repetitive, joyful, fellowship experience that involved being together, eating bread, praising God and having favor with all the people. And “because of their sincerity of heart they do not incur the displeasure of other people.”²¹² This type of gathering “must have sounded inviting indeed.”²¹³

The translation of this verse would be, “And day by day continuing together in the temple, breaking bread by households, they shared food with gladness and sincerity of heart.”

Verse 47

αἰνοῦντες τὸν θεὸν καὶ ἔχοντες χάριν πρὸς ὅλον τὸν λαόν. ὁ δὲ κύριος προσετίθει τοὺς σφζομένους καθ’ ἡμέραν ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό.

The continuation of the sentence from verse 46 is αἰνοῦντες τὸν θεὸν καὶ ἔχοντες χάριν πρὸς ὅλον τὸν λαόν (praising God and having favor with all the people), with αἰνοῦντες and ἔχοντες being present active masculine nominative participles, just like προσκαρτεροῦντες and κλῶντές, and referring back to those believing in verse 44. The word λαός is typically used of all the people of Israel²¹⁴ or the whole nation. In support of

²¹²Finger, *Of Widows and Meals: Communal Meals in the Book of Acts*, 241.

²¹³Ibid., 242.

²¹⁴Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles: The Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary*, 133.

this, Codex D has κόσμον instead of λαόν which “widens the scope of the favor enjoyed by the believers to include the whole world—a reading which is entirely in keeping with the presence, on a figurative level, of people from every nation at the outpouring of the Spirit. . . . The use of λαός instead keeps the narrative on a purely historical level.”²¹⁵ As a result some translate, “having good will towards all the people”²¹⁶ instead of “the whole nation.”

Just like in verse 46 as they fellowshiped daily, the Lord added to their number daily (ὁ δὲ κύριος προσετίθει τοὺς σωζομένους καθ’ ἡμέραν). The verb προσετίθει just like others in the passage is in the imperfect tense, which means the Lord kept adding the ones being saved. The passive participle τοὺς σωζομένους used with an article is adjectival, “the ones being saved.”

The exact same expression as in Acts 2:44 ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό (together) is used at the end of this verse 47, “the Lord was adding the ones being saved daily ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό. In verse 44 the translation is “together.” However, that translation does not fit here. The meaning of the phrase here is difficult to determine and “seems singularly awkward here.”²¹⁷ The Western text adds τῆ ἐκκλησία after ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό to solve the issue.²¹⁸ Lake and Cadbury and F. F. Bruce quote C. C. Torrey who argues that Luke has mistranslated

²¹⁵Rius-Camps and Read-Heimerdinger, *The Message of Acts in Codex Bezae: A Comparison with the Alexandrian Tradition: Acts 1.1–5.42: Jerusalem*, 198.

²¹⁶T. D. Andersen, “Meaning of EXONTEΣ XAPIN ΠΠΟΣ in Acts 2:47,” *New Testament Studies*, no. 34 (1988): 605; F. P. Cheetham, “Acts ii.47: ἔχοντες χάριν πρὸς ὄλον τὸν λαόν,” *Expository Times*, no. 74 (1962, 63): 214.

²¹⁷Lake and Cadbury, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 30.

²¹⁸Aland and others ed., 326.

the Aramaic *lahda* which means “exceedingly” or “greatly.”²¹⁹ However, Black and Wilcox criticize this translation.²²⁰ Lake and Cadbury think that a number should follow ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό.²²¹ While “to their unity” is possible here, “to their number” is probably the better translation. These would be very close to “together” in verse 44. Luke does not expand on how exactly “the ones being saved” were added, though it seems fair from the context earlier in Acts 2 that baptism was again what followed an individual’s belief.²²²

The translation of verse 47 would be, “. . . praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord kept adding the ones being saved to their number.”

Conclusions

The verses of Acts 2:41–47 are closely related to each other and stand as a unit describing the first Jerusalem community practices. These included members being together at one place, persisting in the apostles’ teachings, in fellowship, in breaking bread, in prayers and ultimately in sharing possessions, including land and personal possessions. As demonstrated from the wider context of Acts 2 and 4, and in agreement

²¹⁹Lake and Cadbury, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 30; Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles: The Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary*, 133.

²²⁰Matthew Black, *An Aramaic Approach to the Gospels and Acts* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1967), 10. Also Max E. Wilcox, *The Semitisms of Acts* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), 93–100. Cf. Capper, “The Palestinian Cultural Context of Earliest Christian Community of Goods,” 336, n. 41.

²²¹Lake and Cadbury, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 30.

²²²There were other communities, like the Essenes, who had a strict process for adding new converts (11QS 6:14, 8:19, CD 13:11). Geza Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1998), 78, 81, 112. Also see Catherine Murphy, 25–39.

with Paul's usage of this word in his calls for material sharing by the gentile churches with the community in Jerusalem and well as in other places, *κοινωνία* here has primarily a material meaning and therefore shows a separate activity that happened along with the teaching, breaking of bread and prayers in Acts 2:42.

In this chapter, material sharing seems to take place person-to-person rather than in a large organized setting. There is no clear central leadership described for the distribution of the community's fellowship of goods. This "personal philanthropy"²²³ is the beginning stage of material sharing within the Acts community. This continues in chapter 3, but by the time the events of chapter 4 take place, the size of the material sharing operation seems to grow to a state so that more organized ecclesiastical control will be needed.

This pericope should also be seen in light of its connection with other verses in the book of Acts which hints at an eschatological vision. This interplay of Acts 2 and Acts 1 especially sets the stage for seeing the activity that happens here at the end chapter 2 as a continued fulfillment of "the last days" of Joel 2 and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The fear of God is upon the believers in Jerusalem, and many wonders and signs are done among them. They are rejoicing while experiencing the fear and awe of God among them. This feeling also carries with it the latent expectation of the imminent eschaton. This is the backdrop for the beliefs that ultimately motivated the Acts community to develop a full-fledged material sharing practice, which grew so large that it required the addition of new ecclesiastical structure to support it.

²²³Montero, *All Things in Common: The Economic Practices of the Early Christians*, 45.

Spiritual Sharing in Acts 3:1–10

Chapter 3 illustrates the theme of “many wonders and signs” described in chapter 2:43. In this pericope, Peter and John go into the temple. By the entrance called “Beautiful” there is a crippled man asking for money.²²⁴ The giving of alms is encouraged in many passages in the Gospel of Luke, including Luke 11:41 (give that which is within as charity) and 12:33 (Sell your possessions and give to charity). In Acts 9:36, Tabitha is described as giving alms, and the same is true of the Roman centurion Cornelius in Acts 10:2, 4. In Acts 24:17 Paul also is described as bringing alms to the poor. It was not unusual to beg for alms or to give alms. So when the beggar asks for alms, he has some hope of receiving them. In verse 3, the verb ἠρώτα is in the imperfect tense, which means that there was some sort of ongoing plea even though evidently not for a long time.²²⁵ Peter looks at him intently (ἀτενίσας δὲ Πέτρος εἰς αὐτόν), then asks the beggar to look at him and John. And then he gives an unexpected response, “Silver and gold I do not have, but what I have I give to you, in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.” (ἀργύριον καὶ χρυσίον οὐχ ὑπάρχει μοι, ὃ δὲ ἔχω τοῦτό σοι δίδωμι· ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ Ναζωραίου περιπάτει.).

The key expression in this passage for the current study rests in Peter’s statement, “Silver and gold I do not have.” Many commentators do not make much of this statement

²²⁴Josephus describes different gates of the temple as overlaid with gold and silver and one with bronze. *B.J.* 5.5.3.

²²⁵NASB95 suggests an inceptive aspect here.

other than commenting on the fact that it is a clear reference to minted money.²²⁶

However, Peterson notes, “Whether by choice or by circumstance, the apostles had no money with them on this occasion.”²²⁷ The *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* adds to this: “The accounts in chs. 2:45; 5:2 show that the apostles were the custodians of the funds committed to the leadership of the church by the generosity of the Christian community. One could understand that Peter and John had no money of their own, but why did they not give to the lame man from the treasury of the church? Either they had none of these funds with them at the moment, or for some reason felt that such money must be reserved for the benefit of members of the Christian society.”²²⁸ It should be noted that it may not be chronologically accurate to quote Acts 2 for support of apostolic administration of the material sharing practice. This function is not clearly stated as being placed under the leadership of the apostles until later in chapter 4. In addition, Peter could not ethically say that he had no money if indeed he did have money, but he believed that this money should not be used for almsgiving to the poor who were not part of the community of believers. If almsgiving was to be reserved for those who were a part of the community, then why did Peter give what all assume to be a greater gift to this

²²⁶See Craig S. Keener, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary 3:1–14:28 2* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 1064. Keener, for instance, makes little note of this, instead focusing more on the phrase, “in the name of Jesus.”

²²⁷David Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), 169.

²²⁸“Silver and Gold” [Acts 3:3], *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, rev. ed., ed. Francis D. Nichol, (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1980), 6:154.

outsider invalid by healing him in the name of Jesus? Therefore, another possibility should be considered.

One possible reason why Peter and John had no money with them is that the system for apostolic administration of the material sharing practices had not started yet. Some may suggest they were without money, presuming that money was not allowed for worshipers entering the temple.²²⁹ This does not seem to be likely, since the beggar would presumably be seated at a high-opportunity location in order to gather his alms.

Luke (8:1–3) indicates that Christ’s ministry had been supported by others. Judas had been the money keeper for these funds on behalf of Christ and the disciples before Judas’ betrayal of Jesus.²³⁰ After Judas’ death, it is not clear who took on this function for the remaining disciples. Just how finances were taken care of in the early days after Christ’s resurrection and ascension is not discussed outside of these references in Acts chapters 2 and 3 and then again in chapter 4. However, with the information from these first two chapters, it seems reasonable to conclude that chapter 2 discusses an initial person-to-person sharing or philanthropy not administered directly by the apostolic leadership. This then makes the possibility that Peter and John would be without money more likely. Later in chapter 4, this situation will change.

Conclusions

Peter does not have material possessions that the man is longing for, but he has spiritual power to heal the man and make him walk. This passage parallels material

²²⁹Barrett declares that this was not the case. Barrett, 182. He argues that Luke portrays the disciples as poor.

²³⁰See John 12:6; 13:29.

sharing with spiritual sharing. Here the apostles do not share any possessions but share spiritual power. The power of the Spirit is again clearly evident in this passage, though in a different way. The same apostles who share material possessions here share the power of the Spirit with the crippled beggar. The beggar is healed by the same Spirit that produces the miracle of sharing among the first Christians in Acts.

These verses also allow the possibility that the apostles have not yet taken on financial leadership for the growing community. Peter and John do not have material possessions to share with the beggar. Later, in chapters 4 and 5, money and possessions will be brought to the feet of the apostles for the purpose of distributing to those in need. And then in chapter 6, the amount of time required to accomplish the material sharing will have grown to such an extent that structural change will have to take place in order to handle the growing needs of material sharing.

Acts 4:32–35

These verses introduce another summary section for Luke. The situation in Acts 4:32–35 resembles the one in Acts 2:42–47. The description of believers being in one heart and one mind is preceded by Peter and John’s companions’ prayer (Acts 4:23–29). In Acts 2:44–47 the unity of believers is preceded by Peter’s speech that happened after Pentecost. In Acts 4:31 “the place in which they were gathered together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God with boldness” (Acts 4:31). In Acts 2:43 there was supernatural power among the believers, the fear of God and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. These two passages appear to have the same theme. “The unity of heart and soul in this community is transparent. Not only do its members declare the word of God powerfully; they also make sure that each one in the community has access to everyday needs. Community life means both mission and

mutual care. These occur because people care about one another and the cause they share.”²³¹ Acts 4:32–35 is examined in the following section with the purpose of further understanding of the idea of sharing and what beliefs motivated it.

Verse 32

Τοῦ δὲ πλήθους τῶν πιστευσάντων ἦν καρδία καὶ ψυχή μία, καὶ οὐδὲ εἷς τι τῶν ὑπαρχόντων αὐτῶ ἔλεγεν ἴδιον εἶναι ἀλλ’ ἦν αὐτοῖς ἅπαντα κοινά.

The conjunction δὲ introduces a new section concerned with the communal practices of the early Christians.²³² But at the same time δὲ makes a grammatical connection, linking 4:32 to the previous narrative scene. “In this way, the narrative leaves the reader with obvious signs of divine blessing both before and after the experience of persecution.”²³³ There is a shift from the aorist tense in the previous section to the imperfect tense in this verse and in the wider passage of 4:32–37. The imperfect indicates an ongoing action. “The literary section of 4:32–37, therefore, functions similarly to the summary description at the conclusion of the Pentecost narrative by explicitly highlighting particular aspects of communal life that are significant within a literary

²³¹Bock, “Acts,” 217, 218.

²³²Levinsohn, *Textual Connections in Acts*, 109.

²³³Richard P. Thompson, *Keeping the Church in its Place: The Church as Narrative Character in Acts* (New York, NY: T&T Clark, 2006), 70. See also Jürgen Roloff, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, Das Neue Testament Deutsch 5 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1981), 88. cited in Thompson, *Keeping the Church in its Place: The Church as Narrative Character in Acts*, 70.

context emphasizing divine activity.”²³⁴ What should be clear, though, is that the punctiliar actions of the “shaking of the place” and the “speaking the word of God with boldness” happen because of the power of the Holy Spirit. This action drives these following verses in the same way that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in chapter 2 drives actions of Acts 2:41–47.

The verse begins with the noun τοῦ πλήθους appearing as a neuter, singular, genitive of πλήθος having a gloss of “large number, multitude, crowd.”²³⁵ Some commentators see in πλήθους a possible reference to a type of early ecclesiastical structure. Some suggest it should be translated as a “congregation.”²³⁶ In Acts, this word is sometimes used as a general word for a large group of people. So it is used in Acts 2:6 during the outpouring of the Holy Spirit when the multitude gathered together and heard the apostles speak in their native languages. In Acts 5:16 crowds (a multitude) gather from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing the sick to the apostles.²³⁷ But Luke also often

²³⁴Thompson, *Keeping the Church in its Place: The Church as Narrative Character in Acts*, 70. See also Johnson, *The Literary Function of Possessions in Luke-Acts*, 1–12.

²³⁵Gerhard Delling, “πλήθος, πληθύνω,” *TDNT*, ed. Gerhard Friedrich, trans. Geoffrey Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006), 6:278. See also Bock, “Acts,” 213.

²³⁶Lake and Cadbury, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 47, 48; Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles: The Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary*, 159; Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 230. While no other major English translation does so, the NASB95 translates here “congregation.”

²³⁷In Acts 19:9 at the synagogue in Ephesus some do not believe and speak evil before the multitude. In Acts 21:36 the word πλήθος is not applied to the believers, but more to the mob. In 23:7 the word is applied to the multitude of Pharisees and Sadducees. In Acts 25:24 the expression ἅπαν τὸ πλήθος is applied to the whole Jewish community.

uses it in Acts for a group of believers. In Acts 6:2, 5 τὸ πλῆθος refers to the multitude of the believing disciples. In Acts 14:1, 4 Peter and Barnabas speak and a multitude both of the Jews and of the Greeks believe.²³⁸

From this, it is clear that in the book of Acts, τὸ πλῆθος can refer to the multitude of believers but also to a large group of people in general. It is doubtful, then, that τὸ πλῆθος refers to an organized ecclesiastical structure, especially since this is in the very early stages of the formation of the body of believers as described in Acts 2 and Acts 4.²³⁹ Rather, it simply denotes “community” and “describes the Christian community in its entirety (cf. 6:2, 5: 15:12),”²⁴⁰ “the whole body of their members, *fellowship, community, church.*”²⁴¹

In verse 32 both the noun τοῦ πλήθους and the participle τῶν πιστευσάντων are in the genitive case.²⁴² Τῶν πιστευσάντων is a masculine, genitive, plural, aorist, active participle of πιστεύω. Literally it would be translated as “of the crowd of the ones/those

²³⁸The entire multitude (πᾶν τὸ πλῆθος) in Acts 15:12 listen to Barnabas and Paul declaring how many miracles God has done through them. In Acts 15:30 the multitude also represents the believers. In 17:4 again a big multitude (πλῆθος πολὺ) of devout Greeks join Paul and Silas.

²³⁹See discussions on Acts 2:41–47 earlier.

²⁴⁰Schnabel, *Acts*, 270.

²⁴¹Bauer, BDAG, s.v. “πλῆθος.”

²⁴²The expression τοῦ πλήθους τῶν πιστευσάντων (the multitudes of those who believed) in Acts 4:32 is very similar to the πάντες δὲ οἱ πιστεύοντες in Acts 2:44. Though the participle in 2:44 is in the present tense it still refers to the believers. In addition, as mentioned earlier, “in the book of Acts the absolute use of the participle of πιστεύειν occurs as a designation of Christians.” Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 263.

who believed.” Martin Culy and Mikeal Parsons call this construction “the genitive noun phrase” and suggest two possibilities: “(1) it may modify καρδία καὶ ψυχὴ directly (‘the heart and soul of the group of believers was one’), or (2) it may be taken as a genitive of reference (‘With reference to the group of believers, [their] heart and soul was one’).”²⁴³ The second possibility is favored based on the fact that the verb separates the genitive phrase from the nouns καρδία καὶ ψυχὴ in the nominative case, making it “discontinuous.”²⁴⁴ And the “theme (not always the syntactical subject) of the sentence normally precedes the verb in Greek. In this case, the theme happens to be a genitive noun phrase.”²⁴⁵

The verb that follows the participial phrase is ἦν, an imperfect, third person singular of εἶμι. Culy and Parsons mention that “the singular verb is used with a compound subject here, probably because the compound subject refers to single referent.”²⁴⁶ The compound subject is καρδία καὶ ψυχὴ μία (one heart and one soul). Van der Horst mentions that “one soul and one spirit” point to real friendship.²⁴⁷

²⁴³Culy and Parsons, *Acts: A Handbook on the Greek Text*, 80.

²⁴⁴Ibid.

²⁴⁵Ibid. See also Levinsohn, *Textual Connections in Acts*, 109.

²⁴⁶Culy and Parsons, *Acts: A Handbook on the Greek Text*, 81.

²⁴⁷Horst, “Hellenistic Parallels to Acts,” 46.

Hellenistic ideas of friendship²⁴⁸ and the Jewish expression of unity might be combined here to stress “the total person’s response to God.”²⁴⁹ The same expression, μία ψυχή, appears in 1 Chr 12:38, Israel as one heart/soul. The expression “heart and soul” (καρδία καὶ ψυχή) appears in Deut 6:5, “you shall love your God with all your heart and soul.” In Deut 10:12 the command is “serve your God with all your heart and all your soul.” The same meaning appears in Deut 11:13, “serve Him with all your heart and all your soul.” It is of note that in neither Hellenistic nor Old Testament usages does the expression “one soul” or “one heart” appear in the context of “having things in common.”²⁵⁰ This again suggests the possibility of something new happening with the Jerusalem community in Acts 2 and 4. The unity of the believers here in Acts 4 appears to recall the unity described in 2:44–47 as Bock notes, “The united rejoicing of one heart is like Acts 2:44–46, where the first mention of common (κοινά, *koina*) possessions appears.”²⁵¹ So the situation here in Acts 2 and 4 is unique. Friends and believers are of one heart and one soul. When read in the context of the previous verse, Acts 4:31, this is seen to take place in the divine presence of the Holy Spirit. Thus, it is in the reality of living with an indwelling Holy Spirit that the multitude of believers have a shared heart with the other members of the community, which then leads to having everything in

²⁴⁸Friends are one soul (μία ψυχή) in Euripides, *Orestes* 1046 (in Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1168B), Plutarch, *On Having Many Friends* 8 [Mor.96F], Plato, *Lysis* 214B, Cicero, *On Friendship* 14, 50; 19, 69; 21, 80.

²⁴⁹Thompson, *Keeping the Church in its Place: The Church as Narrative Character in Acts*, 71, 72. Also, see discussions above on Acts 2:44.

²⁵⁰Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 86.

²⁵¹Bock, “Acts,” 213.

common. Seeing this “one heart and one soul” of the believers is another important part of tracing the motivations of the common property among the Jerusalem community.

There are two textual variations that are possible next. Some manuscripts (D, Cyp) add καὶ οὐκ ἦν διάκρισις ἐν αὐτοῖς οὐδεμίᾳ (And there was no quarrel among them at all). Others (E, r) have καὶ οὐκ ἦν χωρισμός ἐν αὐτοῖς τις (There was not any division among them).²⁵² According to Metzger, “the Western reading is an expansion of the original text, made in the interest of emphasizing the unity of the primitive church.”²⁵³ While Metzger is correct that it adds emphasis to the concept of unity, it does not appear to change substantially what has already been stated, “being one heart and one soul.”

The next phrase is καὶ οὐδὲ εἷς τι τῶν ὑπαρχόντων αὐτῷ ἔλεγεν ἴδιον εἶναι which further describes the unity of Christians. Οὐδὲ εἷς is in the emphatic position. Based upon its usage in Acts 2:45, τῶν ὑπαρχόντων should be understood as “possessions.”²⁵⁴ The verb ἔλεγεν is in the imperfect tense again suggesting a continuing action on the part of the members. One’s own, ἴδιον, (predicate accusative adjective), is a general reference to what each member possesses.²⁵⁵ So, no one considered their possessions or property to be one’s own. This is a new addition to the description of material sharing described in chapter 2. It implies that the practice of material sharing is so far having positive results

²⁵²Kurt Aland and others ed., *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 28th ed. (Stuttgart, Germany: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012), 391. See also Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 283.

²⁵³Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 283.

²⁵⁴See discussion above on Acts 2:45.

²⁵⁵It is also used in reference to Judas going to his own place, which shows that it could be understood from a locative perspective referring possibly to property. Johnson, *The Literary Function of Possessions in Luke-Acts*, 199.

in the life of the community and rather than being abandoned, is expanding into a deeper commitment of sharing and a loosening of one's own claims to their possessions and property.

This leads to the question regarding common property and how far the believers went in this practice. In the following verses, the text states that Barnabas had a field to sell and following that, in chapter five, Ananias and Sapphira had something left for themselves as well. It may mean “that those who did possess property did not *claim* it as such but thought of it as property to be shared with those in need. That interpretation is consistent both with Aristotle (*Politics* 2.5 [162B–163B] and with the instruction of Deut 15:4.”²⁵⁶ Schnabel also supports the interpretation of private ownership of possessions and at the same time the communal use of those possessions. Thus, he sees no tension with Acts 5:4 where “Peter asserts that the proceeds of the sale of property that had belonged to Ananias and Sapphira were rightfully theirs.”²⁵⁷

The phrase ἀλλ' ἦν αὐτοῖς ἅπαντα κοινά starts with ἀλλ'. “This conjunction is found only three times outside of the reported speeches of Acts (see also 5:13; 18:20). In each case, it provides a contrast to a negated statement (here, ‘no one [οὐδε] at all claimed any of their possessions as their own’). ‘The first element states what did not happen and the second describes the corresponding event which did take place.’”²⁵⁸ As previously mentioned, this reality must be read within the view of the impending disaster that is described next in chapter five, when Ananias and Sapphira did keep back some of

²⁵⁶Gaventa, 100.

²⁵⁷Schnabel, *Acts*, 270.

²⁵⁸Levinsohn, *Textual Connections in Acts*, 156. See also Culy and Parsons, *Acts: A Handbook on the Greek Text*, 81.

their own possessions. This statement may be understood as a contrast to their dramatic story. The former describes the rule, while the latter gives the exception to it.

Parsons and Culy continue by saying that in the present case, “the contrasting clause states two sides of the same coin, thus emphasizing the importance of communal sharing within early Christianity.”²⁵⁹ Κοινά is emphatic because it appears at the end of the sentence.²⁶⁰ In other words, having things in common is emphasized here. No one calls their things as their own, which then leads the believers to share things in common. This verse draws a clear connection between this act of having all things in common to having one heart and soul for all fellow believers. What is highlighted is that the practice of having all things in common is not done from a spirit of obligation but rather of one which springs from unity.

The expression ἅπαντα κοινά is the same as in Acts 2:44. There it has the verb εἶχον in the imperfect tense in front of ἅπαντα κοινά and Acts 4:32 has the verb ἦν in the imperfect tense in front of ἅπαντα κοινά. As Bock notices,

the adjective [κοινά] is part of the series of cognate terms that mean sharing in something with others. The term ‘fellowship’ (κοινωνία, *koinonia*) is one of these terms, as is the verb ‘share’ (κοινωνέω, *koinoneo*) and the noun ‘partner’ (κοινωνός, *koinonos*). This sharing of possessions shows how ‘connected’ their mutual participation is. It extends even down to possessions, as verse 34 explains in more detail.²⁶¹

The translation of verse 32 would be, “Now the heart and the soul of the multitude of the believers was one, and no one said that something he owned was his own, but everything was held in common by them.”

²⁵⁹Culy and Parsons, *Acts: A Handbook on the Greek Text*, 81.

²⁶⁰Bock, “Acts,” 214.

²⁶¹Ibid. For a full discussion of this root, see above on Acts 2:44.

Verse 33

καὶ δυνάμει μεγάλη ἀπεδίδουν τὸ μαρτύριον οἱ ἀπόστολοι τῆς ἀναστάσεως τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ, χάρις τε μεγάλη ἦν ἐπὶ πάντας αὐτούς.

The verb in this verse, ἀπεδίδουν, is again in the imperfect tense like the verbs in Acts 2:41–47 and 4:32. The idea is that “the apostles were continuously giving testimony concerning the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.” They were giving testimony with great power (δυνάμει μεγάλη) or “by great miracles,”²⁶² “miracles which answer the prayer of the congregation in verse 30.”²⁶³ In analyzing “powers, wonders, and signs” in Acts 2:22 F. F. Bruce called δυνάμεις “our Lord’s miracles,” and those miracles were “signs of the new age” as in Heb 6:5. The δυνάμεις are “mighty works,” “because there were manifestations of the divine power.”²⁶⁴ The expression “great power” is at the beginning of the sentence which indicates emphasis. Miracles are a major part of the apostles’ deeds in the book of Acts and here in Acts 4:33 the apostles are giving testimony with divine power and concurrent to this “great grace was upon them all.” Just like the miracles and signs that are done by the apostles in 2:43 in the context of sharing, here while the apostles give testimony to the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and experience the power and grace of the Holy Spirit, the context is one of sharing.

²⁶²Lake and Cadbury, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 48.

²⁶³Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 231.

²⁶⁴Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles: The Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary*, 123.

The word χάρις (grace) most likely refers to the grace of God in view of Luke 2:40.²⁶⁵ “The context, which highlights what God is doing, favors a reference here to grace from God, not favor from the people as in 2:47.”²⁶⁶ The grace was on “them all” (πάντας αὐτούς). Considering the context around verse 33, in particular verse 32 and verse 34 “all” probably refers to all the ones who accepted the apostles’ message, the πλήθους τῶν πιστευσάντων of verse 32, not just the apostles. As Haenchen says, “The divine grace is not . . . restricted to the Apostles; it spreads over them all.”²⁶⁷

The translation of verse 33 would be, “With great power the apostles were continuously giving testimony concerning the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all.”

Verse 34

οὐδὲ γὰρ ἐνδεής τις ἦν ἐν αὐτοῖς· ὅσοι γὰρ κτήτορες χωρίων ἢ οἰκιῶν ὑπῆρχον, πωλοῦντες ἔφερον τὰς τιμὰς τῶν πιπρασκομένων.

The conjunction γὰρ connects the thought of a current unit with the previous one here.²⁶⁸ In this verse, it is used twice. In the first instance, it connotes the idea that the sentences do not simply contain a list of activities but rather “highlights causal

²⁶⁵Culy and Parsons, *Acts: A Handbook on the Greek Text*, 81, 82. Also see Barrett, 66.

²⁶⁶Bock, “Acts,” 214.

²⁶⁷Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 231.

²⁶⁸For other meanings of the conjunction γὰρ see BDAG.

connections among them.”²⁶⁹ Although “this verse seems to skip the preceding one and refer to verse 32”²⁷⁰ “the conjunction marks this clause as evidence of God’s abundant favor [grace] (v. 33): ‘*This was seen in the fact that there was not anyone in need among them.*’”²⁷¹ Luke “links the generosity shown such persons among the believers in Jerusalem to the persuasiveness of the apostles’ preaching and the great favor of God noted at the end of verse 33.”²⁷² In other words, as the result of the Holy Spirit’s power in verse 31 to testify about the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, all the believers were united in many aspects of life, and there was not a needy person among them.

No one among them was ἐνδεής (needy). The Greek term ἐνδεής appears in the New Testament only here. The word ἐνδεής appears in several LXX passages and stands for different Hebrew words. Of significance for its relationship to Acts 4:34 is Deut 15:4, where it says that there should be no ἐνδεής (needy) because God has provided for His people. This occurrence is located in the wider context of Deut 15:1–18, where the Lord promises blessings to His people when they take care of the poor. Here in Acts, the Spirit is moving the believers to provide τις χρείαν εἶχεν (as anyone had need) in verse 35. It thus seems plausible that Luke had the Deuteronomy passage in mind when describing the events of Acts 4.

²⁶⁹Bartchy, “Divine Power, Community Formation, and Leadership in the Acts of the Apostles,” 91.

²⁷⁰Lake and Cadbury, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 48.

²⁷¹Culy and Parsons, *Acts: A Handbook on the Greek Text*, 82. Also, Lüdemann, *Early Christianity according to the Traditions in Acts*, 61.

²⁷²Bartchy, “Divine Power, Community Formation, and Leadership in the Acts of the Apostles,” 92.

In the next part of the verse ὅσοι γὰρ κτήτορες χωρίων ἢ οἰκιῶν ὑπῆρχον πωλοῦντες ἔφερον τὰς τιμὰς τῶν πιπρασκομένων (for as many as were possessors of fields or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of the things sold), both verbs ὑπῆρχον and ἔφερον are in the imperfect tense, which often implies a customary or repeating action and not a one-time event.²⁷³ It was an ongoing pattern, which fits the whole context of Acts 4:32–37 and Acts 2:41–47. The participle πωλοῦντες is in the present tense, again indicating a continuous action and an action happening at the same time or along the action of the main verb ἔφερον.²⁷⁴ Wallace calls it “*contemporaneous time*.”²⁷⁵ They kept selling and kept bringing the proceeds of the selling (τῶν πιπρασκομένων is a substantival participle²⁷⁶), or “while selling they kept bringing the proceeds of the selling.”²⁷⁷ The imperfect verb (were bringing) and the present participle (selling) in combination “suggest a gradual liquidation of assets, not selling everything all at once.”²⁷⁸

Bock argues that not all the new believers owned houses and land, only a small middle class, about ten percent of the population and the upper class, about four to seven

²⁷³Both verbs are read as iterative imperfects along with ἐτίθουν and διεδίδετο in Acts 4:35 (Schnabel, *Acts*, 272. Cf. Bock, “Acts,” 152.)

²⁷⁴Mounce, *Basics of Biblical Greek Grammar*, 246, 247.

²⁷⁵Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, 614.

²⁷⁶*Ibid.*, 619.

²⁷⁷*Ibid.*, 623.

²⁷⁸Bock, “Acts,” 215. See also David John Williams ed., *Acts* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1990), 93.

percent of the population. And these people were willing to sell what they had and bring the proceeds to the community.²⁷⁹ Pervo concurs by saying, “the needy received support from contributions of those with more means, who liquidated their holdings and presented them to the apostles for distribution.”²⁸⁰ He goes further by adding that “the narrative does not suggest that the contributions were involuntary or that Barnabas’s action was quite unusual or that no one retained their property. The ‘everyone who’ (ὅσοι) of v. 34 is a hyperbole.”²⁸¹ Lüdemann, as noted above, says that “we do not have to presuppose that the owners sold *all* their possessions, so that the difference from v. 32 would simply be one between *the surrender of possessions* (v.34f.) and *resignation of the right to possessions* (32).”²⁸²

While Pervo and Lüdemann may be correct in pointing out that ὅσοι does not have to mean literally all believing landowners or homeowners sold all they possessed on the same day, one should not degrade this concept to the point where the *Zeitgeist* is lost. Clearly Luke is describing a situation where, under the power of the Holy Spirit, the

²⁷⁹Bock, “Acts,” 215. Friesen argues that in the Roman Empire, it is impossible to measure the size of the middle class but estimates it at 7 percent. Steven J. Friesen, “Poverty in Pauline Studies: Beyond the So-called New Consensus,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 26, no. 3 (2004): 346. Longenecker, however, puts the number much higher at between 15–20 percent. Bruce W. Longenecker, “Exposing the Economic Middle: A Revised Economy Scale for the Study of Early Urban Christianity,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 31, no. 3 (2009): 264. These numbers surely are high for Jerusalem, however being further away from the more Roman parts of the empire.

²⁸⁰Pervo, *Acts*, 127.

²⁸¹*Ibid.*, 127, 128.

²⁸²Lüdemann, *Early Christianity according to the Traditions in Acts*, 61.

prevailing attitude of the believers was to be completely devoted to sharing “all” that they possessed in order to care for their fellow believers to prevent a situation of need. The habitual usage of the imperfect tense in these verses further highlights the ongoing nature of this practice. Again, it should not be understood that all possessors sold all they had on a given day and brought all the proceeds to the apostles. Rather, this was the practice of the believers.²⁸³ While it is not clear how often the selling off of property took place, Lüdemann rightly notes that Luke does give the clear purpose of the action expressed in verse 35 καθότι ἄν τις χρείαν εἶχεν (to anyone as he had need).²⁸⁴ This continues the idea expressed in the previous verse that because of a oneness of heart and soul, the believers cared for others in the same way they would care for themselves.

The translation of verse 34 would be, “For no one among them was needy, for as many as were possessors of fields or houses they kept selling them and kept bringing the proceeds of the things sold.”

Verse 35

καὶ ἐτίθουν παρὰ τοὺς πόδας τῶν ἀποστόλων, διεδίκετο δὲ ἐκάστῳ καθότι ἄν τις χρείαν εἶχεν.

All three verbs ἐτίθουν (placing, setting), διεδίκετο (distributing in the passive voice) and εἶχεν (having) are in the imperfect tense. The usage here could be inceptive,

²⁸³Luke could have used πᾶς in combination with ὅσος to make it clear that all possessors participated in this practice. He uses this construction in various places in Luke and Acts. In Acts 5:36 this construction is translated as “all who” rather than “whoever.” While the difference in connotation may be small between these two, the distinction still exists and should be noted in understanding this verse.

²⁸⁴Lüdemann, *Early Christianity according to the Traditions in Acts*, 61.

but in view of the wider context and the fact that the rest of the verbs are iterative imperfects, it seems to make more sense to take these as iterative in *aktionsart*.²⁸⁵ The actions are ongoing and repetitive.

Some suggest that the phrase ἐτίθουν παρὰ τοὺς παρὰ τοὺς πόδας τῶν ἀποστόλων (they continuously laid [the proceeds] by the apostles' feet) recalls an old legal custom of transfer of property where the giver placed it at the feet of the receiver and then the receiver, by placing his foot on it, acquired rights of property and free disposal of that property.²⁸⁶ It is hard to say whether the apostles acquired the rights of property or not when the proceeds (money) of the selling of property were brought to them. But it is clear that the proceeds were initially distributed by the apostles as any had need (διεδίδετο δὲ ἐκάστῳ καθότι ἂν τις χρεΐαν εἶχεν. The phrase καθότι ἂν τις χρεΐαν εἶχεν is exactly the same as in Acts 2:45).

In verse 37 Barnabas sold his land and placed the proceeds to the apostles' feet (ἔθηκεν πρὸς τοὺς πόδας τῶν ἀποστόλων). Later in 5:2 Ananias sold a piece of property and laid a portion of it at the apostles' feet (παρὰ τοὺς πόδας τῶν ἀποστόλων ἔθηκεν). Clearly, the Seven take on some of this role in Acts 6. But that is yet in the future. This verse highlights that the apostles have taken on a new role in the communal life of the community. Whereas in chapters 2 and 3, there does not appear to be any connection between the apostles and material goods, here they are explicitly joined. Here in chapter 4, the apostles have a new function beyond that of prayer, preaching and miracles. At this

²⁸⁵For a recent discussion on Greek tense, aspect and *aktionsart*, see Constantine R. Campbell, *Basics of Verbal Aspect in Biblical Greek* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008).

²⁸⁶Lake and Cadbury, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 49; Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 231.

current stage in the growth of the church, there do not appear to be any negative effects of this new development.

The translation of this verse would be, “And they kept putting [the proceeds] at the apostles’ feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.”

Conclusions

Acts 4:32–35 describes a community that was of one heart and one soul, where the community’s mutual support was expressed in the voluntary pooling of resources. The resources were used to help those in need. The description of the amount of sharing in chapter 4 is greater than that described in chapter 2 so it is fair to assume that the practice is proving successful for providing for the needs of the community. The number of believers has also grown to approximately 5,000 men (Acts 4:4).²⁸⁷ It is in this context that the apostles are described as taking the lead in the distribution of material goods that have been given to the community by all who had possessions. This should be seen as the high point of material sharing found in the book of Acts. The next chapter of Acts introduces a negative aspect of all people sharing everything in common.

What is seen in this present study’s search for motives that were behind the practice of sharing is that it is not merely a belief in an intellectual doctrine that motivates this practice but the reality of the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. This is highlighted in verse 31 with its repeat of the outpouring effects of the Holy Spirit from chapter 2, but also in the use of grace to describe the believers in 4:33.

²⁸⁷There is some uncertainty as to whether the total number of believers was 5,000 or whether this was the number of new believers which were then added to the 3,000 from chapter 2. In addition, it is difficult to say for certain whether the 5,000 was only men or if it also included women as sometimes was the case. On this, see Barrett, 221, 222; Peterson, 188.

The spirit of *κοινωνία* in Acts 2 is growing. The shaking produced by the Holy Spirit leads to the believers who were filled with the Spirit speaking with boldness (4:31b), which leads to “one heart and one mind,” which in turn is exemplified by “no one saying anything was their own.” These things do not happen on their own, or because the believers have found a new “doctrine” to follow. They are the result of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

This seems evident from the singularity of practice regarding the Jerusalem community’s “sharing of goods” both within Christian history but also in the wider Jewish and surrounding cultures.²⁸⁸ The hearts of the believers in this community have been changed by the power of the Holy Spirit. The one heart and one mind, the not saying that anything was their own—these actions are no more possible for the believers in chapter 4 than was the speaking in tongues in chapter 2. This action is a reality which they experience because of their believing in the Son of God, about which the apostles have been witnessing.

²⁸⁸While groups like the Therapeutae, the Essenes, and later, the monastic traditions within Christianity all renounced property and moved into a communal style of living, the Jerusalem community stayed present in the midst of the culture. They did not renounce possessions or property themselves as evil, but rather saw them as useful for the common good of all. The difficulty in one having possessions and property but being ready to sell or divide them with others at a moment’s notice is much more difficult than leaving family and possessions behind. When the Jerusalem community stays a part of the wider culture, they keep many of the same obligations that the wider culture presents relating to family and civic duty.

Acts 4:36, 37 and 5:1–11

Verses 36, 37

Ἰωσήφ δὲ ὁ ἐπικληθεὶς Βαρναβᾶς ἀπὸ τῶν ἀποστόλων, ὃ ἐστὶν μεθερμηνευόμενον υἱὸς παρακλήσεως, Λευίτης, Κύπριος τῷ γένει, ὑπάρχοντος αὐτῷ ἀγροῦ πωλήσας ἤνεγκεν τὸ χρῆμα καὶ ἔθηκεν πρὸς τοὺς πόδας τῶν ἀποστόλων.

Verses 36, 37 give an illustration of a positive example of selling possessions to help the poor with the brief description of Barnabas having sold his property and bringing the proceeds to be placed at the apostles' feet. The verb tenses switch to aorist here (ἤνεγκεν—brought, ἔθηκεν—placed, and an aorist participle πωλήσας) in contrast with all the imperfects in the previous passages. The aorist here points to the concrete or specific example of Barnabas' giving. The same participle ὑπάρχοντος is used in 4:32 in the plural number τῶν ὑπαρχόντων, and it echoes the verb ὑπῆρχον in verse 34.²⁸⁹ In all of these instances it indicates ownership. The word ἀγρός is used here and it means “field.” Everywhere else in Acts, χωρίον is used (Acts 4:34; 1:18; 5:3, 8; 28:7) for “field” or “piece of property/land.” In the gospels both words are used interchangeably. No difference seems to be highlighted here by the use of ἀγρός.

These two verses serve as a transition from the virtues of the apostle-led community-based practice recorded in Acts 4:32–35 to the first negative example described in Acts found in 5:1–11. Barnabas is the example that Ananias and Sapphira should have followed.

The translation of these verses would be, “And Joseph, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, which when translated means ‘the son of consolation,’ a Levite, of

²⁸⁹Lüdemann noticed this about verse 34. *Early Christianity according to the Traditions in Acts*, 62.

the country of Cyprus, having land and after selling it, he brought the money and laid [it] by the apostles' feet.”

Acts 5:1–11

These next verses give an illustration of a negative example of sharing. Acts 5:1–11 stands in contrast to the positive example of sharing by Barnabas. The main verbs in this pericope, as in the story of Barnabas, are in the aorist tense, again pointing to the concrete story.

Verse 1: Ἄνὴρ δέ τις Ἀνανίας ὀνόματι, σὺν Σαπφείρῃ τῇ γυναικὶ αὐτοῦ, ἐπώλησεν κτῆμα.

A man, Ananias, and his wife, Sapphira, sold their property (κτῆμα). The word κτῆμα “is equivalent to χωρίον, ‘land,’ vs. 3, 8”²⁹⁰ and is the same lexeme as that used in Acts 2:45 when the first believers kept selling everything and there was not a needy person among them. It suggests a good portion of land. Keener offers “medium sized estates.”²⁹¹

Verse 2: καὶ ἐνοσφίσατο ἀπὸ τῆς τιμῆς, συνειδυίης καὶ τῆς γυναικός, καὶ ἐνέγκας μέρος τι παρὰ τοὺς πόδας τῶν ἀποστόλων ἔθηκεν.

The verb ἐνοσφίσατο also appears in Titus 2:10 where masters are to teach servants not to steal or hold back (μὴ νοσφιζομένους) from their masters. In the LXX, the verb appears in Josh 7:1 where Achan steals (ἐνοσφίσαντο) some of the things prohibited/under the ban (ἀναθέματος). The covenant with God is violated. And because of this violation all the Israelites suffer. This sin has to be revealed and punished: “he

²⁹⁰Conzelmann, Epp, and Matthews, 37.

²⁹¹Keener, 1185.

who is caught with the devoted things shall be destroyed by fire, along with all that belongs to him” (Josh 1:15, NIV). Achan and his whole household with all his cattle and other possessions are stoned and burned. Second Macc 4:32 also describes the sin of stealing (νοσφισάμενος), and the sinner also dies.²⁹² The word ἐνοσφίσατο in Acts means “more than theft; it seems to apply especially to the ‘insiders,’ acting secretly when property does not belong to them.”²⁹³ It is possible that possessions belong to the community once sold. But it goes against what Peter says in Acts 5:4. From there, it is clear that they still had the legal right to the proceeds after selling the property.

The important thing here in Acts 5 is withholding something that was originally committed to the community of God as part of the whole context of Acts 2 and 4, where everyone was selling out of their heart’s generosity and under the guidance of the Spirit, so that no one would be needy among the believers. Ananias kept a portion of the proceeds, with his wife’s knowledge, and brought only the remainder to place at the apostles’ feet. As mentioned earlier, the expression παρὰ τοὺς πόδας τῶν ἀποστόλων ἔθηκεν is the same here as in Acts 4:35 and 4:37. The couple promised one thing to the

²⁹²Harrill explores the story of Ananias and Sapphira in the broader cultural context of ancient oaths, vows and promises. For him the story resonates with Greco-Roman culture in the form of a comedy. The deaths of Ananias and Sapphira are not tragic but rather build confidence in the blamelessness and purity of the church (J. Albert Harrill, “Divine Judgement against Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1–11): Stock Scene of Perjury and Death,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 130, no. 2 (2011): 351–369. Le Donne builds on this and connects this story with an improper offering in the sanctuary. Such improper actions so close to the temple are not acceptable. He states that Acts 1–7 shows how worship should work in the temple embodied by *ekklesia* (Anthony Le Donne, “The Improper Temple Offering of Ananias and Sapphira,” *New Testament Studies* 59, no. 3 (2013): 346–364.

²⁹³Keener, 1188.

community but brought only a portion of the promised share. This act of concealment is equivalent to listening to Satan (Acts 5:3) rather than God. Perhaps Ananias and Sapphira hoped to achieve a certain status by being perceived, albeit incorrectly, as having given everything to the community.

Verse 3: εἶπεν δὲ ὁ Πέτρος· Ἀνανία, διὰ τί ἐπλήρωσεν ὁ σατανᾶς τὴν καρδίαν σου, ψεύσασθαί σε τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον καὶ νοσφίσασθαι ἀπὸ τῆς τιμῆς τοῦ χωρίου;

Both infinitives ψεύσασθαί (lie) and νοσφίσασθαι (hold back) are in the aorist tense which implies an undefined action²⁹⁴ and can mean a point or start of an action. This may suggest that Ananias and Sapphira were originally under the influence of the Holy Spirit.²⁹⁵ But after Satan ἐπλήρωσεν (filled) their hearts, they started lying to the Spirit and started or rather decided to hold back part of the full sale price of the field. A person can be filled with the Holy Spirit (as in Eph 5:18) or with the spirit of Satan. The word χωρίου is the same as in Acts 4:34 (χωρίων) and 5:8 (χωρίον) which stands for land or a field.

The translation of this verse would be, “But Peter asked, ‘Ananias, how is it that Satan filled your heart for you to start lying to the Holy Spirit and to keep back part of the price of the land?’”

²⁹⁴Mounce, *Basics of Biblical Greek Grammar*, 301.

²⁹⁵This would be understood in the same way that Judas was sent out by Christ to preach and perform miracles but later, Satan entered him. While Judas had events during his time with Christ that showed where his life was heading (John 12:6), nevertheless he still seems to have been a participant in the work which the disciples performed while sent as empowered disciples of Christ. (Luke 22:3).

Verse 4: οὐχὶ μένον σοὶ ἔμενον καὶ παραθὲν ἐν τῇ σῇ ἐξουσίᾳ ὑπῆρχεν; τί ὅτι ἔθου ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ σου τὸ πρᾶγμα τοῦτο; οὐκ ἐψεύσω ἄνθρωποις ἀλλὰ τῷ θεῷ.

The particle οὐχὶ introduces a question expecting a positive answer. The text does not seem to imply that “*If* one sold property he would be expected to hand over the whole selling price.”²⁹⁶ On the contrary, “From Peter’s words to Ananias (5:4) it appears that there was no obligation on members of the community to sell their property and, even after the sale, there was no obligation to hand over all the money received. The believers shared voluntarily under the miraculous guidance of the Holy Spirit. The sin of Ananias and Sapphira was their lie.”²⁹⁷ And the Spirit revealed to Peter their lie. In verse 3 Peter mentions that Ananias lied to the Holy Spirit. Here, in verse 4 he says that Ananias lied to God. Lying to the Spirit is the same as lying to God. Their hearts were hardened as they rejected the work of the Spirit in them. This is in contrast to Barnabas and the other believers. As Toussaint points out, “The fact that believers had the right to keep their money shows that this was not Christian socialism. It was a free-will arrangement for the support of the church, used only temporarily because evidently the early church expected Christ to come in their generation.”²⁹⁸

²⁹⁶Conzelmann, Epp, and Matthews, 38.

²⁹⁷William R. Farmer ed., *The International Bible Commentary: A Catholic and Ecumenical Commentary for the Twenty-First Century* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1998), 1518.

²⁹⁸Stanley Toussaint, *Acts, Bible Knowledge Commentary 2* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 365. For a view that this was Christian communism, see Montero, *All Things in Common: The Economic Practices of the Early Christians*, 82, 83, 106. On the connection between sharing possessions and eschatology, see below the section “Belief in the Last Days.”

The translation of this verse would be, “While it remained did it not belong to you, and after it was sold did it not continue to be in your authority? Why did you place this thing (such a thing) in your heart? You did not lie to men, but to God.”

Verse 5: ἀκούων δὲ ὁ Ἀνανίας τοὺς λόγους τούτους πεσὼν ἐξέψυξεν, καὶ ἐγένετο φόβος μέγας ἐπὶ πάντας τοὺς ἀκούοντας.

The present participle, ἀκούων, indicates that “Ananias had been listening to everything Peter said.”²⁹⁹ The verb ἐξέψυξεν is used only three times in the NT, all here in Acts. It “appears in the NT only in contexts where someone is struck down by divine judgment. Ananias’ wife breathed her last 5:10 (ἐξέψυξεν) for the same reason as her husband. Herod breathed his last (ἐξέψυξεν) in 12:23 because he did not give the glory to God when people shouted that he was the voice of God.”³⁰⁰ When humans go against the divine and sacred, punishment is the reward.

God caused Ananias’ death for his lie to God. Peter does not pronounce the judgment as Paul does in Acts 13:11. Here Ananias death “appears as God’s judgment,”³⁰¹ because he denied “the Holy Spirit’s presence in the church by lying to

²⁹⁹Schnabel, *Acts*, 285.

³⁰⁰Longenecker, “Acts,” 408. The same word appears in Ezek 21:7 (LXX). God says that He would come and destroy His own house using Babylonians and “every spirit would become faint” (ἐκψύξει). There are several other instances in the LXX where divine judgement appears although different words are used. God struck people down for profaning the sacred. Uzzah is struck down by the God for touching the ark in 2 Sam 6:6, 7. The men of Korah and their possessions are swallowed by the earth for complaining to Moses in Num 16:30–33. In Lev 10:2 Aaron’s sons die before the Lord for offering foreign fire to Him. Those who mocked Elijah are cursed in 2 Kgs 2:23, 24. For more examples see Keener, 1193. A similar concept may be behind the word used by Mark and Luke to describe Jesus’ death on the cross, ἐκπνέω.

³⁰¹Conzelmann, Epp, and Matthews, 38.

it.”³⁰² It was lying in the context of the manifest power of the Holy Spirit that brought down this judgment. While living in the power of the Spirit would bring great strength as seen in ability of the believers to consider all their possession and property as common, lying would conversely bring great destruction. That is why a great fear fell upon all the people. “And hearing these words, Ananias fell down and breathed his last, and a great fear fell on all the ones who heard [of it].”

Verse 6: ἀναστάντες δὲ οἱ νεώτεροι συνέστειλαν αὐτὸν καὶ ἐξενέγκαντες ἔθαψαν.

The verb συνέστειλαν means “to wrap up an object, with the implication of getting it ready to remove” or “to prepare for burial.”³⁰³ In hot climates the burial “takes place soon after death,” but “we have no explanation why Ananias was buried so quickly and his wife was not told about it.”³⁰⁴ The younger men should not be defined as having an “office.” “There is no consideration of the actual situation of burial. All the action occurs in a moment.”³⁰⁵ The word probably refers to “the younger members of the community rather than professional buriers.”³⁰⁶

After the younger men arose, they covered him, carried [him] out and buried [him].

³⁰²Richard J. Dillon, “Acts of the Apostles,” in *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, ed. Raymond E. Brown, Joseph Fitzmyer and Roland E. Murphy (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1990), 738.

³⁰³Culy and Parsons, *Acts: A Handbook on the Greek Text*, 87. Also Barrett, 261, 268, 269.

³⁰⁴Longenecker, “Acts,” 409.

³⁰⁵Conzelmann, Epp, and Matthews, 38.

³⁰⁶F. F. Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, ed. Gordon D. Fee, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1988), 106. See also Schnabel, *Acts*, 285.

Verse 7: Ἐγένετο δὲ ὡς ὥρων τριῶν διάστημα καὶ ἡ γυνὴ αὐτοῦ μὴ εἰδυῖα τὸ γεγονὸς εἰσῆλθεν.

After an interval of about three hours, his wife who had not known what had happened, came in.

Verse 8: ἀπεκρίθη δὲ πρὸς αὐτὴν Πέτρος· εἰπέ μοι, εἰ τοσούτου τὸ χωρίον ἀπέδοσθε; ἡ δὲ εἶπεν· ναί, τοσούτου.

And Peter asked her, “Tell me if you sold the land for so much,” and she said, “Yes, for so much.”

Verse 9: ὁ δὲ Πέτρος πρὸς αὐτὴν· τί ὅτι συνεφωνήθη ὑμῖν πειράσαι τὸ πνεῦμα κυρίου; ἰδοὺ οἱ πόδες τῶν θαψάντων τὸν ἄνδρα σου ἐπὶ τῇ θύρᾳ καὶ ἐξοίσουσίν

Sapphira had an opportunity to tell the truth, but she chose not to. Ananias and Sapphira lied together and “in so doing they have tempted the Spirit.”³⁰⁷ Seccombe notes that there seems to be a clear “wilderness” motif here based on the usage of this expression in the Old Testament.³⁰⁸ This “tempting of the Spirit” or wilderness idea suggests a possible eschatological-like setting for the Ananias and Sapphira pericope. They were united in their lying, “so they were united in the judgment that came upon them.”³⁰⁹

And Peter said to her, “How is that you agreed to test the spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of the ones who buried your husband are at the door and they will carry you out.”

³⁰⁷Conzelmann, Epp, and Matthews, 38.

³⁰⁸David P. Seccombe, *Possessions and the Poor in Luke-Acts* (Linz: A. Fuchs, 1983), 213.

³⁰⁹Conzelmann, Epp, and Matthews, 409.

Verse 10: ἔπεσεν δὲ παραχρῆμα πρὸς τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐξέψυξεν·
εἰσελθόντες δὲ οἱ νεανίσκοι εὗρον αὐτὴν νεκρὰν καὶ ἐξενέγκαντες ἔθαψαν πρὸς τὸν
ἄνδρα αὐτῆς

A series of six aorists here describe the scene: ἔπεσεν (fell), ἐξέψυξεν (died),
εἰσελθόντες (after coming), εὗρον (found), ἐξενέγκαντες (carried out), ἔθαψαν (buried).
Things happened quickly, one after another. And immediately she fell down by his feet
and breathed her last. After the young men came in they found her dead, and they carried
her out and buried [her] by her husband.

Verse 11: καὶ ἐγένετο φόβος μέγας ἐφ’ ὅλην τὴν ἐκκλησίαν καὶ ἐπὶ πάντας τοὺς
ἀκούοντας ταῦτα

Φόβος (fear) was mentioned earlier in 2:43 in connection with wonders and signs
done by the apostles and in Acts 5:5 when Ananias fell dead after saying a lie. The fear is
over the expression of the power of God in judging Ananias and Sapphira. In concluding
this section “Luke wants to stress this note of reverent fear—as he expressly did in v. 5
and implicitly does throughout his account.”³¹⁰ Polhill states that “In form this story can
be classified as a “penalty miracle,” or miracle of divine judgment.”³¹¹ And Schnabel
adds,

As in v.5, the “great fear” is more than reverent awe, even for the believers. It is a
distressing apprehension that has intervened in judgment, the alarming realization that
he may do so again in other cases of deception, and the terrifying trepidations that
one’s own life might be in jeopardy because of sin that one has committed. Luke
specifies that not only outsiders are gripped with fear, but also “the whole
congregation” (ἐφ’ ὅλην τὴν ἐκκλησίαν).³¹²

³¹⁰Longenecker, “Acts,” 409.

³¹¹ Polhill, 160.

³¹²Schnabel, *Acts*, 288.

Beyond this, Peterson writes on the connection of Luke's use of ἐκκλησία in the context of φόβος, "By reserving the use of such a significant term for this climactic moment in his narrative, Luke was characterizing the group that God had been gathering to himself through the preaching of the gospel as the community saved by Jesus for entrance into his end-time kingdom."³¹³ As discussed earlier on 2:43, fear in Luke carries an eschatological connotation. This is especially true here in chapter 5 where the fear is connected with judgment.

The word ἐκκλησία as a designation of the Christian community is used for the first time here in the book of Acts.³¹⁴ According to Bauer the term ἐκκλησία means assembly, gathering, "*the church or congregation* as the totality of Christians living in one place."³¹⁵ Later Schnabel concurs by saying, "ἐκκλησία denotes the followers of Jesus gathering to worship God in the context of his salvific revelation in Jesus' life, death, resurrection, and exaltation, to listen to the teaching of the apostles, and to share meals with one another."³¹⁶ Lüdemann is correct when he writes, "Certainly, at the narrative level *ekklesia* denotes the Jerusalem community."³¹⁷ The whole community was united in a Spirit-led community of sharing. Thus, the actions of Ananias and Sapphira to lie against the Holy Spirit threatened this power and community.

³¹³Peterson, 213.

³¹⁴It is also used many times later in Acts 8:1, 3; 9:31; 11:22, 26; 12:1, 5; 13:1; 14:23, 27; 15:3, 4, 22, 41; 16:5; 18:22; 19:32, 39, 40; 20:17, 28. It is found several times in other New Testament books. Jesus uses this word in Matt 16:18 and 18:17. Paul used this term many times.

³¹⁵Bauer, BDAG, s.v. "κοινός."

³¹⁶Schnabel, *Acts*, 289.

³¹⁷Lüdemann, *Early Christianity according to the Traditions in Acts*, 64.

The translation of the verse would be, “And great fear fell on the whole congregation and upon all who heard these things.”

Conclusions

Acts 5:1–11 is closely related to Acts 4:32–37. Thus, the context of community sharing of personal property is in clear focus. The size of the Acts community continues to grow. They are now referred to as ἐκκλησία. Several points beyond this are clarified in this short story, however, that allow for a fuller understanding of both the motivations as well as the actual practice involved.

First is the obvious continued emphasis on the power of the Holy Spirit. While the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit to change selfish human nature into one of unselfish charity has been seen in the previous chapters, here the power of the Spirit against one who lies about material sharing is brought into clear focus. While seeking to maintain the outward appearance of full participation in the fellowship of material sharing, this couple in actuality, is still desiring to maintain their own personal wealth.

In addition to the continued power of the Holy Spirit, this pericope again points to the motif of fear. While it appears as a result of the death of two of the members and so surely goes beyond the godly fear discussed earlier, nevertheless it conveys the feeling of being in the presence of the divine. The eschaton with its impending judgments (especially Luke 21:26) is hinted at. With this negative example, however, the stage is set for the demise of this practice. None of the pivotal concepts of κοινωνία, ὁμοθυμαδὸν, ἅπαντα κοινὰ, and καρδία καὶ ψυχὴ μία will again be used to describe the ἐκκλησία of the Jerusalem community. It is possible that the growth, both in scope of material sharing and in the size of the community itself, is making it a difficult practice to continue in its full extent.

What is perhaps most striking in this story in regard to the early Jerusalem community's practice of material sharing is that, in itself, wanting to keep their own personal property rather than sharing all of it was not a sin. Rather, Peter highlights, it was that they lied about sharing all of the money when in fact they had not. Therefore, it seems that while Acts 2 and 4 state that "everyone" shared what they had with others and did not consider their property to be their own, here in Acts 5, it is clarified that this was not a requirement to be a part of the community.

Ananias and Sapphira did not act as if they were genuine believers. But here, "by the example of Ananias and Sapphira, there is a demonstration of what would happen to those who went against the Holy Spirit."³¹⁸ The first community was completely guided by the Holy Spirit. All the spiritual and material sharing happened after the outpouring of the Spirit. Thus, lying to the Spirit had tragic results. Ananias and Sapphira had been a part of this caring and sharing community. But they did not want to fully submit to the Spirit. In the presence of God's Spirit there should be no pretense of commitment.

Acts 5:12–16

These verses constitute another summary review by Luke after the style of 2:41–47 and 4:32–35.³¹⁹ After the negative example of sharing possessions in Acts 5:1–11 verses 12–16 again focuses on the key themes of signs and wonders (σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα) and believers being in one accord (ὁμοθυμαδὸν) as in Acts 2:42–44 and 4:32. The growth of the community is also discussed (Acts 5:14). Examining these passages will give us a fuller picture of the practice of sharing.

³¹⁸Ibid.

³¹⁹Keener, 1197.

Verse 12

Διὰ δὲ τῶν χειρῶν τῶν ἀποστόλων ἐγένετο σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα πολλὰ ἐν τῷ λαῷ.
καὶ ἦσαν ὁμοθυμαδὸν ἅπαντες ἐν τῇ στοᾷ Σολομῶντος

In this first verse, the narrative switches back to the imperfect tense from the aorist in the preceding pericope. The verbs ἐγένετο and ἦσαν are both in the imperfect tense which means that the miracles happened over a period of time and the believers were together over a period of time. The phrase διὰ δὲ τῶν χειρῶν τῶν ἀποστόλων ἐγένετο σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα πολλὰ takes the reader back to the same expression in Acts 2:43 (πολλὰ τε τέρατα καὶ σημεῖα διὰ τῶν ἀποστόλων ἐγένετο), except here the signs and wonders are done by the hands of the apostles. “By the hands” is an instrumental dative construction.³²⁰

The word ὁμοθυμαδὸν is a reminder of Acts 2:46 where all the believers were of one accord (or: together) at the temple and broke bread house to house.³²¹ There are many instances of ὁμοθυμαδὸν in the book of Acts and in every instance the unity in action and thought is shown whether that unity was negative or positive.

One may question whether the ἅπαντες refers to the apostles and their immediate followers or the whole Christian group. The group at this size has grown to over 8,000, though it is not certain that all the 3,000 from Pentecost and the 5,000 from chapter 4

³²⁰Culy and Parsons, *Acts: A Handbook on the Greek Text*, 90. Stephen, when he was filled with the Holy Spirit, also did many τέρατα καὶ σημεῖα μεγάλα in Acts 6:8. According to Schnabel, “The phrase ‘at the hands of’ is probably a Hebrew idiom and not a reference to the laying on of hands during the healing of the sick.” Schnabel, *Acts*, 291.

³²¹For discussions of this key word ὁμοθυμαδὸν, see above on 2:46.

were residents of Jerusalem. The earlier context helps define this a little more precisely. It is probably οἱ πιστεύοντες (all those who believed) from Acts 2:44, including the Apostles.³²²

The translation of this verse would be, “By the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were continuously done among many people. And they were constantly all together in Solomon’s portico.”

Verse 13

τῶν δὲ λοιπῶν οὐδείς ἐτόλμα κολλᾶσθαι αὐτοῖς, ἀλλ’ ἐμεγάλυνεν αὐτοὺς ὁ λαός.

The expression τῶν δὲ λοιπῶν οὐδείς (none of the rest) includes a partative genitive and οὐδείς is the same as ὁ λαός.³²³ The word ὁ λαός refers to the Jewish people in Acts 2:47.³²⁴ How can the phrase τῶν δὲ λοιπῶν οὐδείς ἐτόλμα κολλᾶσθαι αὐτοῖς (none of the rest dared to join them) be reconciled with μᾶλλον δὲ προσετίθεντο πιστεύοντες (believers were added even more) in 5:14? First of all, it is necessary to understand who τῶν δὲ λοιπῶν were.

Several attempts have been made to clarify who τῶν δὲ λοιπῶν were. Palles “adopted A. Hilgenfeld’s emendation of λοιπῶν to Λευειτῶν, producing thereby the

³²²Some manuscripts, D 42 cop^{sa}, G67 eth sa^{mss}, add ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ after ἅπαντες. According to the UBS Committee it is an interpolation, for according to the Western text of 3:11, Solomon’s portico “was outside τὸ ἱερόν.” Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 286, 287.

³²³Culy and Parsons, *Acts: A Handbook on the Greek Text*, 90.

³²⁴See discussions on Acts 4:47 earlier.

sentence, ‘And of the Levites none dared to prevent them.’”³²⁵ Torrey understands it as a mistranslation of Aramaic and it should be translated as “elders.”³²⁶ Dibelius says that τῶν δὲ λοιπῶν is the same as τῶν ἀρχόντων (leaders).³²⁷ Metzger argues against this proposal because of “the disappearance of the connecting particle.”³²⁸ Conzelmann remarks that “οἱ λοιποί, ‘the rest,’ refers to non-Christians, in contrast to the Christians mentioned in vs. 12; compare Mark 4:11 (οἱ ἔξω, “those outside) with Luke 8:10 (οἱ λοιποί, ‘others’).”³²⁹ Parsons and Culy suggest that because the great crowds were converting in Acts 5:14, τῶν δὲ λοιπῶν οὐδεις refers “to people who were in and around the Porch of Solomon and aware of the Christians’ activities there.”³³⁰ According to Barrett the Christians formed a group separate from the ones who were around in the Portico. So, joining that group would mean becoming a Christian.³³¹

³²⁵Alexandros Palles, *Notes on St. Luke and the Acts* (Edinburgh: Oxford University Press, 1928), 54, 55, quoted in Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 287.

³²⁶Charles Cutler Torrey, *Documents of the Primitive Church* (New York and London: Harper and Brothers, 1941), 96.

³²⁷Martin Dibelius, *Studies in the Acts of the Apostles* (New York: Scribner’s, 1956), 91.

³²⁸Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 287.

³²⁹Conzelmann, Epp, and Matthews, 39.

³³⁰Culy and Parsons, *Acts: A Handbook on the Greek Text*, 90.

³³¹Barrett, 274.

It is reasonable to assume that τῶν δὲ λοιπῶν were non-Christian Jews.³³²

Schnabel also mentions that the phrase referred to “Jewish people in general who do not belong to the congregation of the followers of Jesus. There is no contradiction with vv. 12 or 14 since the Greek term κολλᾶσθαι (‘join’) is not a technical term denoting conversion but often refers to geographical or personal proximity.”³³³ Dillon, following Roloff, comments on the whole phrase τῶν δὲ λοιπῶν οὐδεὶς ἐτόλμα κολλᾶσθαι αὐτοῖς, “The ‘zone of godly awe’ surrounding them (v 11) kept outsiders from approaching on their own.”³³⁴ It is not clear from the text why outsiders did not dare to join them but clearly this verse is set up to be in tension with the next verse, 5:14. While it is hard to imagine that 5,000 believers were gathered in Solomon’s portico daily, nevertheless, it seems that Luke wants the reader to gain a sense of just how large the group had grown and yet at the same time, to signal that this was in no way to be understood as all of Jerusalem having become believers. While many had joined, they were still a separate, distinct community that necessitated great courage to join. There is the sense of the majority watching them with awe and yet not having the strength to join them.

The translation of this verse would be, “And none of the rest dared to join themselves to them, but the people kept praising them.”

Verse 14

μᾶλλον δὲ προσετίθεντο πιστεύοντες τῷ κυρίῳ, πλήθη ἀνδρῶν τε καὶ γυναικῶν

³³²Also see Longenecker, “Acts,” 409.

³³³Schnabel, *Acts*, 291. See also Fitzmyer, 328; Gaventa, 291.

³³⁴Dillon, “Acts of the Apostles,” 738.

In this context, the adverb μᾶλλον means “more than ever” with the verb προσετίθεντο or it can connect with the previous verse with the meaning “more than that the believers were added.” For some, “more likely it introduces a preposition that supplements and clarifies what has preceded.”³³⁵ But either way it is clear that the number of Christians increased by multitudes. The imperfect tense probably suggests that the Christians were continually being added. The effects of this growth on the practice of sharing is not discussed here but will necessitate a change in practice in chapter 6. This idea will prove to be a key part of the conclusions of this study.

In this instance it is unclear if the word τῷ κυρίῳ should go with πιστεύοντες (believers in the Lord) or with προσετίθεντο (the believers were added to the Lord).³³⁶ While there is a semantic difference, it is nevertheless clear that the people who were added were believers in the Lord and they were added to the Lord.

The translation of this verse would be, “The ones believing in the Lord, multitudes of men and women, were being added even more.”

Verse 15

ὥστε καὶ εἰς τὰς πλατείας ἐκφέρειν τοὺς ἀσθενεῖς καὶ τιθέναι ἐπὶ κλιναρίων καὶ κραβάττων, ἵνα ἐρχομένου Πέτρου κἂν ἡ σκιά ἐπισκιάσῃ τινὶ αὐτῶν.

Verses 15 and 16 are structurally similar to Acts 4:34, 35, “for in both cases there is a logical and linguistic connection with each thesis statement. In both instances, special

³³⁵Culy and Parsons, *Acts: A Handbook on the Greek Text*, 91. Also see BAGD, 489.

³³⁶Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 243.

and extraordinary expressions of the respective thesis statements are detailed.”³³⁷ The conjunction ὥστε is used with present active infinitives ἐκφέρειν and τιθέναι. It introduces the result of the wonders and signs that the apostles performed in verse 12.³³⁸ The purpose of bringing the sick is introduced by ἵνα ἐπισκιάσῃ.

The conjunction κἄν is a combination of καὶ and ἔάν and represents a third class conditional sentence³³⁹ which presents a condition “as uncertain of fulfillment, though still likely.”³⁴⁰ The same construction ἵνα κἄν occurs in Matt 9:21 and Mark 6:56 where the sick want to touch the edge of Jesus’ garment. And the same concept appears in Acts 19:11, 12, where the faith in Paul’s handkerchiefs and aprons brought healing. The construction ἵνα κἄν “is used to express an action that is less likely to bring the desired results than some other action (in this case direct intervention by the apostles).”³⁴¹ The people in verse 15 did not have a chance to experience a face to face encounter with the apostles, but they still hoped that just their shadow would help in healing others.³⁴² While

³³⁷Longenecker, “Acts,” 409.

³³⁸Conzelmann, Epp, and Matthews, 39. Culy and Parsons mentioned that it might also be connected to “what immediately precedes (all the new converts were bringing sick friends and relatives for healing).” See Culy and Parsons, *Acts: A Handbook on the Greek Text*, 91.

³³⁹Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, 696.

³⁴⁰Black, *It’s Still Greek to Me*, 145. Cf. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, 696.

³⁴¹Culy and Parsons, *Acts: A Handbook on the Greek Text*, 91.

³⁴²The manuscripts are divided in their interpretation as to whether all of these sick were healed. Codex Bezae adds ἀπηλλάσσοντο γὰρ ἀπὸ πάσης ἀσθενείας ὡς εἶχεν ἕκαστος αὐτῶν (“for they were being set free from every sickness, such as each of them had”). But in other manuscripts, E it^{gig}.p vg^{mss} cop^{G67}, it reads καὶ ῥυσθῶσιν ἀπο πάσης

it is not entirely clear, it seems that the sick being healed here are part of or at least connected to the πιστεύοντες τῷ κυρίῳ group from verse 14 as no new subject is introduced from which the healed might be drawn from and ὥστε connects this with the previous verse which speaks of believers. This group of people seems to be placed in contrast to the sick who are referred to in verse 16.

This era of apostolic healing, performing “signs and wonders,” is likened to “that of the earlier days of our Lord’s Galilean ministry (Mark 1:32–34 par. Luke 4:40, 41). Peter’s shadow was as efficacious as a medium of healing power as the fringe of his Master’s cloak had been (Mark 6:56). No wonder that the common people sounded the apostles’ praises and that the number of believers increased.”³⁴³

The translation of this text would be, “so that they kept bringing the weak to the streets and kept placing them on cots and mats in order that as Peter was passing by at least the[his] shadow might start falling on some of them.”³⁴⁴

Verse 16

συνήρχετο δὲ καὶ τὸ πλῆθος τῶν περὶ πόλεων Ἰερουσαλήμ φέροντες ἀσθενεῖς καὶ ὀχλουμένους ὑπὸ πνευμάτων ἀκαθάρτων, οἵτινες ἐθεραπεύοντο ἅπαντες.

This verse opens wide the impact of the growing movement. It now reaches beyond the confines of Jerusalem. The τὸ πλῆθος from the cities around Jerusalem probably hints that this healing is no longer being experienced only among the believers

ἀσθενείας ἧς εἶχον (and they might have been delivered from all the weaknesses they constantly had).

³⁴³Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, 109.

³⁴⁴Longenecker, “Acts,” 409.

but rather now has gathered the attention of surrounding cities. Nevertheless, the apostles are still following Christ's plan to begin in Jerusalem (Acts 1:8). The disciples are not leaving. Rather those desiring to be healed by them are coming or being brought to them.

The translation of this verse would be, "And also a multitude of the ones from the cities around Jerusalem kept coming and bringing the weak and the afflicted by the unclean spirits and they were all being healed."

Conclusions

This unit describes a continued growth of the new community or church. Continued miracles are the focus in this summary statement, keeping in focus the power of the Holy Spirit acting through the apostles. The esteem of the outsiders is surely motivated by this power and the community practice of sharing that this section follows.

Acts 5:12–16 and especially verses 12–14 are connected with what was stated before in Acts 2:42–47 and 4:32 and 5:1–11. Verse 12 recalls the practice in Solomon's Colonnade, the fear that came from the death of Ananias and Sapphira, and the increased number of people who believed,³⁴⁵ while verses 15 and 16 follow the structure of 4:34, 35. With these internal connections, it is reasonable to conclude that the first five chapters of Acts stand as a unit. The Spirit is an active part of the whole unit. The Spirit is active at the beginning in chapter 2, in chapter 4 and also in chapter 5.

³⁴⁵Ibid.

Sharing Continues in Acts 6:1–7

This pericope at the beginning of Acts 6 is the last mention of the material sharing practice of the Jerusalem community. Here the discussion focuses on a daily distribution of food and is recorded in Acts 6:1–7.³⁴⁶ It presents another challenge to the life of the early church community. The number of the disciples is still multiplying (πληθύνοντων τῶν μαθητῶν) just as described in Acts 2:41 and 4:4. Luke notes that the Greek-speaking believers (Ἑλληνιστῶν) complain about the Hebrew speaking ones (Ἑβραίους)³⁴⁷ because their widows³⁴⁸ were being continuously overlooked (παρεθεωροῦντο imperfect tense) in the daily distribution (ἐν τῇ διακονίᾳ τῇ καθημερινῇ). “Neglect of any group in a community where it was claimed that ‘there was no needy person among them’ would have been a problem, but this was potentially a very divisive matter.”³⁴⁹ The Greek

³⁴⁶Winter notes that the synagogue distribution was every Friday while the Jerusalem believers have a daily distribution. He theorizes that this was occurring since the Christians were meeting daily. Bruce W. Winter, *Seek the Welfare of the City: Christians as Benefactors and Citizens* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994), 66. While this might have some plausibility, it seems more likely that there was a higher degree of concern for the welfare of the needy and thus they chose to ensure food was available every day.

³⁴⁷Both of these groups should be understood as Jewish Christians. The Greek-speaking of them are from the *Diaspora*, while the Hebrews (Aramaic speaking) were local to the area around Jerusalem. On the discussions of these two groups see Barrett, 307, 308; Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 260, 261; Keener, 1253–1260.

³⁴⁸The Jews of this time also have a documented practice of taking care of the widows and poor. On this, see Keener, 1263.

³⁴⁹Peterson, 230. Keener notes that the argument has been made that the reason for the poverty among the widows at this time is because of the earlier sharing which had drained the community’s resources. Keener, 1266.

speaking believers were probably Jews³⁵⁰ as at this point Cornelius has not yet had his dream and Paul has not gone on his missionary journeys to the Gentiles.

The twelve Apostles then give authority to the seven, the ones “of good reputation, full of the Spirit and wisdom” (πλήρεις πνεύματος καὶ σοφίας).³⁵¹ Some say that wisdom here is more of a natural gift.³⁵² Others argue that the phrase “full of the Spirit and wisdom” is “implying that wisdom would be a particular manifestation of the Spirit’s presence in their lives.”³⁵³ In the parallel verse 5, Stephen is described as full of faith and the Holy Spirit. In Isa 11:2 Spirit is further defined as wisdom. While Acts 6:3 “does not include the full title πνεύματος ἁγίου, it is reasonable to assume Luke is referring to the Holy Spirit as it is explicitly mentioned in verse 5. In view of verses 3 and 5, wisdom here is probably a special characteristic that Steven and the others acquired when led by the Spirit.

The twelve will continue in prayer and the ministry of the word while the seven take on the task of administering the daily distribution. The first man on the list of seven is Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit (ἄνδρα πλήρης πίστεως καὶ πνεύματος ἁγίου). We find out later that Stephen and Philip do similar actions to the apostles,

³⁵⁰Bock, “Acts,” 261; Barrett, 314.

³⁵¹For a helpful discussion of this first “appointive” leadership role in the early church, see Robert M. Johnston, “Leadership in the Early Church during its first Hundred Years,” *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 17, no. 2 (2006): 8–12.

³⁵²Barrett, 313.

³⁵³Peterson, 233.

performing great wonders and signs and preaching the Gospel among people (Acts 6:8, 8:26–40).

Six of the seven chosen have Greek names but are still probably Jews except Nicolas.³⁵⁴ Nicolas is described as a proselyte, a Gentile who has converted to Judaism. And as mentioned in Acts 1:13, two of the original twelve disciples also have Greek names, Andrew and Philip. So at least six of the seven mentioned here in Acts 6 are Jews with Greek names. The chosen men are prayed for and hands are laid on them.³⁵⁵

The passage is concluded by the statements that the Word of God is being continuously spread (ἠϋξανεῖν is in the imperfect tense) and the number of the disciples is great (ὁ ἀριθμὸς τῶν μαθητῶν ἐν Ἱερουσαλήμ σφόδρα). The choosing of the seven and sharing happens as a continuation of the story told in Acts 2 and 4. The word of God is being spread and the number of the believers multiply (Acts 6:7). This means that the practice of a community sharing of material possessions is continuing.

Conclusions

Stephen, whose ministry expanded beyond distributing food, did great wonders and signs (τέρατα καὶ σημεῖα μεγάλα) among the people (Acts 6:8). The same miracles

³⁵⁴On the Hellenistic character of the list of seven names, see Keener, 1281–1287.

³⁵⁵Johnston suggests that the Seven here from Acts 6 be identified with the elders of Acts 11:30. Johnston, “Leadership in the Early Church during its first Hundred Years,” 9, 10. While this argument is not without merit, that the elders receive the contribution of the Antioch church and thus appear to have a connection with the administrative oversight that the Seven were appointed to, it is not entirely clear that the two groups should be conflated. Bruce notes that it is possible that the elders in Jerusalem are taking over gradually for the apostles. While there is no clear indicator that this has happened, neither is it clear that the elders of Acts 11 are functioning as the Seven here in Acts 6. Yes, they receive the money from Barnabas and Saul, but that could be that the “elders” are now taking over the leadership of the Jerusalem community. The elders of the Jerusalem community will be listed several times after this (15:2, 4, 6, 22; 16:4; 21:18).

that are described here in verse 8 are done by the apostle in Acts 2:43. The same spirit is among the disciples in chapter 6 as it is in chapters 2, 4 and 5. And the sharing happens under the leadership of the Spirit. The believers are compelled to continue sharing with each other.

New realities are in place that were not present at the beginning in Acts 2. Namely, a much larger number of people is now involved, presumably in both the giving and the receiving, and the group has expanded beyond its original homogeneity. These two factors appear to be significant when thinking about how long and for what reasons this original sharing of material goods was sustained. It is of note that the first push towards ecclesiastical structure beyond the original twelve disciples called by Christ happens here in Acts 6, brought on by the challenges of meeting the Spirit-led, eschatologically driven *κοινωνία*.

Following on the heels of the negative example with Ananias and Sapphira, this second challenge to material sharing concludes the references in Acts to this practice. When the sharing was individually described in chapter 2, the apostles did not need to be directly involved. As the number of believers grows, the apostles take over both the leadership of this practice and the work of actually distributing the shared possessions. Now, the practice has become too large and a new structure must be created. The new group of Seven, full of the Spirit, are now chosen for the express purpose of administrative care over the practice of material sharing. While this seems to be a solution to the current problem, with the fact that this practice is no longer mentioned in the book of Acts leads one to question whether this is the beginning of the process of returning to the original person-to-person sharing described in chapter 2 and similar to what will be described later in the *Didache*. The sharing examples in the remaining

chapters in Acts all pertain to sharing by the gentile communities outside Palestine with the one in Jerusalem.

The fact that the membership of the community has continued to grow highlights that the material sharing was a positive experience for those already participating and also an attractive element for those who joined the community (ἐκκλησία). While it is clear that the power of the Spirit was vital in adding to their growth (Acts 2:47b), the economic fact that “Nor was there anyone among them who lacked” (4:34), had to be a powerful attraction in a culture where rampant poverty was ever present.³⁵⁶ While this is not explicitly stated in the text, it finds implicit evidence in the continued pairing of the practice of material sharing with the growth of the church in these first six chapters.

More importantly, the power of the Holy Spirit acts as the motivating belief behind the continued growth of material sharing. The Spirit moves the hearts and the minds of the believers, producing the miracle of sharing. This miracle of sharing is paired with the miracles of healing that are presented throughout these first 6 chapters of Acts. The Spirit is leading the Christians in resolving the growing demand for continual sharing with all the believers. The same Spirit that led the Christians to share is active here and helps in decision making concerning food distribution.

³⁵⁶There were societal structures in place to provide for the very poor. On this, see Gildas Hamel, *Poverty and Charity in Roman Palestine, First Three Centuries C.E.*, Near Eastern Studies (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1990), 39–42. On poverty in this period, see Jey Kanagaraj, “The Poor in the Gospels and the Good News Proclaimed to Them,” *Themelios* 23, no. 1 (1997); B. J. Malina, “Wealth and Poverty in the New Testament and Its World,” *Interpretation* 41 (1987); Hamel, *Poverty and Charity in Roman Palestine, First Three Centuries C.E.* Hamel notes that famines may have happened every 20 years, which could lead to forced fasts. Mass starvation was extremely rare from these events, but localized shortages happened often. *Ibid.*, 49.

Sharing in Acts 11:27–30; 20:33–35; and 24:17

This final section studying the sharing of common property in the book of Acts looks at two unrelated pericopes that describe the sharing of material goods from church at Antioch to the Jerusalem community and a brief defense of Paul’s self-supporting ministry which includes an exhortation to work in order to provide for the needs of others. In addition, there is one verse where Luke records Paul’s mention of his Jerusalem collection. In the first, Acts 11:27–30, the work of the Spirit is evident. This is demonstrated in the description of Agabus as a prophet (vs. 27), who predicted the coming famine (vs. 28) through the Spirit (διὰ τοῦ πνεύματος). The scope of this famine has led many scholars to “think that Agabus predicted an eschatological famine here.”³⁵⁷ When the famine³⁵⁸ happens as predicted, the Jerusalem community runs out of resources. The fact that the resources have run out in Jerusalem leads to the question of why the material sharing which had been in place earlier was not enough to sustain the community there. It is possible that the practice of community sharing had ceased. This seems doubtful, for if that were the case, there should have been some believers with more means than the poorer members who could have shared and sustained the others via the person-to-person sharing experienced elsewhere. Another possibility is that the effects of the famine were more severe in Judea than in Antioch³⁵⁹ so that even the

³⁵⁷Keener, 1854.

³⁵⁸See Hamel, *Poverty and Charity in Roman Palestine, First Three Centuries C.E.*, 50–52.

³⁵⁹On this, see Joachim Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus: An Investigation in Economic and Social Conditions During the New Testament Times* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1969), 141–143; Hamel, *Poverty and Charity in Roman Palestine, First Three Centuries C.E.*, 50; Barrett, 564.

material sharing practices of the entire community, both rich and poor, were not able to sustain them. Or it may have been simply that the city of Antioch had a general higher standard of living than that in Judea so the believers there were more able to sustain the effects of the famine. Either way, the disciples in Antioch are determined to send *διακονίαν* according to their ability to their needy brothers and sisters in Judea.

What should be highlighted, however, is the clause *καθὼς εὐπορεῖτό τις*. This translates “as [they] had means.” Barrett notes that here there is a distinction to what was happening earlier in Acts 2 and 4. “There is no longer any suggestion of pooling capital (as at 2:44f.; 4:32, 34–37; 5:1–11). The Christians were engaging in business and some at least were prospering (*εὐπορεῖτο*, *had plenty*).”³⁶⁰ While this may be, it is true that while Acts 2 and 4 talk of everyone having everything in common, nevertheless, the examples given seem to be of people who had excess. If Barrett is correct, then this is evidence that the practice of the Jerusalem community has not spread. This suggests that the Antioch church seems to be giving at a level below that of the early Jerusalem community.

The same word *διακονία* is used in Acts 6:1, but none of the other key words from Acts 2, 4, and 5 appear. This hints at some degree of similarity but also something different. A group of elders in Jerusalem receives the gift (Acts 11:30). As discussed above, it might have been the group that continued the responsibilities of the seven in chapter 6:1–7, though this is not certain.³⁶¹ There is a general desire to give of their prosperity in Acts 11, which has some similarities, but again is not the same thing as

³⁶⁰Barrett, 565. This word occurs only here in the NT. On the connection of *εὐπορέω* to prosperity, see Liddell and Scott, *LSJ*, s.v. “*εὐπορέω*.” It only appears twice in the LXX in Lev 25:26, 49 with the idea of “prosperous” or “rich.”

³⁶¹Peterson, 235; Johnston, “Leadership in the Early Church during its first Hundred Years,” 9, 10.

ἅπαντα κοινά. Thus, the Spirit is active in this community in Antioch and as earlier, a desire to share materially with other believers is witnessed, though it does not seem that the level of sharing is what was experienced earlier in Acts 2, 4, and 5.

Later, in Acts 20:33–35 Paul encourages the leaders in Ephesus to support the weak by quoting the Lord Jesus, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.”³⁶² Here in these verses, Luke highlights a contrast between the heavenly inheritance which God will give to the believer (vs. 32) with the material inheritance of this world, silver or gold or clothes (vs. 33).³⁶³ Paul wants the leadership in Ephesus to follow his lead of not coveting the things of the world.

The verb Luke uses for coveting is ἐπιθυμέω. According to Silva, “The earliest uses are fairly general and denote a strong desire. Thus, ἐπιθυμία can be applied, e.g., to the strong craving for water on the part of dying people (Thuc. 2.52.2; 7.84.3), the eager desire to recover men who had been captured (5.15.1), coveting the possessions of others (Isocr. *De pace* [= *Or.* 8] 26 et al.).”³⁶⁴ Later in the LXX, this is the verb used to translate the tenth commandment, “Thou shalt not covet.”

Paul, however, goes beyond the commandment to include both a description of how Paul himself provided for himself and others by his own work and also an exhortation for the Ephesians to do the same. The inclusion of δεῖ before the infinitive ἀντιλαμβάνεσθαι shows that Paul understood this to be more than a simple exhortation but rather an essential directive for Christian conduct. This should be understood as

³⁶²It is not known where Paul gets this saying of Jesus.

³⁶³Cf. Barrett, 981.

³⁶⁴Moises Silva ed., “ἐπιθυμέω,” *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 2:241

especially so for leaders as Paul is here addressing the Ephesian leadership team in his final farewell. That Luke includes these words as the final saying of Paul before his benediction must highlight the role it plays in Luke's understanding.

In addition, Luke highlights that Paul labels those receiving the material sharing of the working Ephesians as weak (ἀσθενούντων). In Luke's other uses of this word it is typically translated as the sick.³⁶⁵ This usage here in 20:35 sets up a juxtaposition with 2:45 and 4:35 where Luke had earlier described those receiving material possessions from others as "those in need." This change to using the descriptor "weak" for the expression "those in need" has two possible meanings. This may have simply been an exegetical explanation of who was actually in need in the early Jerusalem community, i.e. those who were too sick to work. Or it could be a response to the fact that individuals were joining the community out of a desire for free food when they were actually able to work. This is a fact that Paul does confront in other places, arguing that those who do not work should not eat (2 Thess 3:10). It seems reasonable to conclude that Luke records Paul here in 20:35 giving his own understanding of material sharing, in some ways distinct to what was taking place in chapters 2–4. While sharing in Acts 4 and 6 involved administrative leadership of the believers, what is described here seems more along the lines of personal sharing.

This type of charity would also fall under what Paul encourages those giving to the Jerusalem collection in Romans and Corinthians to follow. In Acts 24:17, Luke gives mention of Paul's special collection.³⁶⁶ That this long-planned for gift is only mentioned

³⁶⁵Lk 4:40; Acts 9:37; 19:12.

³⁶⁶This collection will be looked at in more detail below in the section on "Sharing in Other Contexts."

as an aside in the book of Acts has caused much speculation. There are various theories as to why Luke does not give much information about the delivery of this gift. Barrett concludes that “either (1) that Luke was less well informed about Paul’s work than one would expect a companion to be, or (2) that he found the collection less interesting than Paul did, or (3) that there was some good reason for suppressing it.”³⁶⁷ It seems more probable that the trajectory of Paul’s life at the time of the giving of the gift had shifted entirely towards his arrest and subsequent trials. In either case, there is in this brief mentioning of the gift another highlight on the inability of the Jerusalem community to sustain itself through what began as a very successful method of internally providing for the economic needs of the community.

Possessions and Sharing in the Gospel of Luke

Since Luke and Acts have the same authorship, it is reasonable to look for the concepts of possessions and sharing in the Gospel of Luke with the purpose of unveiling the beliefs that motivated sharing in the book of Acts.

The topics of wealth, poverty and possessions appear in many verses in Luke. The theme of rich and poor first appears in Mary’s song in Luke 1:53, “He has filled the hungry with good things but he has sent the rich away empty.”³⁶⁸ In Luke’s version of the Beatitudes in 6:20 the poor are blessed for theirs is the kingdom of God and the rich receive a woe (6:24). When John the Baptist sends messengers to inquire about who Jesus is, Jesus’ response in 7:22 is that the good news is being preached to the poor along with the blind receiving sight, the lame walking, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear and

³⁶⁷Barrett, 1108.

³⁶⁸All the translations in this section are taken from New International Version,

dead are raised. In Luke 12, when a man complains about his brother not dividing their inheritance, Jesus exclaims that a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions (Luke 12:15, ἡ ζωὴ αὐτοῦ ἐστὶν ἐκ τῶν ὑπαρχόντων αὐτῷ). To support His statement Jesus tells a parable about a rich man who built more store houses rather than being rich towards God (οὕτως ὁ θησαυρίζων ἑαυτῷ καὶ μὴ εἰς θεὸν πλουτῶν). Jesus clearly calls for people to not be obsessed with possessions. The poor, who cannot afford to repay your generosity, are still to be invited when you give a banquet (Luke 14:7–14). In Luke 16:13 in the parable of the Shrewd Manager Jesus says that you cannot serve both God and money. In the allegorical parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus the rich are tormented and the poor are rewarded in heaven (Luke 16:19–31).³⁶⁹ But it is all because they did not listen to the prophets or Jesus.

There are even more explicit statements about giving and sharing in the Gospel of Luke. In 3:11 when people come to be baptized from John the Baptist he says, “The man with two tunics must share with him who has none, and the one who has food should do the same” (μεταδότη τῷ μὴ ἔχοντι, καὶ ὁ ἔχων βρώματα ὁμοίως ποιείτω). The verbs, μεταδότη and ποιείτω here are in the third person aorist imperative, which means it is not a suggestion, but a command. This verse resembles the activities found in Acts 2:44, 4:32 and Acts 6: 1–7 where the believers share possessions and food (daily distribution). In Luke 6:30 Jesus commands all those listening to him to give to everyone who asks them. The word “give” is in the present imperative (Πάντι αἰτοῦντί σε δίδου). The present

³⁶⁹On the challenges involved in interpreting this parable, see James A. Metzger, *Consumption and Wealth in Luke's Travel Narrative*, Biblical Interpretation Series 88 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 132–157.

imperative is used for the most part “for general precepts—i.e, for habits that should characterize one’s attitudes and behavior—rather than in specific situations.”³⁷⁰ The present imperative here is probably iterative and indicates repeated action or customary action which indicates “a command for action to be continued.”³⁷¹ It is often “a character-building command to the effect of ‘make this your habit,’ ‘train yourself in this,’ etc.”³⁷² In other words, Jesus encourages continuous, customary, habitual giving. The second part of the verse says, “if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back” and again there is a present imperative here (μὴ ἀπαίτει). Considering the context and the present imperative in the first part of the sentence, the negative prohibition is most likely progressive, indicating the cessation of activity in progress. “It has the idea, *Stop continuing*.”³⁷³ In the same chapter in verse 38 Jesus says, “Give and it will be given to you.” The same verb δίδοτε is used in the present imperative tense.

In Luke 12:33 Jesus tells His disciples not to worry but to sell their possessions and to give alms (Πωλήσατε τὰ ὑπάρχοντα ὑμῶν καὶ δότε ἐλεημοσύνην). Both verbs for selling and giving are in the imperative mood again, but here they are in the aorist tense. This verse comes after the Parable of the Rich Fool in 12:13–21 in the context of not worrying about one’s future. The rich fool stores up possessions for himself and plans to build bigger barns, but all is in vain because on that night he perishes. In this parable Jesus encourages being rich towards God. While Jesus does not explain this expression

³⁷⁰Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, 721.

³⁷¹Ibid., 722.

³⁷²Ibid.

³⁷³Ibid., 724.

“rich towards God” the rich man reveals that his new wealth will give him a sense of ease about his future. Thus not trusting in wealth seems one point that Jesus makes. Beyond this, one could see an allusion to other sayings in Luke regarding possessions as behind what Jesus means by this expression.

The imperatives in the passage after the parable of the Rich Fool alternate between present and aorist. In verse 21 “do not be anxious” is a negative present imperative. In verse 24 “consider the ravens” is in the aorist imperative, and in verse 27 “consider the lilies” is also in the aorist imperative. In verses 29 (“seek not what you might eat or drink, but do not be worried”) all the imperatives are in the present tense. In verse 31 “seek his kingdom” is also present. And in verse 32 there is a negative imperative “do not be afraid.” It seems that in more specific statements like “consider the lilies” and “consider the ravens,” the aorist imperative is used. In verse 33 Jesus is also very specific with his command. As Fanning notices, “A specific command normally calls for action viewed as a single whole, for action to be done in its entirety on that occasion, and the aorist is natural for this.”³⁷⁴ Because of the alternation of aorist and present tenses the aorist should be taken as constative rather than ingressive. The constative aorist stresses the solemnity and urgency of the actions. It has the force of, “Make this your top priority.”³⁷⁵ Jesus urges here in Luke 12:33 to sell what one has (ὕπαρχοντα) and give alms and to make purses that do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven. The same word ὑπαρχοντα is used in Acts 4:34 as a verb (ὑπῆρχον), “the ones *having* land or houses they kept selling them.”

³⁷⁴Buist M. Fanning, *Verbal Aspect in New Testament Greek* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 329; cf. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, 719.

³⁷⁵Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, 720.

In 14:33 the cost of discipleship includes giving up possessions (οὕτως οὖν πᾶς ἐξ ὑμῶν ὃς οὐκ ἀποτάσσεται πᾶσιν τοῖς ἑαυτοῦ ὑπάρχουσιν οὐ δύναται εἶναι μου μαθητής.). Again, the same word ὑπάρχουσιν is used to identify things a person has (possessions).

In the story of the Rich Young Ruler in Luke 18:18–23, the young man is instructed by Jesus to sell everything and give to the poor (πάντα ὅσα ἔχεις πώλησον καὶ διάδος πτωχοῖς). The words πώλησον and διάδος are in the imperative mood in the aorist tense. These are commands to sell and to give. The imperatives should be taken as ingressive and even be more specific as momentary or single act where “a specific situation is usually in view rather than a general precept.”³⁷⁶ It stresses that urgency of the action.³⁷⁷ The rich young ruler did not practice charity or any other kind of giving. Jesus commands him to start selling. The rich man becomes sad because he has wealth and does not want to share it.

In summary, in his Gospel, Luke encourages taking care of the poor. The poor are blessed and should not be neglected and should be fed and taken care of. In many instances concerning sharing possessions in Luke, sharing is a command from the Lord. He commands the sharing of possessions (ὑπάρχοντα) and food (βρώματα). In other words, sharing is based on the belief that it was a command. Sharing is commanded in specific situations with urgency and also as a habitual action. This kind of sharing is similar to the sharing described in the book of Acts.³⁷⁸ The community of Acts puts

³⁷⁶Ibid., 719.

³⁷⁷Ibid., 720.

³⁷⁸Secombe sees in this the reason for Luke’s stories in Acts regarding κοινωνία. He argues that the book of Acts, in its description of the church’s common life, is Luke’s attempt to introduce the church as “the faithful λαός in communion with the true prophet” (i.e. Jesus). Secombe, *Possessions and the Poor in Luke-Acts*, 218.

Jesus' commands to share into practice under the power of the Holy Spirit. What is added in Acts is the pervasiveness of sharing within the whole community with the administrative oversight by the apostles. This may have been Jesus' original idea, but it is not explicit in Luke. Perhaps this is because the community was not organized as a large body of believers yet in the Gospel of Luke. But based on the analysis above, it seems that ultimately what takes place in Acts is a Spirit produced miracle of community sharing for the entire group of believers in Jerusalem.³⁷⁹

Sharing in Other Contexts

As was mentioned earlier in the section on Acts 2:41–47, the idea of sharing among friends was not new to Greek or Jewish society. In ancient Greek literature, the concept of friends sharing everything was common.³⁸⁰ In the Old Testament Lev 25:35 says, “If one of you brethren becomes poor, and falls into poverty among you, then you shall help him, like a stranger or a sojourner, that he may live with you.” In Deuteronomy 8:18 it is clearly stated that the Lord is the one who gives power to get wealth and it is not from our own power: “Then you say in your heart, ‘My power and the might of my hand have gained me this wealth.’ And you shall remember the Lord your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth.” Since possessions belong to God the believers are encouraged to share them in Deut 15:3–5: “but you must remit your claim on whatever any member of your community owes you. There will, however, be no one in need among you, because the LORD is sure to bless you in the land that the LORD your God is

³⁷⁹Polhill, 160.

³⁸⁰See the section on Acts 2:44. For a further summary of these ideas see Mealand, “Community of Goods and Utopian Allusions in Acts 2–4,” 97, 98.

giving you as a possession to occupy.” And in the same chapter verse 11 says, “Open your hand to the poor and needy neighbor in your land.”

Selling and sharing possessions is not missing in the New Testament outside of the writings of Luke. Matt 5:42, in a parallel to Luke 6:30, writes, “Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away.” Charitable deeds are encouraged to be done privately (Matt 6:1–4): “Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven.” Jesus gives a command in Matt 6:19–24 not to store up for yourselves treasures on earth, and in Mark 10:21 he says, “. . . sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me.” Both Matt 6 and Mark 10 parallel Luke 18:22.

Much of Paul’s discussions about sharing material possessions are centered around his desire to collect a significant offering to take to the believers in Jerusalem community.³⁸¹ While some³⁸² argue that this was connected to the famine mentioned in Acts 11, the separation in time makes that an unlikely conclusion. In 1 Cor 16:1–4 Paul advises the believers to set aside help for his collection that he wants to take to the saints

³⁸¹This topic has been analyzed in detail by Ogereau, “The Jerusalem Collection as κοινωνία: Paul’s global Politics of socio-economic Equality and Solidarity.” On the theological implications of this gift between gentile and Jewish churches, see Colin G. Kruse, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012), 546. For an older study of this collection of Paul’s, see Keith F. Nickle, *The Collection: A Study in Paul’s Strategy* (London: SCM, 1966).

³⁸²Alan F. Johnson, *1 Corinthians*, The IVP New Testament Commentary Series 7 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 312.

in Jerusalem.³⁸³ This statement by Paul does not include any of the κοιν- roots, though it is a clear reference to the giving of material possessions to others.³⁸⁴ He mentions it again in 2 Cor 8:1–5 and 9:6–10 and Rom 15:26. This gift for the Jerusalem community is mentioned as having been delivered by Paul in Acts 24:17 during his trial before Felix.

In 2 Cor 8:1–5 the Macedonian believers are described as both giving beyond their means and doing so voluntarily: “For I bear witness that according to their ability, yes, and beyond their ability, they were freely willing” (2 Cor 8:3). In 2 Cor 9:6–10 giving to the gift for the Jerusalem believers is again encouraged to be voluntary giving. “So let each one give as he purposes in his heart not grudgingly or of necessity: for God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Cor 9:7).

This “fruit” or gift is described as being for the poor among the saints according to Rom 15:26. While Paul says in Rom 15:26, 27 that the gentile churches were pleased to help the Jerusalem poor, he also states that “they ought also to be of service to them in material things” (ὀφείλουσιν καὶ ἐν τοῖς σαρκικοῖς λειτουργῆσαι αὐτοῖς). The verb ὀφείλω has the clear connotation of owing or being obligated. A sort of reciprocity is described here with the spiritual blessing originally belonging to the Jerusalem community which was then shared with the gentile churches. In turn, the gentiles owed material goods back to the Jewish believers. In seeking to describe this tension, John Murray writes, “It was the bond of fellowship existing between the saints that constrained

³⁸³Ogereau lists four main interpretations of this collection. 1) an eschatological event; 2) expression of Gentile moral obligation; 3) an ecumenical gift; 4) a simple act of charity. Ogereau, “The Jerusalem Collection as κοινωνία: Paul’s global Politics of socio-economic Equality and Solidarity,” 362.

³⁸⁴Περὶ δὲ τῆς λογιᾶς τῆς εἰς τοὺς ἁγίους.

the offering and it was calculated to promote and cement that fellowship.”³⁸⁵ This idea of being constrained in one’s giving adds beyond what seems to have existed in the original Acts community.³⁸⁶

In other contexts, Paul also encourages a spirit of generosity. In Eph 4:28 sharing with the needy is encouraged: “Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need.” This compares well with what Luke records Paul saying to the Ephesian elders in Acts 20 discussed above. In 1 Tim 6:18 in the instructions to the rich it says, “Command those who are rich . . . to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous, willing to share.”

In the discussion of faith being dead without works in Jas 2:15, 16 the deeds of compassion are emphasized. If any of your fellow believers is naked or does not have food and you do not give them the things that are needed for their body, what good is it? 1 John 3:17, 18 says that the love of God cannot abide in us if we have goods and do not help our brothers in need.

As we have seen above the theme of sharing is not isolated to Luke. All the Gospel writers and Paul encourage sharing with the needy. But in the book of Acts material sharing reaches its highest fulfillment. The miraculous intervention of the Spirit moves the believers to continuous sharing with brothers and sisters. Everyone operates under the fear of the Lord while praying, breaking bread, fellowshiping and sharing all

³⁸⁵John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1968), 218.

³⁸⁶What might be questioned is why the poor in Jerusalem are not still being provided for by the community of goods described in Acts 2 and 4. It seems that it may not have been a sustainable practice.

they have. There is no other place in the New Testament that produces this kind of community-wide material sharing.

Beliefs that Motivated Sharing Possessions in the Book of Acts

This chapter has focused on material sharing in the book of Acts. As is well known, there are no explicit reasons given by Luke for why the early Acts community takes up this practice. While Jesus' ministry is supported by the giving of resources by some prominent women, yet as the story is told in the beginning chapters of Acts, no explicit explanation is provided of the material sharing of possessions that begins here. The disciples are simply commanded by Christ to remain in Jerusalem (1:4) and await the outpouring of the Spirit (1:8).

The three main passages that describe the sharing of possessions, Acts 2:41–47, Acts 4:32–35 and Acts 5:12–16, use common words and phrases.³⁸⁷ The words *κοινωνία* and *κοινός*, both key words in these chapters have been shown to have strong connections to material possessions or relationships connected with material things. All the main verbs in Acts 2:41–47 and 4:32–35 are in the imperfect tense that indicates an ongoing action with a shift to the aorist tense for the retelling of the story of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5:1–11. Sharing did not happen just once but continued for some time period.

Community growth is a key point in the context of material sharing that this study of Acts has focused on. In the initial description of sharing in chapter 2, the small upper room core has just grown rapidly in size from 120 to 3,000 believers (2:41). Material sharing begins at this point, but the apostles do not seem to be directly involved (3:6) in

³⁸⁷Co found the same thing in her investigations (Co, “The Major Summaries in Acts: Acts 2,42–47; 4, 32–35; 5, 12–16. Linguistic and Literary Relationship,” 67.).

the administration of this practice. After more preaching by Peter and John in the temple, (4:4), the number of believing men comes to at least 5,000. The descriptions in these chapters suggest a successful, growing community which may have provided an attraction in and of itself. This thought, though, is also challenged by the statement (5:13) that no one dared to join. Perhaps it was because of the judgment on Ananias and Sapphira.

At this point, the apostles take over the administration of this practice and it seems to reach its high point in terms of overall participation and success. With the episode of Ananias and Sapphira, a negative aspect appears. While it is clear that this was a community wide practice of material sharing, this episode highlights that while individuals were not required to share their funds in order to be a part of the community, there was some motivation for Ananias and Sapphira to want the community to believe that that had given everything from the sale of their property.

While the community continues to grow (5:14) from this, it leads to the next difficulty experienced during the time of material sharing. The growth of the community (6:1) has brought Greek and Hebrew speaking believers together which results in one of the groups feeling uncared for. The apostles' response is to call for the assistance of a new group of leaders. This seems to aid in the continued growth of the community (6:7) but never again in the book of Acts is the level of material sharing found in the first six chapters of Acts described. In fact, sharing may revert to the person-to-person sharing that seems to be what was taking place in chapter 2. In chapter 11, the elders receive the gift from Antioch but there is no discussion of any administrative oversight of distribution by the apostles or the new group of leaders (elders) from chapter 6. It seems fair to suggest that "all things in common" was no longer being practiced.

While Luke never mentions the cessation of the practice of “having all things in common,” if it had continued up to this time, at this point it was no longer able to sustain the Jerusalem poor. One may surmise that either there were no longer wealthy members of the community in Jerusalem or they were no longer following the prior material sharing practice. In addition, while this study has suggested that the involvement of the Holy Spirit was vital to the practice of community sharing as described in Acts, this does not imply that since the practice is not described later in the book that the Holy Spirit is no longer active. Rather, it seems that this demonstrates what is seen throughout the course of Christian history. That is, the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit is given for certain needs and specific times and places and this can change dramatically from place to place and from time to time. Paul’s mention in Acts 20:33–35 of working in order to give to help the poor sounds more like Christian almsgiving rather than “all things in common. In these later discussions, there is no hint that any form of centrally administered community-wide material sharing taking place either in Jerusalem or in the other cities where Christianity had spread. Thus, it seems reasonable to conclude that the size of the group ultimately proved to be a difficulty in continuing the practice of material sharing and possibly also led to the rise of another layer of church administration with the additions made in chapter 6.

While there was no requirement or law recorded in Acts that compels the early Christians to have all things in common, in the Gospel of Luke there are commands for the followers of Jesus to share possessions. In many instances that address sharing possessions in Luke, sharing is presented as a command from the Lord. He commands believers to share possessions (ὑπάρχοντα) and food (βρώματα). This appears as a

compelling backdrop to the believers in Acts practicing material sharing. And in Acts, they do it voluntarily under the power of the Holy Spirit.

Belief in the Power of the Holy Spirit

Although there are no explicit textual statements of what beliefs motivated the early Jerusalem community to share material possessions, there are contextual indications for the motivations of this practice. In the larger context of Acts 1–5, the description of material sharing happens after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1–40 and Acts 4:31). Thus, it seems that Luke wanted to connect these two things. Evidence for this claim is found in the manner in which Luke presents his material. Moved by the Spirit, the first Christian community shares material goods with each other, having all things in common. Sharing material possessions happens along with persistence in the teachings of the apostles which would have included Jesus' teaching on giving to the poor, in eating together and prayers amidst the wonders and signs being performed and God's punishment for lying to the Spirit. When compared, the summaries of Acts 2:41–47 and 4:32–35 both end with a description of the community's goods.

The daily distribution continues in Acts 6:1–7. The same Spirit is active here and is called on to help in decision-making concerning food distribution. The men of the Spirit are chosen to continue the distribution of food so that the apostles can concentrate on the preaching of the Word. In Acts 11:27–30 the Spirit is clearly present in the prediction of the prophet which in turn leads believers to share according to their abilities with other believers who are in need. Having all things in common in Acts always takes place in a clear connection with the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit.

Belief in the Last Days

In Acts the descriptions of community sharing are placed in the larger context of Pentecost, and in the context of miracles and healings that were done by the apostles in chapters 1–5. In Acts 2 Peter quotes Joel’s prophecy about the last days, “‘And it will be in the last days,’ says God, ‘I will pour out of my Spirit on all flesh’” (Acts 2:17 from Joel 2:28–32, “καὶ ἔσται ἐν ταῖς ἐσχάταις ἡμέραις, λέγει ὁ θεός, ἐκχεῶ ἀπὸ τοῦ πνεύματός μου ἐπὶ πᾶσαν σάρκα.”). And in Acts 2:38, just a few verses before the description of community sharing, Peter exclaims, “‘Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’” In Acts 4:31 the disciples are “all filled with the Holy Spirit” and in 4:32 “no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common.” Having all things in common takes place as a result of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit that was interpreted by Peter both as a fulfillment of the “last days” of Joel 2 and also as the gift which the new believers would receive upon their baptism.³⁸⁸ This high level of sharing demonstrates that the sharing taking place was in part motivated by an eschatological belief. “If the world was to end shortly an immediate pooling and common charitable use of all resources might well seem prudent. There was no need to take thought for the morrow since there would not be one.”³⁸⁹ All of this raises the question of Luke’s eschatology.

³⁸⁸And in Acts 2:43, wonders and signs are mentioned.

³⁸⁹Barrett, 168.

Following Conzelmann, some scholars argue for the receding value of the eschaton in Luke-Acts with the emphasis of it happening in the remote future.³⁹⁰ According to Borgen, Luke wrote salvation history as a response to the delay of the second coming (parousia).³⁹¹ On the other hand, many scholars since Conzelmann agree on the presence of some level of imminent eschatology in the writing of Luke.³⁹² According to Smith, “Far from relinquishing hope in a near end, Luke’s second volume seeks to nurture that hope.”³⁹³

³⁹⁰Hans Conzelmann, *The Theology of St. Luke*, trans. G. Buswell (New York: Harper and Row, 1961); E. Grässer, *Das Problem der Parusieverzögerung in den Synoptischen Evangelien und in der Apostelgeschichte* (Berlin: Töpelmann, 1957); Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles*. See also J. Zmijewski, *Die Eschatologiereden des Lukas-Evangeliums* (Bonn: Peter Hanstein, 1972), 98.

³⁹¹Borgen, *Eschatology*, xiii.

³⁹²F. O. Francis, “Eschatology and History in Luke-Acts,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, no. 37 (1969); R. H. Hiers, “The Problem of the Delay of the Parousia in Luke-Acts,” *New Testament Studies*, no. 20 (1974); R. H. Smith, “History and Eschatology in Luke-Acts,” *Concordia Theological Monthly*, no. 29 (1958); R. H. Smith, “The Eschatology of Acts and Contemporary Exegesis,” *Concordia Theological Monthly*, no. 29 (1958); A. J. Mattill, *Luke and the Last Things* (Dillsboro: Western North Carolina, 1979); A. J. Mattill, “Naherwartung, Fernerwartung, and the Purpose of Luke-Acts: Weymouth Reconsidered,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 34 (1972).

³⁹³Smith, “History and Eschatology in Luke-Acts,” 897, 898. Also quoted in John T. Carroll, *Response to the End of History: Eschatology and Situation in Luke-Acts*, eds. J. J. M. Roberts et al., Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 92 (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1988), 12.

Besides the timing of the end, Luke's eschatology has also been discussed from other perspectives.³⁹⁴ Some treat the eschatology as the same in both Luke and Acts³⁹⁵ while others make a distinction between the eschatology in the Gospel of Luke and in the book of Acts.³⁹⁶ Some emphasize the parousia,³⁹⁷ others the ascension³⁹⁸ and some discuss the history between the ascension and parousia.³⁹⁹ Many scholars place an emphasis on the relationship between Israel, the church and the coming kingdom.⁴⁰⁰

Carroll identifies four elements of the inter-relationship among Israel, church and kingdom. First is the timing of the eschatological program and its completion. Next is the content of the eschatological program (what did Luke expect to happen and to whom) and then the significance of the eschaton. And last is the situation that shaped Luke's

³⁹⁴For the full review of the different approaches see Carroll, *Response to the End of History: Eschatology and Situation in Luke-Acts*, 1–36.

³⁹⁵Smith, "The Eschatology of Acts and Contemporary Exegesis."; Francis, "Eschatology and History in Luke-Acts."; H. Farrell, "The Eschatological Perspective of Luke-Acts" (Ph.D. dissertation, Boston University, 1972).

³⁹⁶Gaventa; S. G. Wilson, "Lukan Eschatology," *New Testament Studies*, no. 15 (1969–1970); Beverly Roberts Gaventa, "The Eschatology of Luke-Acts Revisited," *Encounter*, no. 43 (1982).

³⁹⁷Mattill, *Luke and the Last Things*.

³⁹⁸H. Flender, *St. Luke: Theologian of Redemptive History*, trans. R. and I. Fuller Fuller (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1967); E. Franklin, "The Ascension and the Eschatology of Luke Acts," *Scottish Journal of Theology*, no. 23 (1970).

³⁹⁹Hans Conzelmann, "Present and Future in the Synoptic Tradition," *Journal for Theology and the Church* 5 (1968), quoted in Carroll, *Response to the End of History: Eschatology and Situation in Luke-Acts*, 28.

⁴⁰⁰Jacob Jervell, *Luke and the People of God* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1972); D. Tiede, *Prophecy and History in Luke-Acts* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980).

eschatological point of view. He focuses on the first and the fourth, the timing and Luke's situation.⁴⁰¹ Carroll correctly notes that Luke's eschatology is very distinctive, noting a correlation between Luke 21:12–19 and the eschatology of Acts.⁴⁰² The parousia is unpredictable, and only God knows the timing of the end (Luke 12:35–48; Acts 1:6–8). Luke connects the statements about being ready for the appearing of the Son of Man in Luke 12:35–48 by placing them right after the extended discussion on sharing in Luke 12:13–21, 33, 34. Yet the setting of delay in Luke need not contradict the imminent end.⁴⁰³ Carroll rightly suggests that “Delay does not oppose but undergirds expectation of an imminent End in Luke's own situation.”⁴⁰⁴ Carroll continues, “Only because Luke continues to expect a sudden return of Jesus (and soon) does his appeal for an alert, faithful manner of living have motivating force.”⁴⁰⁵

⁴⁰¹Carroll, *Response to the End of History: Eschatology and Situation in Luke-Acts*, 29, 30.

⁴⁰²Ibid., 119.

⁴⁰³Luke does not use the language of delay. Scholars speak of this because of the juxtaposition of the concept of the last days with a story that continues on with no parousia.

⁴⁰⁴Carroll, *Response to the End of History: Eschatology and Situation in Luke-Acts*, 166. Cf. Joseph Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1981), 1.234.

⁴⁰⁵Carroll, *Response to the End of History: Eschatology and Situation in Luke-Acts*, 167. While Carroll's reading of Acts seems to do more justice to Luke as a historian, he still follows most all scholars who primarily see Luke as having his own theology to pass on. He writes, “Luke sought to reinforce living eschatological faith.” (ibid., 166.) While this statement cannot be argued against, it betrays a common viewpoint that Luke was himself advocating for a certain theology of history and salvation. It seems possible to view Luke also as the narrator of events that he both lived and experienced himself and heard about through the words of others close to him who themselves lived out the history of the early church. See Jacob Jervell, *The Theology of the Acts of the Apostles*, ed. James D. G. Dunn, *New Testament Theology* (Cambridge,

It is clear that there are other places in the New Testament that discuss the parousia and call for readiness before His coming (Matt 24, Luke 12:33, 35–48; 21). Rom 13:11–14 says, “for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. . . . Let us walk properly, as in the day, . . . put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.” There are others like 1 Thessalonians 4:15, 17, 1 Cor 15, Rev 22:20. The importance of prayer in 1 Cor 16:22 (O Lord, come!) “in the early church worship service shows how much the church lived in expectation of the Second Coming.”⁴⁰⁶ While Jesus does speak of delay and warns the early believers that it is not for them to know when the end will come (Acts 1:7), nevertheless the sense of living every day as the last day seems nigh.

Based on the immediate context of Acts 2:17, one of the beliefs that motivated sharing is the belief in the “last days.” The miraculous sharing of material possessions described in the early chapters of the book of Acts happened in that context. As known from the rest of the book of Acts and the New Testament, the parousia remained in the future. But the fact that the parousia does not happen does not invalidate the experience of the practice of having all things in common and living each day as the last day. This belief is not contrary to the belief in the Spirit but goes along with it. The miraculous

UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 114, 115. It is helpful to see Luke for what he seems to claim for himself, an interested party who is retelling the amazing events he and others close to him experienced. From this perspective, trying to determine exactly how Luke understood the delay of the parousia may not be as important as trying to envision what the early believers in Christ were experiencing in the exciting days of the founding of the church.

⁴⁰⁶Richard P. Lehmann, “The Second Coming of Jesus,” in *Handbook of Seventh-Day Adventist Theology*, ed. Raoul Dederen, Commentary Reference Series (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2000), 899.

sharing of possessions is happening under the transformative influence of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is promised for the last days in Acts 2:17. The first Jerusalem community of believers had that Spirit led experience where “they could not bear to have, while another wanted.”⁴⁰⁷ The hearts and minds of believers were transformed by the Spirit and the miraculous selfless sharing occurred in the community.

⁴⁰⁷Charles John Vaughan, *Studies in the Book of Acts* (Minneapolis, MN: Klock & Klock Christian Publishers, 1985), 54, 55.

CHAPTER III

POSSESSIONS AS DESCRIBED IN PHILO'S *DE VITA CONTEMPLATIVA*

In order to compare the sharing described in the book of Acts with the sharing among the Therapeutae described by Philo, it is important to understand in some detail the type of community Philo describes and its place in the Jewish Christian culture. Philo of Alexandria was a first century Hellenistic Jew. He and his family were extremely wealthy.¹ However, he wrote in “praise of poverty,”² including specifically two groups, the Essenes and the Therapeutae, who variously practiced communal living. The Therapeutae are only mentioned in *De vita contemplativa* and are the focus of this chapter. An understanding of Philo’s attitude to wealth is an important introduction to his descriptions of the Therapeutae.

This tension between Philo’s attitude to wealth and his own social standing has not gone unnoticed by scholars. In a scholarly exchange, David Mealand and Ewald Schmidt offered somewhat competing assessments of Philo’s attitude. Mealand says that “Philo’s social position was ambiguous. He was wealthy, but also identified with a people who were vulnerable to abuse and sometimes attack.”³ Mealand compares him to

¹Mealand, “Philo of Alexandria’s Attitude to Riches,” 258, 259.

²Ibid., 259.

³Ibid., 264.

Seneca in this regard and spends most of his article pointing out various philosophical backgrounds to his ideas on wealth. He concludes that much of the tension comes from his Jewish heritage, “some of whose texts reflect the outlook of less privileged groups.”⁴ Schmidt responds to this article by arguing against Mealand’s supposedly false assumption that “there exists a causative relation between socio-economic circumstances and critical evaluation of wealth” and concludes that “almost every source that exhibits a degree of hostility to wealth . . . shows evidence of aristocratic production.”⁵ Mealand, in reply, insists that “Philo did not write *solely* from an aristocratic point of view.”⁶

Later, Thomas Phillips attempted to clarify the polemic between Mealand and Schmidt by offering a subtle shift to Schmidt’s view. He noted that “Philo’s criticisms of wealth should . . . be interpreted as criticisms of the unbridled desire for wealth.”⁷ Thus wealth was not what was viewed as negative but rather the desire for wealth was where Philo’s critique lay. So “although the Therapeutae did ‘abandon their property’” they “donated their property to heirs and friends, and thus, ‘made good the needs of men, their kinsfolk and friends, and so turned their indigence into affluence.’”⁸ Gerald Downing, in

⁴Ibid.

⁵Schmidt, “Hostility to Wealth in Philo of Alexandria,” 85.

⁶Mealand, “The Paradox of Philo’s Views on Wealth,” 114.

⁷Phillips, “Revisiting Philo: Discussion of Wealth and Poverty in Philo’s Ethical Discourse,” 114. On the issues of controlling desire in Philo’s thought see R. Williamson, *Jews in the Hellenistic World: Philo* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 201–219.

⁸Phillips, “Revisiting Philo: Discussion of Wealth and Poverty in Philo’s Ethical Discourse,” 118, 119.

countering Schmidt's argument against Mealand writes, "We cannot tell . . . how charitable" Philo was, "but he does . . . display an awareness of the reality of poverty and economic injustice . . . and not simply the self-indulgent purely theoretical sensitivity of an aristocratic scholar reproducing Jewish and Hellenistic platitudes."⁹ This carefully nuanced debate illustrates the challenge which Philo himself faced. He was wealthy through inheritance and yet philosophically and religiously, he saw reason to distrust wealth and so wrote in hostility to wealth.¹⁰

⁹Downing, "Philo on Wealth and the Rights of the Poor," 118.

¹⁰In writing *De vita contemplativa*, Philo is clearly writing in praise of a certain way of life that has many places of contact with Greek philosophy. However, Philo also speaks negatively about aspects of Greek philosophy and also brings in elements of Judaism as patterns to be praised. There are lengthy critical descriptions of pagan worship and banquets but nothing is said about the relationship to Jews in Alexandria apart from them giving their possessions to relatives and friends. Philo, *Contempl.* 13. Manuel Alexandre, Jr. suggests that these descriptions of pagans and their lifestyle should be rendered as Philo's rhetorical mastery "to persuade, convince, and move into action those Jews who were losing the essence of their faith." Alexandre, "The Eloquent Philosopher in Philo's *De Vita Contemplativa*," 329. David Hay analyzes Philo's references to other texts in *De vita contemplativa* and concludes that "one must suppose that the style and content of his references to other texts and persons other than the Therapeutae are carefully determined." Hay, "Foil for the Therapeutae: References to other Texts and Persons in Philo's 'De Vita Contemplativa'," 335. He notes that ultimately, the treatise is written "to instill or confirm values that Philo regards as essential to Judaism in general: devotion to a God who is both transcendent being and savior, commitment to immaterial realities as the highest goods, and to allegorical study of the Jewish scriptures as a superior avenue for approaching those goods." *Ibid.*, 348. As a whole *De vita contemplativa* is "a description written in praise of contemplation and of particular community of Jewish contemplatives." *Ibid.*, 347, 348.

Engberg-Pedersen, on the other hand, sees Philo attempting to describe the ideal state and how its citizens live and to argue that a small group of Jews are the only ones living out this ideal state. Engberg-Pedersen, "Philo's *De Vita Contemplativa* as a Philosopher's Dream," 46. To illustrate this, Engberg-Pedersen lists the major philosophical terms that Philo uses, such as practice and theory, philosophers, passions and vices, nature and laws etc. *Ibid.*, 55. He also notes that Philo only slowly reveals that this group is actually Jewish, contrasting them to the Greeks. *Ibid.*, 62, 63. See also Hay, "Foil for the Therapeutae: References to other Texts and Persons in Philo's 'De Vita Contemplativa'," 332. Though not explicitly stated, it seems clear that Engberg-Pedersen

Community as Described in Philo's *De vita contemplativa*

In order to compare the sharing described in the book of Acts and the sharing among the Therapeutae as described by Philo it is important to understand in some detail the type of community Philo describes and its place in Jewish and Christian cultures. The discussion of the Therapeutae has an interesting history. Neither Josephus nor Pliny make any mention of them by name, and Philo himself does not refer to them in his other works. There are several different conclusions that have been reached regarding the identity of the Therapeutae.¹¹ These will be discussed next.

Therapeutae: Real or Fictional Community?

Because this was a community described only in Philo's *De vita contemplativa* in antiquity, the question as to the actual historicity of this group has been debated. The lack of reference to any group of this name by other writers including Philo, along with the

sees this volume more focused for a Greek philosophical audience. While there are clear philosophical themes that would be familiar to the educated Hellenist of the day, Hay is correct to point out that a reader should be sympathetic to Judaism to find real value in Philo's work. Worshipping on the seventh day and reading the teachings of ancient Judaism are not practices that would be necessarily attractive to the Greek. And while Philo writes in favor of this group, he does not portray himself as having the same values as them in everything. *Ibid.*, 347.

¹¹For an extensive analysis of the major opinions on the identity of the Therapeutae, see Jean Riaud, "Les Therapeutes d' Alexandrie dans la tradition et dans la recherche critique jusqu'aux decouvertes de Qumran," *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* II 20.2 (1987).

non-traditional lifestyle which Philo attributes to them has caused some scholars to believe that this community was a fictitious idealization on Philo's part.¹²

Troels Engberg-Pedersen analyzes the genre of *De vita contemplativa* and argues that this treatise is "a philosopher's dream."¹³ When choosing between fact and fiction, he includes under fiction "the position of those relatively many scholars who claim that although there may be *some* factual element to Philo's description, he has also 'idealized' his own account fairly *extensively*. Methodologically, I cannot see that there is any possibility of choosing between that hypothesis and the one according to which it is all fiction."¹⁴ While Engberg-Pedersen's idea is well thought out and gives a clear method for ascertaining the "fantasy genre" of the document, it has not been accepted outright by scholars. Joan Taylor says that "there is not a reason to categorize it as a utopian fantasy."¹⁵ Manuel Alexandre also disagrees with Engberg-Pedersen and mentions that he "does not advance any relevant internal or external reference to prove his thesis or deny

¹²Michel Nicolas was the first to describe this group as a "Utopia of asceticism" even going so far as to suggest that *De vita contemplativa* was not written by Philo. Cited by Riaud, 1191.

¹³Engberg-Pedersen, "Philo's *De Vita Contemplativa* as a Philosopher's Dream," 64. Engberg-Petersen offers two alternatives for analyzing the genre. In the first, he likens Philo to Aristotle. So he compares *De Vita Contemplativa* with the *Nicomachean Ethics* and the description of how to live one's life, how Philo presents his work as a *pramgateia* following Aristotle, and how the opening and closing sentences sound Aristotelian. *Ibid.*, 41. Alternatively, Engberg-Petersen suggests another, more plausible, way in which Philo writes "a utopian fantasy for a serious purpose." *Ibid.*, 43. The goal for Philo then was to write something fictional, describing the best way to live, that no one would know was actually fictional.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 48.

¹⁵Taylor, *Jewish Women Philosophers of First-Century Alexandria: Philo's 'Therapeutae' Reconsidered*, 345.

the explicit statements of the author.”¹⁶ Alexandre argues that “*De vita contemplativa* is a narrative of something real; a pedagogical and apologetic narrative in epideictic form and content.”¹⁷ Mary Ann Beavis also speaks against Engberg-Petersen’s hypothesis regarding *De vita contemplativa* as a “philosopher’s dream,” and proposes three reasons for its inadequacy. First, Philo’s reference to a historically existent group of the Essenes in *Contempl.* 1 “leads the reader to expect that his account of the contemplative life will also draw on a real-life example, the Therapeutai/Therapeutrides (*Vit. Cont.* 2), a class of philosophers who exist ‘in many places in the inhabited world’ (*Vit. Cont.* 22).”¹⁸ Second, Philo starts his treatise with the words, “I will not add anything of my own procuring to improve upon the facts as is constantly done by poets and historians . . . but shall adhere absolutely to the actual truth.”¹⁹ Third, Philo gives a detailed account of the Therapeutae’s location.²⁰ Beavis compares the Therapeutae with the Heliopolitans, a fictional ideal society, and concludes that the Therapeutae should be understood as Jewish ascetics living in Egypt.

Philo’s description of them deliberately accentuates the similarities between the ‘blessed lives of the Therapeutai and those of imaginary ideal societies like the Heliopolitans, but is realistic enough to justify his assertion that his narrative is true.

¹⁶Alexandre, “The Eloquent Philosopher in Philo’s *De Vita Contemplativa*,” 319, n. 2.

¹⁷Ibid., 329.

¹⁸Mary Ann Beavis, “Philo’s Therapeutai: Philosopher’s Dream or Utopian Construction?,” *Journal for the Study of Pseudepigrapha* 14, no. 1 (2004): 31, 32. See also Alexandre, “The Eloquent Philosopher in Philo’s *De Vita Contemplativa*,” 319, n. 2.

¹⁹Philo, *Contempl.* 1 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:113).

²⁰Philo, *Contempl.* 22, 23

Rather than being a philosopher's dream, Philo's account of the Therapeutai in *De vita contemplativa* is a utopian construction of a real community.²¹

Other scholars argue that "it would have been difficult to invent the existence of a group living near to Alexandria without being 'found out.'"²² If it were a fictional community it is unlikely that Philo would have chosen to give it such a specific location which might be easily verified by many people.²³ Hay seems to strike the right balance when he concludes, "It is an ideal community in the sense that its members seek strenuously to shape their lives by their religious ideals."²⁴ What we are most likely to have, then, is a description of an actual group of Jews perhaps with idealized traits."²⁵

But what kind of Jewish group were they? How was this group related to the Jews in the area? Were they part of the Essenes? Or were they early Christian converts? Answering these questions will help us understand how similar the Therapeutae were to the Christian community in Acts and consequently how similar and/or different the motivations for sharing in both communities were.

²¹Beavis, 41.

²²François Daumas, *La 'solitude' des Therapeutes et les antecedents egyptiens du monachisme chretien* (Paris: Éditions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1967), 348. Daumas' opinion is referenced in Francesca Calabi, *God's Acting, Man's Acting: Tradition and Philosophy in Philo of Alexandria*, eds. Francesca Calabi et al., *Studies in Philo of Alexandria* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 174.

²³Beavis, 32.

²⁴Hay, "Things Philo Said and did not Say about the Therapeutae," 683.

²⁵James R. Royse, "The Works of Philo," in *The Cambridge Companion to Philo*, ed. Adam Kamesar (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 52. See also P. Geoltrain, "Le traité de la Vie Contemplative de Philon d'Alexandrie," *Semitica*, no. 10 (1960).

A Sect or a School of Thought?

Philo describes the Therapeutae as having the “writings of men of old, the founders of their way of thinking” (οἱ τῆς αἰρέσεως ἀρχηγέται).²⁶ Here, Philo uses αἵρεσις to describe the group Therapeutae. Schlier states concerning the usage of αἵρεσις in Philo, “We need not be surprised if in Philo it is used on the one side to denote a Greek philosophical school, as, e.g. in *Plant.*, 151, and if on the other it is employed to depict what Philo calls the august philosophical society of the Therapeutics, as, e.g., in *Vit. Cont.*, 29.”²⁷

Colson’s translation in the LCL of “way of thinking” is different than the other major translators who, Runia points out, all use the word “sect” instead.²⁸ The translation of sect implies the group was a well-defined sect within Judaism. Runia notes that Josephus also uses this term in connection with the three main groups within Judaism, the Pharisees, Sadducees and the Essenes.²⁹ In comparing these three established groups within Judaism to the small group described by Philo, Runia concludes that “way of thinking” is a better understanding of what Philo means by the term αἵρεσις.³⁰

²⁶Philo, *Contempl.* 29 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:129).

²⁷Heinrich Schlier, “αἰρέομαι, αἵρεσις, αἰρετικός, αἰρετίζω, διαίρεω, διαίρεσις,” *TDNT*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006), 1:181. See also, Alexandre, “The Eloquent Philosopher in Philo’s *De Vita Contemplativa*,” 319.

²⁸Runia, “Philo of Alexandria and the Greek *Hairesis*-Model,” 125. Translators mentioned are Yonge (1854, 1855), Conybeare (1895), Winston (1981), Corrington (1990), and Daumas-Miquel (1963).

²⁹*Ibid.*, 136, 137.

³⁰*Ibid.*, 140.

This word in classical and Hellenistic usage meant “choice, inclination,” and “from this there develops in Hellenism the predominant objective use of the term to denote a. ‘doctrine’ and especially b. ‘school.’”³¹ In the LXX and Judaism it is used as “choice,” “of or by free choice, or voluntarily.”³² Several texts in Acts reveal the same usage as in Josephus (Acts 5:17; 15:5; 26:5). And Christianity itself is called a αἵρεσις by its opponents in Acts 24:5, 24:14, 28:22. Later in Christianity in connection with either the Greek philosophical schools or the Jewish sects, the term denotes “societies outside Christianity and the Christian church.”³³

Joan Taylor strongly argues for Therapeutae as being an independent group and places them in the context of “the ascetic, contemplative groups that formed part of the philosophical school of Jewish allegorical exegesis in first-century Alexandria.”³⁴ Hay

³¹Schlier, “αἵρεομαι, αἵρεσις, αἵρετικός, αἵρετίζω, διαίρέω, διαίρεσις,” (2006), 1:180, 181.

³²Ibid., 181.

³³Ibid., 182.

³⁴Taylor, *Jewish Women Philosophers of First-Century Alexandria: Philo’s ‘Therapeutae’ Reconsidered*, 68–73. Also Frederick C. Conybeare, *Philo about the Contemplative Life* (New York, NY: Garland, 1987), 278, 279. Taylor, in noting that Philo refers to the Therapeutae as disciples of Moses in *Vit. Cont.* 63, writes, “This term does not refer only to the small group of Therapeutae living outside Alexandria that Philo focuses upon in the text, but is much more general. For Philo this term was linked with those who practiced an allegorical interpretation of Scripture that was thought to have been passed down from Moses to the present day.” Joan E. Taylor, “Virgin Mothers: Philo on the Women Therapeutae,” *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 12, no. 1 (2001): 46. Runia also notes a connection between αἵρεσις as a description of the Therapeutae and as their allegorical method of interpretation. He notes that when αἵρεσις is understood as a school of thought, it can refer to either their contemplative lifestyle or their allegorical method of interpreting the Scripture, both of which are essentially the same since they are both rooted in their study of Scripture. Runia, “Philo of Alexandria and the Greek *Hairesis*-Model,” 140. Dillon suggests that Philo doesn’t know the Therapeutae’s allegorical methods well based on a comparison of the Qumran documents

notes that Philo does not seem to suggest that the Therapeutae are “heretical sectarians or that they stand at odds with other Jews in Egypt or elsewhere. They have a special calling or vocation (προαίρεσις – §§2, 29, 67; cf. *Hypoth.* 11.2), but this does not seem to cut them off from the wider Jewish community.”³⁵

It seems safe to understand Philo’s usage of the term αἵρεσις in reference to this small group as most probably apologetical. Philo wants “to describe these contemplatives in terms that Greek readers standing outside Judaism would understand.”³⁶ He describes them as “those of our people who embrace the contemplative life.”³⁷ They do not cut themselves off from the Jews but they have “risen to the pinnacle of human spiritual development.”³⁸ They read “laws and oracles delivered through the mouth of prophets, and psalms,”³⁹ and “they read the Holy Scriptures.”⁴⁰ The prophet Moses is mentioned in 7.63 and 8.64. In 8.64 the Therapeutae follow “the truly sacred instructions of the prophet

with Philo’s own methods. John Dillon, “The Essenes in Greek Sources: Some Reflections,” in *Jews in the Hellenistic and Roman Cities*, ed. John R. Bartlett (New York, NY: Routledge, 2002), 128. He makes this conclusion based on his understanding that the Therapeutae are closely related to the Essenes.

³⁵Hay, “Foins for the Therapeutae: References to other Texts and Persons in Philo’s ‘De Vita Contemplativa’,” 344.

³⁶Runia, “Philo of Alexandria and the Greek *Hairesis*-Model,” 140.

³⁷Philo, *Contempl.* 58 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:147).

³⁸Hay, “Foins for the Therapeutae: References to other Texts and Persons in Philo’s ‘De Vita Contemplativa’,” 344.

³⁹Philo, *Contempl.* 25 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:127).

⁴⁰Philo, *Contempl.* 28 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:129).

Moses.”⁴¹ The experience of the Red Sea is vividly described in 11.85–87. In this setting, Moses then stands as the founder of their αἵρεσις.

Were the Therapeutae part of the Essenes?

The Essene movement, mentioned in antiquity by Philo, Josephus, and Pliny, has been identified by some with the Qumran community since soon after the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls.⁴² The Essenes are also mentioned in the opening words in Philo’s *De vita contemplativa*, “I have discussed the Essenes, who persistently pursued the active life and excelled in all or, to put it more moderately, in most of its departments. I will now proceed at once in accordance with the sequence required by the subject to say what is needed about those who embraced the life of contemplation.”⁴³ There is no other mention of the Essenes in the rest of *De vita contemplativa*, but they are discussed in *Hypothetica* 11.1–18 as well as in *Quod Omnis Probus Liber Sit* 12.75–13.91, where the term θεραπευταὶ is also used in reference to the Essenes.⁴⁴ This has led to some

⁴¹Philo, *Contempl.* 64 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:151).

⁴²See Dupont-Sommer, *The Dead Sea Scrolls. A Preliminary Survey.*, 105–117. David John Dillon argues that “Philo may be taken as a primary source on the Therapeutae and a secondary source on the Essenes of Palestine . . . Josephus, on the other hand . . . constitutes a primary source for the Essenes of Palestine.” See also Dillon, “The Essenes in Greek Sources: Some Reflections,” 118, 119. For a very helpful, more recent study on the Essenes in relation to wealth, see Catherine Murphy’s dissertation “The Disposition of Wealth in the Literature and Practice of the Qumran Community and Its Relevance for the Study of the New Testament.”

⁴³Philo, *Contempl.* 1 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:113).

⁴⁴On possible connections between the names of these two groups, see Emil Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ*, eds. Geza Vermes et al., rev. ed. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1979), 559, 560.

discussion on whether the θεραπευταὶ of *De vita contemplativa* should be identified with the Essenes.⁴⁵

There is some discussion among scholars that there is a lost document of Philo's on the Essenes. On this, some conclude that *Contempl.* 1.1 refers to Philo's descriptions of the Essenes in *Hypoth.* 11.1–18.⁴⁶ Others say that because Philo did not allude to any of his treatises on the Essenes in *De vita contemplativa* and “the qualification that the Essenes did not excel in all departments of the active life does not appear in those extant accounts [*Hypothetica* and *Quod Omnis Probus Liber Sit*],”⁴⁷ it is likely that “this passage [*De vita contemplativa* 1.1] alludes to another Philonic treatise that has not survived.”⁴⁸ Taylor and Davies suggest that both *Hypothetica* and *Quod Omnis Probus Liber Sit* discuss the Essenes similarly and likely have the same origin. And “it seems quite likely, therefore, that Philo described the Essenes in a similar way in his lost treatise on the active life of those who serve God. Likewise, it seems quite probable that Philo used his description of the contemplative devotional community outside Alexandria in his

⁴⁵Vermes, “Essenes-Therapeutai-Qumran,” 105–113. Also Marcel Simon, *Jewish Sects at the Time of Jesus* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1967), 120–130. And again later Geza Vermes, *The Essenes According to the Classical Sources*, eds. Geza Vermes et al. (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989), 15–17, 76. There are also a number of French scholars who see a strong connection between the two groups.

⁴⁶Daumas, *La 'solitude' des Therapeutes et les antecedents egyptiens du monachisme chretien*, 11, 12.

⁴⁷Hay, “Foins for the Therapeutae: References to other Texts and Persons in Philo's 'De Vita Contemplativa',” 336.

⁴⁸Ibid. Also K Bormann, “Über das betrachtende Leben,” in *Philo von Alexandria: Die Werke in deutscher Übersetzung*, ed. L. Cohn (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1964), 44, n. 1.

lost work *Quod omnis malus servus sit*, a companion piece of *Quod omnis probus liber sit*.⁴⁹

Schürer's *History of the Jewish People*'s revised English translation looks carefully at both differences and similarities between what Philo said about the Therapeutae and the Essenes.⁵⁰ It points out that there was no full identity between the Therapeutae and the Essenes. The groups, "although originating from the same root, or from the same spiritual need of pious Jews, were nevertheless separate developments."⁵¹ But at the same time it concludes, based on the Dead Sea Scroll research, that "the hypothesis that the Therapeutae were members of an Egyptian branch of the Palestinian Essene movement deserves serious consideration."⁵²

Vermes (who was part of the editorial team that updated Schürer's work), in a series of three articles, argued for the close identification of the Therapeutae and Essenes based on several factors, including the etymology of the name, Essene, that Philo uses for them.⁵³ He ultimately concludes that, "The available evidence does not justify a complete

⁴⁹Joan E. Taylor and P. R. Davies, "The So-called Therapeutae of *De Vita Contemplativa*: Identity and Character," *Harvard Theological Review* 91, no. 1 (1998): 9.

⁵⁰Schürer, 593–597. One looks in vain for a reference to the Therapeutae and *De vita contemplativa* in Schürer's 1898, edition as it was common in the 19th century to doubt the authenticity of the work. Vermes notes that this was because Eusebius and others identified the Therapeutae as a group of Christian ascetics. Vermes, "Essenes-Therapeutai-Qumran," 103.

⁵¹Schürer, 596.

⁵²*Ibid.*, 597.

⁵³Geza Vermes, "The Etymology of "Essenes"," *Revue de Qumran* 2, no. 3 (1960): 139; Vermes, "Essenes-Therapeutai-Qumran.,"; Geza Vermes, "Essenes and Therapeutai," *Revue de Qumran* 3, no. 4 (1962). Vermes looked to Aramaic ܢܘܨܢ (healer) for a root. The connection between this root and the notion of healer connected with the

identification of the Therapeutae and the Essenes/Qumran sectaries. The most likely conclusion is that the former represented an Egyptian off-shoot of the Palestinian ascetic movement of the Essenes.”⁵⁴ Bilde, after comparing the relevant documents in Philo and Josephus on the Essenes, agrees with Vermes’ assessment and concludes that they are the same group.⁵⁵

Dillon compares the Essenes and the Therapeutae and acknowledges that the Essenes were engaged in different trades and at least some worked outside the commune and earned income for the group, but the Therapeutae left their possessions to their kinsmen or to friends.⁵⁶ Dillon nevertheless sees the Therapeutae as “Essenes of some sort.”⁵⁷

According to Sly,

One of the reasons for mentioning the Essenes at all is to describe a form of communal life that complements what he observes among the Jewish Therapeutae near Alexandria. The Essenes epitomize the practical life. They are concerned with exercising the virtues through work and service. They limit their philosophical pursuits to study of the scriptures on the Sabbath. This is enough to provide them with their three standards for living: love of God, love of virtue and love of their fellows,

name Therapeutae is a key part of Vermes’ identification of the Essenes with the Therapeutae. More recently, Goranson has argued for a different etymology looking to the Hebrew verb עשה (to do). Stephen Goranson, ““Essenes”: Etymology from עשה,” *Revue de Qumran* 11, no. 4 (1984).

⁵⁴Vermes, *The Essenes According to the Classical Sources*, 17.

⁵⁵Per Bilde, “The Essenes in Philo and Josephus,” in *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament. Supplementary Series.*, ed. F. H. Cryer (Sheffield: Sheffield University Press, 1998), 65, 66.

⁵⁶Dillon, “The Essenes in Greek Sources: Some Reflections,” 123. See also Murphy, 338, 339.

⁵⁷Dillon, “The Essenes in Greek Sources: Some Reflections,” 118.

philanthropia. Philo opens his treatise *De vita contemplativa* by comparing theirs with the contemplative life.⁵⁸

On the other hand, Catherine Murphy separated the Therapeutae and the Essenes, “The lifestyle of the Therapeutae is on many points similar to that of the Essenes, but while both groups share the traits of common prayer and common table, the Therapeutae do not share their property in common. Philo’s descriptions of the Essenes, in contrast, contained quite a lot of information about economic arrangements in the community.”⁵⁹ Although it is clear that the Therapeutae gave their possessions to their kinsfolk and friends, somehow they continued to live communally and survive. They had their clothing and shared meals together.⁶⁰ They might not have had the same economic arrangements as the Essenes but had to have a source of their modest supplies from somewhere.⁶¹ When they left their possessions to others they stayed in certain places of dwelling called “the houses of the society,” and those appear to be common.⁶² And “they leave their possessions to their families and dwell in places outside urban communities: this they have in common.”⁶³

⁵⁸Dorothy Sly, *Philo’s Alexandria* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1996), 141.

⁵⁹Murphy, 294, 295. Murphy also notes that the scholarly consensus is that the two groups are not the same.

⁶⁰Philo, *Contempl.* 13.

⁶¹*Ibid.*, 34–37.

⁶²*Ibid.*, 24 (trans. Colson, LCL, 127).

⁶³Taylor and Davies, “The So-called Therapeutae of *De Vita Contemplativa*: Identity and Character,” 7.

Winston helpfully summarizes the relationship between the Therapeutae and the Essenes in the following way, “As for the relationship of the Therapeutae and the Essenes, the consensus is that, although originating from the same root, they nevertheless represent separate developments.”⁶⁴ There seem to be at least two key reasons for differentiating between the Therapeutae and the Essenes. As Philo points out, the Therapeutae practice the contemplative life while the Essenes excel at the practical life. This seems to point to a fundamental difference in purpose. The difference in focus between the life of the mind and the practical side show two different systems. In addition, the economic practices, while sharing the concept of affirming frugal living, thus have key differences. Thus, although the Essenes have clear similarities to the Therapeutae, and some might question whether they should form a portion of this present work, they do have their own separate development and thus they will not receive further focused attention in this study.

Therapeutae as Levites?

A small group of scholars asks questions about the Therapeutae’s identity in relation to the priests in Jerusalem.⁶⁵ In describing the Therapeutae as priests/Levites, Riaud writes, “For the service of God, of which Levi is the symbol, is the source of

⁶⁴Winston, *Philo of Alexandria: the Contemplative Life, the Giants, and Selections*, 41. See also, David Winston, “Philo and the Hellenistic Jewish Encounter,” in *The Studia Philonica Annual: Studies in Hellenistic Judaism* 1995), 41. Although stating that there is a consensus, Winston did acknowledge that Vermes believed differently.

⁶⁵Calabi, *God’s Acting, Man’s Acting: Tradition and Philosophy in Philo of Alexandria*, 173, 174. See also Jean Riaud, “Quelques réflexions sur les Thérapeutes d’Alexandrie à la lumière de ‘De Vita Mosis’ II, 67,” *The Studia Philonica Annual* 2 (1991): 187–191.

wisdom which is the proper vocation of Israel. The most perfect wisdom is to serve the true Being, in other words, to behave as a priest of God offering in sacrifice acts of wisdom or acts of knowledge.” He continues, “The solitaries of Lake Mareotis are wise because they are priests. The spiritual worship they give back to God is the philosophical service; and their sacrifice, the allegorical designation of the exercises to which they give themselves daily; the reading of the Holy Scriptures and the traditional allegorical philosophy.”⁶⁶ Riaud does not see Philo as describing the Therapeutae’s life in competition to the priests and Levites but rather as one of respect.⁶⁷ Francesca Calabi questions “not whether the Therapeutae should be considered as substitutes for priests, but whether the Therapeutae followed the same *halacha* as the Levites of Jerusalem.”⁶⁸ In Nikiprowetzky’s opinion, “there was an almost total agreement between the Therapeutae’s doctrine and the Levite’s ideals of life.”⁶⁹

The exact role of the Therapeutae in the Jewish community is still not very clear, and scholars continue to debate this topic.⁷⁰ Their Jewishness is obvious, however, and thus this lack of precision will not inhibit the results of this present study.

⁶⁶Riaud, “Quelques réflexions sur les Thérapeutes d’Alexandrie à la lumière de ‘De Vita Mosis’ II, 67,” 187.

⁶⁷Ibid., 189, 190. Riaud argues this by noting the deference showed by the Therapeutae to the priests in the food they ate at their feasts. See *Contempl.* 81, 82.

⁶⁸Calabi, *God’s Acting, Man’s Acting: Tradition and Philosophy in Philo of Alexandria*, 173, 174.

⁶⁹Referenced in *ibid.*, 173.

⁷⁰Ibid., 174.

Were the Therapeutae a Christian or a Jewish group?

Most of the Church Fathers starting with Eusebius identify the Therapeutae as a Christian group.⁷¹ *De vita contemplativa* is quoted by Eusebius, who believes that the Therapeutae were a group of early Christians. They shared possessions just as “in the canonical Acts of the Apostles it is related that all the acquaintances of the Apostles sold their goods and possessions and divided them to all according as anyone had need so that none was in want among them.”⁷² Philo uses the word μοναστήριον in *Contempl.* 25 in describing the Therapeutae’s life which, according to Eusebius, could have accounted for the origin of monasticism in the Christian church.⁷³ Also, the Therapeutae’s weekly feasts must have referred to the Eucharist, according to Eusebius.⁷⁴ Calabi summarizes the alleged connections between the Therapeutae and the Christians in the following way.

Some aspects of the Therapeutae mentioned as closely relating them to Christians were: giving up their worldly belongings and families, in a similar way to that recounted in the *Acts of the Apostles*, . . . reading the *Scriptures* and books written by the ancients, explaining text allegorically, their use of meetings, the presence of

⁷¹Eusebius *Historia Ecclesiastica* 2.17.1 and 2.18.4–8 (trans. Kirsopp Lake, LCL, 1:145 and 1:159). Cf. Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature*, 3–7.

⁷²Eusebius *Historia Ecclesiastica* II.16–17.2–6 (trans. Kirsopp Lake, LCL, 1:145–147).

⁷³Eusebius *Historia Ecclesiastica* II.17.6–10 (trans. Kirsopp Lake, LCL, 1:145–149).

⁷⁴Eusebius *Historia Ecclesiastica* II.17.6–10 (trans. Kirsopp Lake, LCL, 1:145–149). See also Runia, “Philo and the Early Christian Fathers,” 219, 220.

women in the community. . . , plus their respect for a hierarchical order in their prayers and chants.⁷⁵

But those connections do not necessarily make the Therapeutae Christians.

The community organization of the Therapeutae also gives some clues about whether they might be connected with the Jewish Christian community described in the first chapters of Acts. Philo does not give a lot of details concerning their community organization, but he does mention that they strive to maintain a sense of community (δι' ἧν ἀσπάζονται κοινωνίαν)⁷⁶, a concept also mentioned in Acts 2:42 where the Christians follow the apostles' teaching and τῆ κοινωνίᾳ.⁷⁷ Scholars are divided on the Therapeutae's living arrangements. "Some critics suggest contributions may have been procured by friends and relations in Alexandria. . . . The scholars formulate various hypotheses, starting out with what Philo says about the Therapeutae, who 'abandon their property to their sons or daughters or to other kinsfolk.'"⁷⁸ Based on this, some suggest that the Therapeutae's relatives supported them once they withdrew from society.⁷⁹ This seems quite different from the Jerusalem community described in Acts.

⁷⁵Calabi, *God's Acting, Man's Acting: Tradition and Philosophy in Philo of Alexandria*, 177, 178. On the connections of Philo with early Christianity see Schenck, *A Brief Guide to Philo*, 73–76.

⁷⁶Philo, *Contempl.* 24 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:127).

⁷⁷The word κοινωνία is also used in 1 Cor 6:14; 10:16; 13:13, Phil 1:5, 6; 2:1; 1 John 1:3.

⁷⁸Calabi, *God's Acting, Man's Acting: Tradition and Philosophy in Philo of Alexandria*, fn. 175.

⁷⁹Riaud, "Quelques réflexions sur les Thérapeutes d'Alexandrie à la lumière de 'De Vita Mosis' II, 67," 185 n. 3, quoted in Calabi, *God's Acting, Man's Acting: Tradition and Philosophy in Philo of Alexandria*, 176.

Calabi mentions, that “another hypothesis contemplates the possibility that the Therapeutae practiced simple crafts or grew vegetables so as to procure what they needed to survive.”⁸⁰ Taylor and Davies believe that the junior members (διάκονοι) helped with organization and food service and in general were the ones “who attend to the practicalities.”⁸¹ According to Calabi,

The Therapeutae withdrew from society after having led an active life. Theirs was the choice of people who could afford to indulge in the pleasure of theoretical activities. Although they led a life of hard work while they were young, once they reached a certain age they could devote themselves to theorizing. Youth and maturity should be employed in practical life, while old age . . . may be devoted to contemplation. Their desert was a place . . . where they could live together making common choices: a place of individual and collective growth.⁸²

While there are many things not clear about the community organization of the Therapeutae, it seems fair to see them more as a Jewish group as attributed to them by Philo than as a Christian group similar to the Acts community. Royse correctly notes that it is implausible to describe the Therapeutae as a Christian group, “Thus, current scholarship is unanimous in holding that this work is Philo’s own description of a sect of [non-Christian] Jews.”⁸³ Even so, with this closeness of religious beliefs between Judaism and early Christianity, a study of the similar practices mentioned above

⁸⁰Calabi, *God’s Acting, Man’s Acting: Tradition and Philosophy in Philo of Alexandria*, 176.

⁸¹Taylor and Davies, “The So-called Therapeutae of *De Vita Contemplativa*: Identity and Character,” 20.

⁸²Calabi, *God’s Acting, Man’s Acting: Tradition and Philosophy in Philo of Alexandria*, 181.

⁸³Royse, “The Works of Philo,” 52.

(communal living and constant studying of the scriptures in particular) will prove helpful in illuminating the practice of material sharing in the book of Acts.

Conclusions

Philo in his work *De vita contemplativa* describes a retired⁸⁴ group of philosophers called Therapeutae (θεραπευται)⁸⁵ or the “disciples of Moses”⁸⁶ who “embraced the life of contemplation”⁸⁷ in an isolated area near the city of Alexandria.⁸⁸ It was most likely a Jewish group similar to the Essenes, but distinctly separate.⁸⁹ While there are also similarities with the Jerusalem community of Acts in the area of shared κοινωνία with one another and a religious focus on the God of the Jews, nevertheless the differences in these and other areas point to no identification between these two groups

⁸⁴They were most likely older people. The women, in *Contempl.* 68, are specifically mentioned as “most of them aged virgins.” In *Contempl.* 13 he mentions that they gave their wealth to their children. Those children were probably grown. Also, see Riaud, “Quelques réflexions sur les Thérapeutes d’Alexandrie à la lumière de ‘De Vita Mosis’ II, 67,” 188. However, it is noted that *Contempl.* 69 mentions “those who from their earliest years have grown to manhood and spent their prime in pursuing the contemplative branch of philosophy.” These may have begun their time as part of the young men who served the community.

⁸⁵Philo, *Contempl.* 2 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:115). Sly looked at both Jewish and non-Jewish groups with this same name and noted that “the term *therapeutai* has come to be understood as the proper name of that group [Therapeutae from *De vita contemplativa*.] Yet Philo indicates explicitly that the group he describes is only one of many groups that could be called by the same name. (*Contempl.* 21)” Sly, *Philo’s Alexandria*, 138, 139.

⁸⁶Philo, *Contempl.* 63, 64 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:151).

⁸⁷Philo, *Contempl.* 2 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:113).

⁸⁸Philo, *Contempl.* 21, 22.

⁸⁹See section above on Essenes.

either. However, the Therapeutae should be seen as part of a real life community that existed in the first century.

Words Used for Wealth and Possessions in *De vita contemplativa*

According to Philo “the vocation of these philosophers is at once clear from their title of Therapeutae and Therapeutrides, a name derived from θεραπεύω.”⁹⁰ The two terms refer to male and female members.⁹¹ The term θεραπεύω⁹² for Philo means “to cure” in the sense of healing from passions or “in the sense of ‘worship,’ because nature and the sacred laws have schooled them to worship the Self-existent.”⁹³ In other words they were healers of the soul and worshippers. An important part of their lives as the Therapeutae is connected to their stance on wealth and possessions.

Almost from the very beginning of the treatise, Philo mentions that the Therapeutae abandoned wealth and possessions to their families and friends. In order to

⁹⁰Philo, *Contempl. 2* (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:113).

⁹¹Hay, “Things Philo Said and did not Say about the Therapeutae,” 680.

⁹²In early Greek literature, θεραπεύω was used to refer to serving or waiting upon someone. It could be used to take care of one’s body, to treat medically, or to observe a feast. It also was used in the context of training animals, cultivating land, or taking care of domestic chores such as preparing food or repairing clothes. See Liddell and Scott, *LSJ*, s.v. “θεραπεύω.” In the NT, it almost always means to heal. Moises Silva ed., “θεραπεύω ” *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 2:447. Because Philo specifies how he uses θεραπεύω, a more detailed study of this word is not needed.

⁹³ Philo, *Contempl. 2* (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:115). For more on the discussion of the name Therapeutae (θεραπέυται), see Taylor and Davies, “The So-called Therapeutae of *De Vita Contemplativa*: Identity and Character,” 5–7.

understand their motivations for this practice, it will be helpful to examine the words used to describe wealth and possession in *De vita contemplativa*.

13 εἶτα διὰ τὸν τῆς ἀθανάτου καὶ μακαρίας ζωῆς ἡμέρον τετελευτηκέναι νομίζοντες ἤδη τὸν θνητὸν βίον ἀπολείπουσι τὰς οὐσίας υἱοῖς ἢ θυγατράσιν εἴτε καὶ ἄλλοις συγγενέσιν, ἐκουσίῳ γνώμῃ προκληρονομούμενοι, οἷς δὲ μὴ συγγενεῖς εἰσιν, ἐταίροις καὶ φίλοις· ἔδει γὰρ τοὺς τὸν βλέποντα πλοῦτον ἐξ ἐτοίμου λαβόντας τὸν τυφλὸν παραχωρῆσαι τοῖς ἔτι τὰς διανοίας τυφλώττουσιν.⁹⁴

In this text there is a description of the Therapeutae leaving their property (τὰς οὐσίας) to their sons or daughters (υἱοῖς ἢ θυγατράσιν) or companions and friends (ἐταίροις καὶ φίλοις) if they did not have kinsfolk, “thus voluntarily advancing the time of their inheritance.”⁹⁵ This leaving of material possessions is connected with the previous description of the Therapeutae’s beliefs and their longing for “the deathless and blessed life” and “thinking their mortal life already ended.”⁹⁶ The verb ἀπολείπουσι is in the present active and should probably be understood as a historical present with dramatic

⁹⁴Then such is their longing for the deathless and blessed life that thinking their mortal life already ended they abandon their property to their sons or daughters or to other kinsfolk, thus voluntarily advancing the time of their inheritance, while those who have no kinsfolk give them to comrades and friends. For it was right that those who have received ready to their hand the wealth that has eyes to see should surrender the blind wealth to those who are still blind in mind (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:121).

⁹⁵Philo, *Contempl.* 13 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:121).

⁹⁶Philo, *Contempl.* 13 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:121).

effect.⁹⁷ Thus, the translation would be, “they left their possessions to their sons or daughters and moreover to other relatives.”

The second word in 13, πλοῦτον (ἔδει γὰρ τοὺς τὸν βλέποντα πλοῦτον), is used with the adjectival participle τὸν βλέποντα which can be literally rendered as “the wealth that sees.” The Therapeutae are here described as having a different kind of wealth, a spiritual wealth, and so they are willing to submit their “blind wealth” to the ones whose minds are still blinded. “For it is necessary for those who have received the wealth that sees already prepared to submit the blind (wealth) to the minds still blinded.”⁹⁸ The same word πλοῦτος appears in 17 in the more philosophical context of nature’s wealth (φύσεως πλοῦτος) in Philo’s explanation of his quote from Homer’s *Iliad*, “The idea conveyed is that injustice is bred by anxious thought for the means of life and for money-making, justice by holding and following the opposite creed. The first entails inequality, the second equality, the principle by which nature’s wealth is regulated and so stands superior to the wealth of vain opinion.”⁹⁹ In these usages, the word πλοῦτος refers to worldly wealth in the more abstract sense or a philosophical good. This principle of equality is important with Philo, especially in the context of the Therapeutae. In the next section on κοινωνία, it will be seen that this act of giving away of one’s possessions, and

⁹⁷Wallace states that historical present “maybe used to describe a past event, either for the sake of *vividness* or to *highlight* some aspect of the narrative.” Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, 526.

⁹⁸Translation mine. It reflects Philo’s dualism of material being negative and the non-material and the soul being good. For the discussions on this see below.

⁹⁹Philo, *Contempl.* 17 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:123).

thus obtaining equality with all inside the community, is in a sense, a prerequisite to κοινωνία.¹⁰⁰

The next passage includes several other words in describing possessions, οὐσία, χρῆμα, and κτήσις.

14 Ἀναξαγόραν καὶ Δημοκρίτον Ἕλληνας ἄδουσιν, ὅτι φιλοσοφίας ἡμέρω πληχθέντες μηλοβότους εἶασαν γενέσθαι τὰς οὐσίας· ἀγαμαὶ τοὺς ἄνδρας καὶ αὐτὸς γενομένους χρημάτων κρείττονας. ἀλλὰ πόσῳ βελτίονες οἱ μὴ θρέμμασιν ἐμβόσκεσθαι τὰς κτήσεις ἀνέντες, ἀλλὰ τὰς ἀνθρώπων ἐνδείας, συγγενῶν ἢ φίλων, ἐπανορθωσάμενοι καὶ ἐξ ἀπόρων εὐπόρους ἀποφίηναντες; ἐκεῖνο μὲν γὰρ ἀπερίσκεπτον ἵνα μὴ μανιῶδες ἐπ' ἀνδρῶν, οὓς ἡ Ἑλλάς ἐθαύμασεν, εἶπω τὸ ἔργον, τοῦτο δὲ νηφάλιον καὶ μετὰ φρονήσεως ἠκριβωμένον περιττῆς.¹⁰¹

In 14 all three words are used in relation to possessions, οὐσία, χρῆμα, and κτήσις. The word οὐσίας is used in the following sentence, “They [Anaxagoras and Democritus] allowed their property (τὰς οὐσίας) to be grazed by sheep.” The word χρῆμα is used in the next sentence, “I also admire these men myself who have become better than wealth (χρημάτων).” “But how much better are the ones who did not give up their possessions (τὰς κτήσεις) to be devoured by animals, but [gave up to] the needs of men, relatives and friends.” Another place where the word κτήσεις is used is in 70 in the

¹⁰⁰This is important as it will be suggested in the section on κοινωνία that because of its connection to the creation of humans by God, it must be available to all in their quest for a vision of God.

¹⁰¹“The Greeks extol Anaxagoras and Democritus because smitten with the desire for philosophy they left their fields to be devoured by sheep. I too myself admire them for showing themselves superior to wealth, but how much better are these who did not let their estates serve as feeding-ground for cattle but made good the needs of men, their kinsfolk and friends, and so turned their indigence into affluence. Of the two actions the first was thoughtless, I might say mad, but that the persons concerned have the admiration of Greece, the second showed soberness and careful consideration and remarkable good sense” (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:121).

sense of ownership of servants/slaves, the διακονοῦνται δὲ οὐχ ὑπ’ ἀνδραπόδων, ἡγούμενοι συνόλως τὴν θεραπόντων κτήσιν εἶναι παρὰ φύσιν (They do not have slaves to wait upon them as they consider that the ownership of servants is entirely against nature).¹⁰² This demonstrates that the term κτήσιν here includes ownership of slaves. However, this type of ownership is evil and against nature according to *Contempl.* 71. The Therapeutae do not need to have slaves to serve during their sacred banquet. They are attended by the young freemen.

16 πόσω δὴ κρείττους οὗτοι καὶ θαυμασιώτεροι, χρησάμενοι μὲν οὐκ ἐλάττωσι ταῖς πρὸς φιλοσοφίαν ὀρμαῖς, μεγαλόνοιαν δὲ ὀλιγορίας προτιμήσαντες καὶ χαρισάμενοι τὰς οὐσίας, ἀλλὰ μὴ διαφθείραντες, ἵνα καὶ ἑτέρους καὶ ἑαυτοὺς ὠφελήσωσι, τοὺς μὲν ἐν ἀφθόνοις περιουσίαις, ἑαυτοὺς δὲ ἐν τῷ φιλοσοφεῖν; αἱ γὰρ χρημάτων καὶ κτημάτων ἐπιμέλεια τοὺς χρόνους ἀναλίσκουσι· χρόνου δὲ φείδεσθαι καλόν, ἐπειδὴ κατὰ τὸν ἰατρὸν Ἱπποκράτην “ὁ μὲν βίος βραχύς, ἡ δὲ τέχνη μακρὴ.”¹⁰³

In 16 the same word οὐσία is used as in 2.13 and 2.14 in the context of how much better are the ones who “have given freely the possessions (χαρισάμενοι τὰς οὐσίας).” The other two words, χρῆμα and κτῆμα in the plural form (κτημάτων and χρημάτων), are used in the context of leaving property (αἱ γὰρ χρημάτων καὶ κτημάτων ἐπιμέλεια τοὺς χρόνους ἀναλίσκουσι) “for care of wealth and property consume time.”¹⁰⁴ The desire to

¹⁰²Philo, *Contempl.* 71 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:157).

¹⁰³“How much better and more admirable are these who with no less ardour for the study of wisdom preferred magnanimity to negligence and gave away their possessions instead of wasting them, in this way benefiting both others and themselves, others through supplying them with abundant resources, themselves through furthering the study of philosophy? For taking care of wealth and possessions consumes time and to economize time is an excellent thing since according to the physician Hippocrates ‘life is short but art is long’” (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:123).

¹⁰⁴Philo, *Contempl.* 16 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:123).

give identified here is not motivated primarily by the desire to help others who are poor and do not have possessions. The giving that takes place here is so that one's possessions are not wasted, "benefiting both others and themselves, others through supplying them with abundant resources (περιουσία), themselves through furthering the study of philosophy."¹⁰⁵ The recipients of "blind wealth" are considered as still "blind in mind."¹⁰⁶ They have not reached the level of the givers who free themselves from possessions so that they can pursue the study of philosophy.¹⁰⁷ The giving away of one's possessions to others here is mixed with a motive for self-development rather than simply to help others in need. The givers do not need possessions any more as they consider themselves a level above the receivers.

It is interesting to note that the word κτήμα is also used in Acts 2:45 as a designation of property/land when the new Christian believers were together, had everything in common and were selling κτήματα καὶ τὰς ὑπάρξεις. The same word κτήμα is also used in Acts 5:1 to describe the piece of property Ananias and Sapphira sold. The Therapeutae of *De vita contemplativa* display a certain hostility¹⁰⁸ towards wealth, seeing that it distracts from the real life of solitude and contemplation of philosophy. This is different from what has been seen in Acts 4 and 5, where it is a means of support for others in need, with no perceived negative connotations against the giver, or the receiver,

¹⁰⁵ Philo, *Contempl.* 16 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:123).

¹⁰⁶ Philo, *Contempl.* 13 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:123).

¹⁰⁷ Philo, *Contempl.* 16 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:123).

¹⁰⁸ For this terminology, see Schmidt, "Hostility to Wealth in Philo of Alexandria," 91.

or the material possessions themselves. The giving of possessions in Acts 2:45 is motivated by the selfless desire to help and support other Christians who are in need. In Acts 5:1 the givers also want to be perceived as selfless givers but their greediness gets in the way.

18 ὅταν οὖν ἐκστῶσι τῶν οὐσιῶν, ὑπ' οὐδενὸς ἔτι δελεαζόμενοι φεύγουσιν ἀμεταστρεπτι καταλιπόντες ἀδελφούς, τέκνα, γυναῖκας, γονεῖς, πολυανθρώπους συγγενείας, φιλικὰς ἐταιρείας, τὰς πατρίδας, ἐν αἷς ἐγεννήθησαν καὶ ἐτρέφησαν, ἐπειδὴ τὸ σύνηθες ὄλκον καὶ δελεάσαι δυνατώτατον.¹⁰⁹

Again, the word οὐσία is used here in the plural genitive form, “whenever they should be amazed by the possessions/property, yet being enticed/lured by nothing they flee without turning round leaving brothers, children, wives, parents, a lot of relatives, clubs of friends, the fatherlands in which they were born and grown since the accustomed living is attractive and it is powerful to lure.”¹¹⁰ Possessions are viewed as something undesirable for spiritual contemplation. So the givers flee from their brothers, sisters, friends etc., to acquire a new and better life of contemplation.

There is one more place where the word οὐσία is used. It is in 61 when Philo describes the sexual acts with young boys that take place at Plato’s banquets, “. . . his body wastes away through desire, particularly if his suit is unsuccessful, while his property is diminished by two causes, neglect and expenditure on his beloved.”¹¹¹ In this

¹⁰⁹“So when they have divested themselves of their possessions and have no longer ought to ensnare them they flee without a backward glance and leave their brothers, their children, their wives, their parents, the wide circle of their kinsfolk, the groups of friends around them, the fatherlands in which they were born and reared, since strong is the attraction of familiarity and very great its power to ensnare” (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:125).

¹¹⁰Translation mine.

¹¹¹Philo, *Contempl.* 61 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:149).

case, no hostility towards possessions is described, though the context in which this word is used may evoke a negative connotation.

The verb ἀπολείπουσι is in the present tense and could be either historical or aoristic present. In view of the wider context of 18–20, viewing it as a historical present makes more sense—they left possessions and moved to the country. The historical present is used fairly frequently in narrative literature to describe a past event. It is typically used in the third person and with verbs of action. Most of the surrounding verbs are in the present tense in this document.

The members of the community left their belongings voluntarily (ἐκουσίῳ γνώμῃ). Giving up the bondage of possessions was the beginning of their spiritual community fellowship. This new life was more enriching and brought them closer to the end of their earthly existence.¹¹²

Conclusions

A survey of all of the words related to wealth and possessions in *De vita contemplativa* shows that the most common word used is οὐσία. This word is used in the context of admiration for the Greeks who abandoned their οὐσία for the sheep to graze on. The contemplatives leave their οὐσία to the ones who are not as spiritually mature as they are. Losing property/possessions is a gain for the spiritual contemplatives, not a loss. This same word οὐσία is used by Luke in Luke 15:12 to describe possessions/property in the parable of the Lost Son when the younger son asks for his part of property (μέρος τῆς

¹¹²For the discussion on this, see below.

οὐσίας).¹¹³ Here in Luke, property is a great and valuable inheritance of the father to his sons. Losing such an inheritance is a big mistake and restoration of the son's status is a huge blessing.

The words χρῆμα and κτῆμα are used in *Contempl.* 2.14 and 2.16, again in reference to wealth and possessions. These verses discuss how good it is to give possessions to others rather than abandon them like the Greeks did and let them be devoured by sheep.¹¹⁴ The contemplatives are better by giving their χρῆμα and κτῆμα to their kinsfolk and friends. They do not waste their possessions but benefit both others by providing them with resources and themselves by freeing themselves from worry about possessions. They are able to be devoted to the study of philosophy.¹¹⁵ Possessions, then, are seen as a barrier that prevented the Therapeutae in the goals of contemplating the higher thoughts of Scripture and philosophy but are also seen as useful for providing abundant wealth (περιουσία) to those close to them to whom they were given.

Luke uses the word χρῆμα in Acts 4:37 when Barnabas sells a field and brings “the money/wealth” to the apostles' feet. He wanted to share his possessions with fellow believers and not get rid of them so that he could have a better spiritual life. And in Acts 5:1 Ananias and Sapphira sell κτῆμα. Ananias and his wife valued the possessions they had but seemed to want to do good by sharing with fellow Christians. Their greed and pride got in the way and prevented them from sharing all and caused them to lie. Also,

¹¹³In this parable, οὐσίας is used in parallel with τὸν βίον which while typically understood as life, in later times came to stand for mode of life i.e. possessions or wealth. Liddell and Scott, *LSJ*, s.v. “βίος.” Clearly, what is lost and restored to the son is more than simply the father's wealth but the all that goes with a familial relationship.

¹¹⁴Philo, *Contempl.* 14 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:121).

¹¹⁵Philo, *Contempl.* 16 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:123).

κτῆμα is used in Acts 2:45 when describing the first Christians' selling of their possessions. The possessions were to be part of their lifestyle of providing for the needs of similar believers and not as a means of getting to a better spiritual life as it was for the contemplatives in *De vita contemplativa*.

The words, and the concepts these words for possessions/property are allied with, demonstrate that the Therapeutae were hostile towards possessions/property and saw that they prevented them from contemplating more important spiritual things. That is why leaving them was the most reasonable thing to do. But giving them to someone they were close to was also seen as more noble than simply abandoning them. In Luke and Acts, however, sharing possessions with others is providing for their needs without any obvious benefit to the one giving. Sharing in Acts is an act of service to fellow believers and not an act of escaping from wealth for higher thoughts. Nor did it result in a fellow friend or family member gaining the large amount of wealth being given away. Sharing in Acts is selfless support for someone in need who is a fellow believer a seeker after spiritual truth, not someone who is considered less than spiritual.

Life and κοινονία of the Therapeutae

The Therapeutae abandoned their property¹¹⁶ and from the context of 2.18–20 it seems that they moved from the city to the country “pursuing solitude in gardens or lonely bits of country.”¹¹⁷ They had chosen to forsake their urban lifestyles for

¹¹⁶Philo, *Contempl.* 13–17

¹¹⁷Philo, *Contempl.* 20 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:125).

philosophical reasons.¹¹⁸ Their life was safe among “farm buildings and villages round about.”¹¹⁹ There was “no programme of initiation” into the community mentioned.¹²⁰ But in each house there was a dwelling place (οἶκημα) called a cell (σεμνεῖον καὶ μοναστήριον) where the members of the community did their contemplative studying and by doing so, were “initiated into the mysteries of the sanctified life.”¹²¹ Human interaction was not essential for the daily search for virtue. Rather, this was found in the life of the mind, guided primarily by the teachings of Moses and those of their fathers who had written comments on Moses.¹²²

Everyday life was very simple for Therapeutae. They prayed twice a day (ἐκάστην ἡμέραν εἰώθασιν εὐχεσθαι, περὶ τὴν ἕω καὶ περὶ τὴν ἑσπέραν) and spent their entire day in spiritual exercise.¹²³ They interpreted Scripture allegorically¹²⁴ and

¹¹⁸Taylor and Davies, “The So-called Therapeutae of *De Vita Contemplativa*: Identity and Character,” 19.

¹¹⁹Philo, *Contempl.* 24 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:127).

¹²⁰Cf. Vermes, *The Essenes According to the Classical Sources*, 15.

¹²¹Philo, *Contempl.* 25 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:127).

¹²²See *Contempl.* 29 where Philo notes that “They have also writings of men of old, the founders of their way of thinking, who left many memorials of the form used in allegorical interpretation and these they take as a kind of archetype and imitate the method in which this principle is carried out.” Philo, *Contempl.* 25 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:127).

¹²³Philo, *Contempl.* 27, 28.

¹²⁴Borgen mentions that “In *Cont.* 78 Philo characterizes the exegetical work of the Therapeutai. He says they employ allegorical interpretation.” Though the word διαπτύσσω “may mean allegorical interpretation, but can also have the more general meaning of unfolding what is not clear in the Laws of Moses.” Peder Borgen, *Philo of Alexandria: An Exegete for His Time* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 150.

composed hymns and psalms (οὐ θεωροῦσι μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ποιοῦσιν ᾠσματα καὶ ὕμνους εἰς τὸν θεόν).¹²⁵ They did not eat or drink before sunset and some abstained from food for three days and still others did not take food for six days.¹²⁶ And when they ate they ate only bread and drank water. And even on feast days there was no meat or wine, just “bread with salt as a seasoning, sometimes also flavoured with hyssop as a relish.”¹²⁷

The Therapeutae’s houses (οἰκίαι) were also simple,¹²⁸ and they possessed only one coat for the winter and one for the summer,¹²⁹ and a white robe for special occasions (συμπόσιον).¹³⁰ The houses (οἰκίαι) were made to protect from the heat and the cold. They were not too close to each other so as to maintain solitude (or: not to displease the ones who have been zealous for the desert [δυσάρεστον τοῖς ἐρημίαν ἐζηλωκόσι]).¹³¹ But at the same time they were not too far from each other in order to maintain a sense of κοινωνία (literally “cherished the κοινωνίαν”— δι’ ἣν ἀσπάζονται κοινωνίαν).¹³² In order to understand the Therapeutae’s life and community it is important to understand how the word κοινωνία is used in Philo and in *De vita contemplativa*.

¹²⁵Philo, *Contempl.* 28, 29 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:129–131).

¹²⁶Philo, *Contempl.* 34, 35

¹²⁷Philo, *Contempl.* 73 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:157–159).

¹²⁸Philo, *Contempl.* 24

¹²⁹Philo, *Contempl.* 38

¹³⁰Philo, *Contempl.* 66 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:128, 129).

¹³¹Philo, *Contempl.* 24 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:127).

¹³²Philo, *Contempl.* 24 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:127). The word κοινωνία is translated as community/fellowship in LCL.

Excursus on the Word κοινωνία in Philo

The word κοινωνία appears only once here in *De vita contemplativa* 24. But it appears 107 times in Philo's other works. While it plays an important role in Philo's understanding, little has been written on it.¹³³ What follows is a study of Philo's usage of this term.¹³⁴

In *De Cherubim* 110 κοινωνία is used to describe how, though "a lyre is formed of unlike notes, God meant that they should come to fellowship (κοινωνίαν) and concord and form a single harmony, and that a universal give and take should govern them, and lead up to the consummation of the whole world." The text here talks about how everything belongs to God and he lets the creation use it, "only in as much as they have the use of them." Therefore, nothing should be sold to created beings. Here, "giving and receiving" is what all things do to achieve κοινωνία. This symphony aspect described by Philo, where all the instruments work together to make one piece of music, resembles in a metaphorical way, the "one accord" (ὁμοθυμαδὸν) concept discussed in Acts 2:46 where

¹³³Baumert, in his massive study, looks at fewer than 10 of Philo's usages. Baumert, *Koinonein und Metechlein—Synonym?: eine umfassende semantische Untersuchung*, 141–256. Hauck, in his influential *TDNT* entry, spends less than a paragraph on it. Hauck, "κοινός," *TDNT* (2006), 3:803. Silva gives two paragraphs to the topic but scarcely gives more information, seeming to follow Hauck in focusing on the usage in *De vita Moysis* I.158 where κοινωνία is used to describe the relationship between God and Moses, which is an innovation from the LXX. Silva, 2:708. When one considers the view that Philo had of Moses, however, using κοινωνία to describe the relationship between God and Moses does not seem like much of an innovation. On Philo's view of Moses, see Runia, "Philo of Alexandria and the Greek *Hairesis*-Model," 28–35. Liddell and Scott give no references to Philo's usage in their classic lexicon. Liddell and Scott, *LSJ*, s.v. "κοινωνία." Bauer gives two usages. Bauer, *BDAG*, s.v. "κοινωνία."

¹³⁴Unless otherwise noted, all translations in the following section of Philo are from the LCL.

all the believers contributed towards the common good. In *De migratione Abrahami* 178 Philo writes of the Babylonian understanding of astronomy as music “produced by a sympathetic affinity (κοινωνία)” of its parts. Moses then “seems to confirm the sympathetic affinity (κοινωνία)” in 180.

Κοινωνία is also used to describe a kind of fellowship or closeness between people like friendship or intimacy, not as simply referring to a group of people. This is seen in *Opificio mundi* 152 where, when speaking of creation, it says that God “sets up in each of them a desire for fellowship (κοινωνίας) with the other.” Similarly, in the description of virtue in *De sacrificiis Abelis et Caini* 27 Philo describes it as having characteristics including, “piety, and holiness, and truth, and right, and purity, and an honest regard for an oath, and justice, and equality, and adherence to one’s engagements and communion (κοινωνία).”¹³⁵ In *Quod deterius potiori insidiari* 164 κοινωνία refers to “relationship” in the sense of friendship or intimacy being paired with οικειότητα. Allegorically Philo writes of Laban’s plan to marry Leah to Jacob as “older things should first be taken into our company” speaking of things which should not be studied first by the person seeking wisdom. Fellowship here is metaphorical for taking into one’s mind. In *De ebrietati* 78 Philo writes of those who “do no action whatever that can tend to piety or human fellowship (κοινωνίαν).” Here it is in parallel to εὐσέβειαν and in contrast to ἀθεότητος and seems to refer to a general sense of human relationships or basic human interactions. Later in 84, he refers to one who “in your desire for human fellowship (κοινωνίας) you observe the customs that hold among created men.” In *De somniis* II.83 Philo writes of people with the friends and family members “united to them by fellowship

¹³⁵Translation is from Yonge. Colson’s translation is odd, combining κοινωνία with εὐσυνθεσία which appears before it, resulting in a translation of “fellow-feeling.”

of feeling (κοινωνίαν).” Here again it is connected with οικειότητα (kindred, intimacy). In *De decalogo* 14, Philo writes of “harmony and fellowship of spirit (κοινωνία),” here pairing it with ὁμονοία (harmony) in describing how the people of Israel were to live under the laws given by Moses. In 109, Philo writes of those who “desire for fellowship (κοινωνίας)” with fellow humans. Here it is in parallel with ὁμιλίαν (association) and χρῆσιν (relationship) and, significantly, is something that is achieved through material sharing with those in need. In 162, Philo writes of the laws which are given to exhort men to “gentleness and fellowship (κοινωνίαν).”¹³⁶ In *De specialibus legibus* II.7, Philo notes the power of speech to cause “a sense of fellowship (κοινωνίας),” writing of that which is positive and beneficial to humanity. In *De virtutibus* 81, he notes that gentleness and consideration are fundamental to the “relations (κοινωνίας) of men to their fellows” and in 84 compares it with other virtues “mercy, neighbourliness (κοινωνίαν), charity, magnanimity.” Here it is paired with ἡμερότητα, χρηστότητα, and μεγαλόνοιαν. If one returns something that another person lost, “yourself restore through natural neighbourly feeling (κοινωνίας).”

In *De posteritate Caini* 1:181 it is used in the sense of fellowship. Here the idea seems more of simply “being together” with people rather than having any specific connotation of friendship or relationship. In *De Gigantibus* 42 κοινωνία is again used with the meaning of fellowship: “we do find fellowship (κοινωνία) and kinship of each with its opposite” here being paired to some degree with συγγένειαν. In *De confusione linguarum* 48 “He eschews thoughts of fellowship (κοινωνίαν)” and seeks to get

¹³⁶Because of the pairing with other dissimilar adjectives, this usage seems to fall under the idea of close relationships with other humans rather than a general “being together” with others.

everyone else's wealth for himself. In this context, the person who wants to acquire possessions illicitly does not have *κοινωνία*. It is used, here, in the context of wealth though it does not seem that it itself is to be understood referring to a material relationship. The idea of simply being together is also seen in *De congressu eruditionis gratia* 58 where the wicked have "aught else that tends to fellowship (*κοινωνίαν*)" where the understanding is of being together with other people. In this context, *κοινωνία* is important for society and is used here of not having a group to belong to, no house, no city. As seen above, Philo often uses it for a general sense of people being together. He writes of humans having "fellowship and a spirit of partnership (*κοινωνίαν*)," again pairing *κοινωνία* with *ὁμόνοιαν* (harmony). This appears also in *De specialibus legibus* I.295 where, while describing virtue, Philo describes multiple elements that lead to this, including "fellow-feeling (*κοινωνίας*) and goodwill and equity and humanity." Here it is paired with "*ὁμονοίας ἰσότητός τε καὶ φιλανθρωπίας*." The law also upholds "fellowship (*κοινωνίας*) and humanity" in I.324, where again *κοινωνία* is in parallel with *φιλανθρωπίας*. In II.119 he describes the Israelites moving from an agrarian society to one more concentrated in the city because "the feeling of unity (*κοινωνίας*) and friendship" had grown. Philo pairs *κοινωνία* with *φιλίας* here. In II.167, Philo writes in praise of the Jewish people who, out of "a sense of fellowship (*κοινωνίας*) and goodwill to all men" represent them to the true God. Philo pairs *κοινωνία* with *εὐνοίας* here. In III.103 he notes that men have virtue by reason of their rational soul from which "springs the sense of fellowship." In *De virtutibus* 181 Philo describes the "whole company of the other virtues" referring to all of them together. In *De praemiis et poenis* 87, he describes those that God chooses to save as those who have "brotherly affection and good fellowship (*κοινωνίαν*)" pairing it with *ὁμοφροσύνην*. In 92, while describing humans,

Philo laments that they are a “creature naturally gentle and kindly, in whom the sense of fellowship (κοινωνία) and amity is ingrained” and yet they kill their fellow humans. Here κοινωνία is in parallel with ὁμονοία. While describing the Essenes in *Quod omnis probus liber sit* 84, after giving a long list of their virtues he concludes by noting that they have “their spirit of fellowship (κοινωνίαν).”¹³⁷ In *Hypothetica* 11.1, Philo describes them as “trained for the life of fellowship (κοινωνίαν).” In a slightly different way, the Essenes do not marry wives, Philo says in *Hypothetica* 11.14, because they are the “principal danger to the maintenance of the communal life (κοινωνίαν).” Philo then describes wives as selfish creatures who are overly jealous and lead the husband to having bad morals. She plays a part like an actress on a stage and then if children come, “she compels him to commit actions which are all hostile to the life of fellowship (κοινωνία).”¹³⁸ These both, wives and children, lead to slavery not freedom. Here again it is seen that the virtue of freedom is closely connected for Philo in one of his usages of κοινωνία.

In *De Abrahamo* 74, Philo writes of “all the community (κοινωνία) of the body” referring to the parts of the body working together. This is similar to what is described in *De Iosepho* 160 where herpes is said to attack “the whole framework (κοινωνίαν) of the festering body.” Again, while referring to the parts of the body Philo writes in *De decalogo* 150 of “all that unites (κοινωνίαν) to make the body.” In *De specialibus legibus* III.28, he metaphorically writes of the parts of the body which “engage in strife with each other (κοινωνία).” In *Legatio ad Gaium* 238, Philo, in describing what would happen if

¹³⁷This is repeated in *Quod omnis probus liber sit* 91.

¹³⁸*Hypothetica* 11.16.

the Jews saw a pagan statue being carried into the temple, writes that “their whole body in each part of its system (κοινωνία) changed from its natural motions” would become stiff as stone.

Κοινωνία is used by Philo when referring to a part or share of something. This is seen, for example, in *Opificio mundi* 138 where it describes “the part (κοινωνία) it was to take in the whole” when talking about the individual parts of the body. In *De virtutibus* 175, Philo writes of “membership (κοινωνία) in the best of commonwealths,” speaking of the what being a part of the people who follow Moses provides.

Κοινωνία can also be used to refer to the whole of something. In *Quod omnis probus liber sit* 113, Philo notes that if freedom is removed from the individual, “the whole system (κοινωνία)” is destroyed. Similarly, in *De aeternitate mundi* 143, Philo writes metaphorically on the destruction of the world that “if the whole system (κοινωνία) of his parts and limbs is cut away,” then the person will be destroyed.

Κοινωνία, in *De specialibus legibus* I.109, is also used to describe a “partner (κοινωνία) in marriage” or simply the marriage relationship itself. In *De specialibus legibus* I.138, Philo exhorts spouses, in working for their marriage, “to make the name of partnership (κοινωνία) a reality securely founded on truth.” In *De specialibus legibus* III.23, Philo describes the evil of twins who marry and join “into a partnership and wedlock (κοινωνία).” Here Colson translates κοινωνία as “partnership and wedlock.” In 25, he also talks of siblings who marry, which prevents the “fellow-feeling (κοινωνία) and inter-communion” of men to spread over the whole world. Here κοινωνία is in parallel with ἐπιμιξία. This usage could very well be understood as speaking directly of sexual union. Again, in 29 he notes that Moses exhorts, “do not enter into the partnership (κοινωνία) of marriage” with foreigners. In *Legatio ad Gaium* 72, Philo writes of a

failed marriage that “if this (κοινωνίας) be broken the community of interests is broken also.” In *Quaestiones in Genesim* 1:17b Philo, in the context of the creation of Adam and Eve, describes a harmonious relationship with another person as a “communion (κοινωνίαν) of love” which is expressed by Pythagoras’s statement, “A friend is another I.”

Sexual union is also described by κοινωνία. In *De congressu eruditionis gratia* 121, Abraham having relations with Hagar is described as “κοινωνία.” In *De Abrahamo* 100 Philo describes marriage where “the partnership (κοινωνίαν) is between body and body.” This is repeated in 248 where Philo writes of Sarah speaking to Abraham describing their marriage as “the union of man and wife.” In referring to adultery, *De decalogo* 123 uses κοινωνία.

Κοινωνία can also be used to talk about fellowship with God, though this is not common. In *De Abrahamo* 41, Philo describes humanity as “worthy of kinship (κοινωνίας) with Him.”¹³⁹ Moses is also said to have had “partnership (κοινωνίας) with the Father” in *De vita Moysis* I.158. While multiple scholars mention this usage as an invention by Philo, it’s rare usage seems to diminish the magnitude of this observation.

Κοινωνία is also used by Philo with the notion of unity. Philo uses it allegorically in *Legum allegoriae* I.8 to describe the constellation known as the Bear, noting that the seven stars lead “to fellowship (κοινωνίας) and unity among men.” Here κοινωνία seems in parallel with ἐνώσεως (unity). In *De sacrificiis Abelis et Caini* 75 there is a description of the powers given to the ones created in unity (κοινωνία) and harmony. This is also

¹³⁹As noted above, Hauck and Silva note that Philo introduces a new usage of κοινωνία when compared to the LXX, that of using it to describe the relationship between God and Moses. Both cite *De vita Moysis* I.158, considered next, but neither mention this current usage where Philo describes humanity itself as worthy of κοινωνία with God.

seen in *De agricultura* 145, where it speaks of “the meeting and partnership (κοινωνία) of both” in parallel here with σύννοδος (traveling together). Unity, or possibly fellowship (κοινωνίας), is also obtained by speaking a common language in *De confusione linguarum* 13. In 193, he writes of God wanting “to do away with her fellowship” when speaking of the wicked people living at the time of the Tower of Babel. This is parallel to στίφος (body of men) and ὁμολογίας (agreement) and seems to hint at a concept of a group of people. Humans are also described as being “oneness of mind and fellowship.” Here κοινωνία is in parallel with ὁμόνοιαν (unanimity). In *De fuga et inventione* 55, Philo writes of one who is “cut off from their partnership (κοινωνίας) with the body” who will be saved. The idea of a soul being united with the body is behind this statement. In 112 Philo writes of the mind of the wise “linking in a yet firmer concord the affinity and fellowship (κοινωνίαν)” of the virtues. In *De Abrahamo* 103, Philo writes of the man who desires virtue but does not practice it as one who “assumes a counterfeited fellowship (κοινωνίαν), he, the licentious with chastity.” Here Philo is describing the uniting of two different things. In 224, He writes of the need for one to separate himself from that which is not connected with wisdom, saying that he cannot have “fellowship with him.” Here again, the context demonstrates that it is unity between two opposing forces that is being discussed. In *De specialibus legibus* IV.16, Philo describes people who engage in human trafficking as those that “disregard their partnership (κοινωνίας) in the laws.” Here individuals are understood as being connected with the laws and customs of their culture. In 187, he writes of God’s creation as one of “fellowship and harmony.” Here κοινωνία is paired with ἁρμονίας. These usages show a connection between virtue, or being like God, and κοινωνία. He is not writing about a relationship between God and individuals or between individuals themselves but rather a general concept of unity or harmony. He also

notes that it is just to associate things which are made to be together and therefore the “homogeneous are made for association (κοινωνία).” In *De virtutibus* 51, Philo describes Moses and his god-like qualities who would “train all his subjects to fellowship (κοινωνία)” and again in 80 as a man of “fellow feeling (κοινωνίας).” Here again Philo is connecting κοινωνία with virtue. Something similar is seen in *De virtutibus* 103 where members of the nation are called to be “compacted and unified by their fellowship (κοινωνίας) in it.” In addition, in 119, Moses wanted to create “unanimity, neighbourliness, fellowship, reciprocity of feeling,” pairing it with ὁμόνοιαν and ὁμοφροσύνην. Unity can also be an evil thing as when Philo, in *In Flaccum* 136, speaks of clubs of individuals “whose fellowship (κοινωνίας) is founded on no sound principle but on strong liquor and drunkenness.” In *Quaestiones in Genesim* 3:3 Scripture is “dissociated from all community (κοινωνίας) or equity” if it is interpreted in parts rather than as a whole.

Philo uses κοινωνία several times to refer to the parts of the body being united. In *De confusione linguarum* 194, he writes in speaking of the human body that God “brought none of its parts into fellowship (κοινωνία) with any other” noting that the eye cannot hear. This has the idea of unity or being the same. Then in 195, God makes it so “that fellowship (κοινωνία) of part with part should be withdrawn from them.” Here again the idea is of people, or body parts, being united together. In *De decalogo* 71 Philo writes of “several parts which unite to form the body.” In *De specialibus legibus* III.131, he describes the high priest who prays that the nation “regarded as a single body may be united in one and the same fellowship (κοινωνία).” In IV.83, he writes of a sickness which is “seizing all parts (κοινωνία) of the body’s system.” In writing of the killing of

Flaccus in *In Flaccum* 190, Philo describes his body falling apart “as the ligaments which bind the whole body together” were loosened.

Κοινωνία also has the idea of “common” in Philo. So, he writes of “common properties” of men distinct from women in *De sacrificiis Abelis et Caini* 101. In *De agricultura* 26 it is used “by their passing under the same (κοινωνία) name.” In *De confusione linguarum* 12 Philo talks of the “common (κοινωνίαν) language” in use before Babel. In *De vita Moysis* I.324 Philo writes of those of have a “community of laws,” referring to laws they all share in common. In describing the sabbatical and Jubilee laws in *De specialibus legibus* II.110, Philo writes of the laws “common to other seventh years.” In III.182, he notes that there should not be a situation where a crime and its punishment “have no common ground (κοινωνίαν) and belong to different categories.” In IV.133, he describes the Ten Commandments as, from one perspective, “having nothing in common (κοινωνίαν) with any other.” Something like the idea of common seems to be behind Philo description of Gaius not being like Apollo when he writes, “What fellowship then with Apollo has he whose conduct never showed any affinity or kinship?” In other words Philo asks, what does Gaius have in common with Apollo?

Philo uses κοινωνία with the idea of participant or participation as well. In *De confusione linguarum* 83, he writes of “unity of voice and speech through fellowship (κοινωνία) in unjust deeds.” The idea here is one who participates in evil actions. In *De specialibus legibus* IV.14, Philo describes man as close to God because of “his participation (κοινωνίαν) in reason.” In *Quod omnis probus liber sit* 107, Philo describes philosophers who love virtue as those who keep from “association with the passions (κοινωνίας).”

Partnership is also an aspect of *κοινωνία*. Writing of knowledge and wisdom *De congressu eruditionis gratia* 22, Philo speaks of them “in virtue of a certain degree of partnership.” In *De mutatione nominum* 104, he writes of “dealings where the partners (*κοινωνίας*) have no real partnership.” In *De vita Moysis* II.190, speaking about how God communicates through the prophet Moses, Philo writes “we find combination and partnership (*κοινωνίαν*).” Here it is in parallel with *μίξις* (intercourse.) Philo, in *De decalogo* 171 also writes of “partnerships (*κοινωνία*) which are not true to their name.” Here partnership is not between individuals. He does so again in *De specialibus legibus* II.75 when he writes disparagingly of one who does not “disguise your want of a partner’s feeling by pretending to act as a partner (*κοινωνία*)” in one’s money lending practice of exacting high interest. Here *κοινωνία* is used in a monetary or wealth context. In III.158, he discusses those acting as judges who “on the pretext of their friendship or kinship, or partnership (*κοινωνία*), or some similar connexion” let the guilty go free. Here it is parallel with *φιλίαν ἢ συγγένειαν*.

Philo occasionally uses *κοινωνία* in a business or wealth context.¹⁴⁰ In *De specialibus legibus* I.104 Philo writes that “one would not care to admit to partnership (*κοινωνίαν*) with the priests the women” whose money was earned from prostitution. This implies that if the priests accepted this money, they would become partners with the women who earned it through using the money itself. In I.235, when writing about laws pertaining to fraudulent business dealings, Philo talks about when “a man lies about a partnership (*κοινωνίας*) or a deposit or a robbery.” In IV.30, he writes of the most sacred “dealings between man and man is the deposit on trust (*κοινωνία*)” in the context of loan

¹⁴⁰See above on *De decalogo* 109 for another related example.

contracts and other formal documents. In describing trade between countries, Philo writes in *Legatio ad Gaium* 47 of the “exchange of goods which the countries in desire for fellowship (κοινωνίας)” send to each other. In *Quaestiones in Exodum* 2.3, Philo writes regarding the needs of widows and orphans, that God wants their needs to be taken care of by those who have abundance “with natural fellowship (κοινωνία).”

Partnership through sharing is another shade of meaning of κοινωνία discussed by Philo. In *De specialibus legibus* II.108 he writes how God, through his laws for protecting the poor through the gleaning from fields, then “invites them to share (κοινωνίαν) with the owners” in the wealth.

Finally, in a unique usage, an individual’s social abilities are also described with κοινωνία. In *De fuga et inventione* 35 “noble social qualities (κοινωνία)” are referred to by Philo.

After looking in detail at how κοινωνία is used in Philo’s works, it is apparent that it has several meanings. There are multiple examples where κοινωνία is used concretely to simply describe a relationship between people, between the parts of the body, between a man and a woman and between people conducting business. These are very common usages with Philo and compare well with the wider usage in ancient Greek literary works. However they are not what will be the focus in seeking to understand the lone appearance of κοινωνία in *De vita contemplativa*.

There is another usage that is more abstract, where Philo pairs virtue and its pursuit with κοινωνία. This significant usage is seen, for example, when Philo describes the creation in *Opificio mundi* 152. There, when speaking of humans, he says that God “sets up in each of them a desire for fellowship (κοινωνίας) with the other.” What is key here is that this quality of κοινωνία is given by God and is a pivotal virtue for man. In *De*

specialibus legibus II.167, Philo writes in praise of the Jewish people who, out of “a sense of fellowship (κοινωνίας) and goodwill to all men” represent them to the true God. Philo pairs κοινωνία with εὐνοίας here. In III.103 he notes that men have virtue by reason of their rational soul from which “springs the sense of fellowship.” In *De virtutibus* 181 Philo describes the “whole company (κοινωνίαν) of the other virtues” referring to all of them together. In *De praemiis et poenis* 87, he describes those that God chooses to save as those who have “brotherly affection and good fellowship (κοινωνίαν),” pairing it with ὁμοφροσύνην. These usages all demonstrate this philosophical idea of κοινωνία connected with virtue as a gift from God and as an important component for the life of the mind. It is this usage that seems most connected to its appearance in *De vita contemplativa* 24 in the discussion of the Therapeutae, a community of people seeking virtue.

A significant parallel to *De vita contemplativa* occurs in *De decalogo* 109. In discussing the importance of the fifth commandment as a connection between the two halves of the Decalogue, Philo discusses two groups of people. In one group, there are those who only live in contemplation of God. The second group contains those who, “in their desire for fellowship (κοινωνίας ἕμερον), they supply the good things of life in equal measure to all for their use, and deem it their duty to alleviate by anything in their power the dreaded hardships.” Continuing in 110, he writes that “all who neither take their fit place in dealings with men by sharing the joy of others at the common good (κοινοῖς ἀγαθοῖς) and their grief at the reverse, nor cling to piety and holiness, would seem to have been transformed into the nature of wild beasts.” According to this passage, good and virtuous people are the ones who both share with men in the affairs of their lives and are also lovers of God. This may parallel to some degree the practice of the Therapeutae

who, before entering their life of contemplation, give their material wealth to family and friends. One may question, though, whether this is a true parallel or whether the Therapeutae have too much separation between their *κοινωνία* with fellow humans and their pursuit in solitude of the life of the soul.

In *De vita contemplativa*, *κοινωνία* is only used in 24, but the context for this starts in 18. There the ones joining the community of the Therapeutae are described as leaving possessions, leaving their friends, brothers, children, wives, parents and fleeing from the cities to the country. In comparison with *De decalogo* 109 discussed just above, In *De vita contemplativa* the Therapeutae first took care of the needs of those close to them through material sharing of possessions, following Philo's interpretation of the fifth commandment. Then, Philo describes their living not too close and at the same time not too far because they welcome/cherish (*ἀσπάζονται*) *κοινωνία*. Based on the context, *κοινωνία* here is the philosophical ideal of being a true part of humanity which is the focus of all who seek after virtue. In this context, *κοινωνία* represents a form of virtue.

This is not the same type of *κοινωνία* as in the book of Acts. With the Therapeutae, once the new inductees enter the community, they apparently do not have anything else material to share. They have already left all their material possessions to others. So, while *κοινωνία* is used in *De vita contemplativa* in the context of sharing material possessions, it should not be understood as equivalent to the sharing of material possessions found in Acts. It represents a philosophical ideal of human interaction or relationship. It is not the kind of *κοινωνία* experienced by a husband and a wife or even between God and humans. It is more the comradery of being in close proximity to

another human who is traveling the same journey of life as another.¹⁴¹ They live close to each other but this closeness was in reality rather distant as they did not see each other or interact with the other members of the community during the week. The Therapeutae only eat together every seven days, worshiping together then as well. Even this meeting, though, is not to maintain a sense of *κοινωνία* for this is already achieved by living “close enough” to their community members. The closeness is only close enough to have *κοινωνία* but not too close so as to be considered crowded. The closeness that allows for *κοινωνία* is valued comparably to the need for aid when fending off thieves. This connection demonstrates that their *κοινωνία* was not one of a deep, intimate relationship between people. Instead, its purpose is to allow the community to focus on being alone with their own contemplation and study.

In Acts 2 and 4, *κοινωνία* is something that happens in the public sphere on a continual basis and is experienced through material sharing rather than through contemplation. The members of the Christian community in Acts continued in sharing (Acts 2:42, *προσκαρτεροῦντες . . . τῇ κοινωνίᾳ*), they were together (Acts 4:32, *ἦσαν ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ καὶ εἶχον ἅπαντα κοινὰ*) and broke bread in their homes (Acts 2:46, *κλῶντές τε κατ’ οἶκον ἄρτον*) partaking their food with gladness and simplicity (Acts 2:46, *μετελάμβανον τροφῆς ἐν ἀγαλλιάσει καὶ ἀφελότητι καρδίας*). The members of the community of believers in the book of Acts take care of each other in the sense of material sharing, those who had more shared with those who had less through a common fund managed by the apostles. In the book of Acts, *κοινωνία* and its broader sense from

¹⁴¹Note how *Contempl.* 20 speaks of how the Therapeutae “know how unprofitable and mischievous are associations with persons of dissimilar character.” The goal is for the limited human interactions that the members do engage in to only be with others who are searching for the same vision of God.

its derivative κοινός, means having material goods in common among the community of believers with the Holy Spirit functioning as the motivating power. In *De vita contemplativa*, κοινωνία is primarily a philosophical ideal which happens with material sharing functioning as the backdrop. Thus, the sharing/participation (κοινωνία) of Acts is quite different than in the community of the Therapeutae.

With the Therapeutae, it is clear that they gave away their material possessions at the very beginning before joining the group. It is, however, difficult to determine how the community of physical sharing was maintained after the initial sharing. After joining the community, the members would not have any possessions. Clearly, a means of providing even just the basic essentials of food and clothing required some resources. This leads to the obvious question of how they acquired these bare essentials. They do have community cattle that will be discussed below, so they do have a few common things necessary for sustaining life. In any case, there was an attempt to deemphasize material possessions.

Philo does not provide a lot of details of the socio-economic organization of the community.¹⁴² He alludes “to various practical elements of the community without any explanation.”¹⁴³ But even the basic description given reveals the simplicity of their living as far as possessions are concerned. Next, this study will look at their community

¹⁴²Neither does Luke mention how the sharing was organized although Acts 2:45 specifies that they kept selling their possessions and kept dividing them among all, as anyone had need (καὶ τὰ κτήματα καὶ τὰς ὑπάρξεις ἐπίπρασκον καὶ διεμέριζον αὐτὰ πᾶσιν καθότι ἂν τις χρεῖαν εἶχεν). This description gives us an idea of possible co-existence of private and common properties.

¹⁴³Taylor and Davies, “The So-called Therapeutae of *De Vita Contemplativa*: Identity and Character,” 20.

organization in order to clarify the extended meaning of *κοινωνία* and fellowship in the community of the Therapeutae and ultimately the beliefs behind this practice.

Lifestyle and Organization

The group of the Therapeutae consisted of both men and women who were celibate and seniors. “By senior they do not understand the aged and grey headed who are regarded as still mere children if they have only in late years come to love this rule of life, but those who from their earliest years have grown to manhood and spent their prime in pursuing the contemplative branch of philosophy.”¹⁴⁴ Most of the women were “aged virgins.”¹⁴⁵ But in addition to that, “besides older men there were young men who were members.”¹⁴⁶ In the community of the Therapeutae “men and women met in the common place (*κοινὸν τοῦτο σεμνεῖον*) every seventh day. In the book of Acts the believers who were of one accord, gathered in the temple for worship daily and also had their meals from house to house (Acts 2:46).

The common place where the Therapeutae gathered was separated into two parts by a wall, one side for men and the other side for women. The wall did not rise all the way to the ceiling. This arrangement was made to preserve modesty and at the same time for the women to be able to hear what was spoken.¹⁴⁷ “For six days they seek wisdom by

¹⁴⁴Philo, *Contempl.* 67 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:155).

¹⁴⁵Philo, *Contempl.* 68 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:155). Also, see Philo, *Contempl.* 3.32 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:131)

¹⁴⁶Hay, “Things Philo Said and did not Say about the Therapeutae,” 675 fn. 14. See, for example, Philo, *Contempl.* 72, 73.

¹⁴⁷Philo, *Contempl.* 32, 33

themselves in solitude in the closets mentioned above, never passing the outside door of the house or even getting a distant view of it. But every seventh day they meet together as for a general assembly and sit in order according to their age. . . .”¹⁴⁸ They seemed to have strict rules as far as sitting order, posture, and gestures.¹⁴⁹ The most learned senior member (ὁ πρεσβύτατος) delivered “a well-reasoned and wise discourse.”¹⁵⁰ The adjective πρεσβύτατος is in the nominative masculine singular, which indicates a male person. All the rest sat still and listened “showing their approval merely by their looks or nods.”¹⁵¹

Besides meeting on every seventh day, the community of both men and women assembled after “seven sets of seven days.”¹⁵² They were dressed in white robes and took “their stand in a regular line in an orderly way, their eyes and hands lifted up to Heaven. . . . So standing they pray to God that their feasting may be acceptable.”¹⁵³ After worship the seniors reclined “according to the order of their admission.”¹⁵⁴ “The feast was shared by women also, most of them aged virgins” (συνεστιῶνται δὲ καὶ

¹⁴⁸Philo, *Contempl.* 30 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:131).

¹⁴⁹Philo, *Contempl.* 30, 31, 77

¹⁵⁰Philo, *Contempl.* 31 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:131).

¹⁵¹Philo, *Contempl.* 31 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:131).

¹⁵²Philo, *Contempl.* 65 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:153).

¹⁵³Philo, *Contempl.* 66 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:153).

¹⁵⁴Philo, *Contempl.* 67 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:155).

γυναῖκες).¹⁵⁵ The men sat “by themselves on the right and the women by themselves on the left.”¹⁵⁶ In this context, Philo reiterates the habit of austerity practiced by the Therapeutae. He notes that they do not use soft couches for reclining but rather a simple plank of wood “always and everywhere practise a frugal contentment worthy of the free.”¹⁵⁷ The one who sat in the first place or the president (ὁ πρόεδρος) “discusses some question arising in the Holy Scriptures or solves one that has been propounded by someone else.”¹⁵⁸ And again, as during the gatherings on the seventh day, male leaders were mentioned speaking to the community.¹⁵⁹ The banquet (σμπόσιον) was prepared with simple food of bread with salt as a seasoning, sometimes also flavoured with hyssop as a relish¹⁶⁰ and clear water. There was no wine or flesh of animals allowed.¹⁶¹ It is not stated where the bread came from and who prepared it, though the young men discussed next seem to be one possibility.

¹⁵⁵Philo, *Contempl.* 68 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:155).

¹⁵⁶Philo, *Contempl.* 69 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:155).

¹⁵⁷Philo, *Contempl.* 69 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:155–157). Philo’s concept of is connected with freedom and frugality. Thus, he will remark shortly (*Contempl.* 71) that there are no slaves, rather everyone is free. And in the beginning, κοινωνία is only achieved after all of one’s material goods have been given away (*Contempl.* 13–20).

¹⁵⁸Philo, *Contempl.* 75 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:159).

¹⁵⁹Hay, “Things Philo Said and did not Say about the Therapeutae,” 674.

¹⁶⁰Philo, *Contempl.* 73 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:159).

¹⁶¹Philo, *Contempl.* 73, 74.

After the jubilee banquet they held a “sacred vigil.”¹⁶² They formed themselves “into two choirs, one of men and one of women,”¹⁶³ and they sang hymns. But later they merged into one single choir and continued worshipping till dawn.¹⁶⁴ Their choir became “a copy [μίμημα] of the choir set up of old beside the Red Sea in honour of the wonders there wrought. For at the command of God the sea became a source of salvation to one party and of perdition to the other.”¹⁶⁵ In their worship they celebrated “a victory of God”¹⁶⁶ like “the men led by the prophet Moses and the women by the prophetess Miriam.”¹⁶⁷ As Hay mentions, “the victory over the Egyptians must be a spiritual triumph the Therapeutae feel they share over against the idolatrous and immoral pagans of Egypt.”¹⁶⁸

They ended the vigil by standing “with their faces and whole body turned to the east and when they see the sun rising they stretch their hands up to heaven and pray for bright days and knowledge of the truth and the power of keen sighted thinking.”¹⁶⁹ And

¹⁶²Philo, *Contempl.* 83 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:165).

¹⁶³Philo, *Contempl.* 84 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:165).

¹⁶⁴Philo, *Contempl.* 85–89 The notion of pursuing philosophy in the sunlight is parallel to the one at Qumran, but it does not imply “anything like sun-worship” among the Therapeutae (Hay, “Things Philo Said and did not Say about the Therapeutae,” 681 fn. 42.)

¹⁶⁵Philo, *Contempl.* 85, 86 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:165–167).

¹⁶⁶Hay, “Things Philo Said and did not Say about the Therapeutae,” 682.

¹⁶⁷Philo, *Contempl.* 87 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:167).

¹⁶⁸Hay, “Things Philo Said and did not Say about the Therapeutae,” 682.

¹⁶⁹Philo, *Contempl.* 89 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:167–169).

the last verse states that the “Therapeutae . . . lived in the soul alone, citizens of Heaven and the world.”¹⁷⁰

There were no slaves to prepare food or do any other practical duties during these banquets or on other days. Every man was free.¹⁷¹ However, the younger men of the association (οἱ νέοι τῶν ἐν τῷ συστήματι), called attendants (διακονικάς), were chosen for performing practical tasks.¹⁷² And they were not just any juniors but “young members of the association chosen with all care for their special merit who as becomes their good character and nobility are pressing on to reach the summit of virtue.”¹⁷³ This seems to indicate some sort of admission procedure whereby the new members are categorized according to the level of virtue perceived in them. Unfortunately, there is no further explanation of this and so what criteria were used for this important selection process are not known. What is known is that the young men listened to the speeches at the banquets standing and not reclining like the elders, “The young men standing by show no less attentiveness than the occupants of the couches.”¹⁷⁴ The same young people must have attended to the devotees who lived in the simple houses and had their meals and drink

¹⁷⁰Philo, *Contempl.* 90 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:169). On the discussion of this verse see below.

¹⁷¹Philo, *Contempl.* 71.

¹⁷²Philo, *Contempl.* 71 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:157). As a noun τοὺς διακόνους is mentioned in the accusative case in *ibid* 75.

¹⁷³Philo, *Contempl.* 72 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:157).

¹⁷⁴Philo, *Contempl.* 77 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:161).

after sunset since they did not pass “outside the door of the house.”¹⁷⁵ And they did not eat together except on the seventh day or until the jubilee banquet (συμπόσιον). Again, at the banquet the members of the group were “catered to by the junior members of the community.”¹⁷⁶

Some scholars believe the juniors also were also the ones tasked with taking care of the community’s cattle.¹⁷⁷ The cattle were likewise released from the continuous labor on the seventh day.¹⁷⁸ The fields, most likely of barley, were plowed by the young men. They most likely also “threshed the grain and ground it, sifted it, mixed it with water, kneaded it, made it into loaves with hyssop, and baked it.”¹⁷⁹ In general, they had the responsibility of practical matters like

fetching water, tending cattle, field work, housework, baking, cleaning, sewerage management, and so on. They may have spun cloth and made clothing, or baked pottery for dishes and cooking vessels. They may have shopped for essential items or engaged in selling surplus from the fields. They may have tended the sick. They may also have copied sacred writings. Philo’s devotees themselves appear to do no physical labor at all but entirely devoted to their philosophical discipline. In order to be free to live an undisturbed existence devoted to the pursuit of spiritual excellence, they need to be maintained. Philo then is really writing about the elders, not the junior members who seem to run the community.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁵Philo, *Contempl.* 30 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:131).

¹⁷⁶Taylor and Davies, “The So-called Therapeutae of *De Vita Contemplativa*: Identity and Character,” 21.

¹⁷⁷See, for example, *ibid.*, 22.

¹⁷⁸Philo, *Contempl.* 36.

¹⁷⁹Taylor and Davies, “The So-called Therapeutae of *De Vita Contemplativa*: Identity and Character,” 22.

¹⁸⁰*Ibid.*

It seems that these junior members of the community played a significant role in the community's practical organization. In other words, the younger were supplying the basic needs of the older contemplatives and then, in this minor sense, there was sharing among the members. In reality, though, this seems more like service than sharing.

Conclusions

The Therapeutae lived in a small community. Their sharing started at the very beginning of communal life when they gave up all of their possessions. Community for them was a means of ending their extended intervals of solitary contemplation. They gathered together from time to time for eating and worship and some degree of social fellowship. As Calabi summarizes, the desert "was a place where they could live together, making common choices: a place of individual and collective growth."¹⁸¹

This community stands in contrast with the community described in Acts for whom material sharing with the needy happened all the time along with a much more common and continuous time of common meals and worship with each other. The Therapeutae worshipped together and ate meals together only on Sabbaths and for the Jubilee holiday. The junior members of the community played an important role in the community's practical organization and helped with cleaning and food preparation. The community members lived close to each other in what appears to be communal buildings. They did it all for the sake of contemplation and because they perceived themselves as citizens of the heavenly kingdom who still resided in this world. To further determine their motivations for giving up possessions and living a solitary life with these occasional

¹⁸¹Calabi, *God's Acting, Man's Acting: Tradition and Philosophy in Philo of Alexandria*, 181.

communal gatherings it is important to look closer at the passages that disclose their beliefs.

Leaving Possessions and the Therapeutae's Beliefs

A key part of this present study is the search for clues regarding how the group's beliefs are represented as motivating their practice. This next section will look at reasons given by Philo for sharing/abandoning possessions among the Therapeutae in an attempt to answer this question. Several important passages will be studied in order to accomplish this. This first passage looks at the concept of immortality.

13 εἶτα διὰ τὸν τῆς ἀθανάτου καὶ μακαρίας ζωῆς ἕμερον τετελευτηκένοι νομίζοντες ἤδη τὸν θνητὸν βίον ἀπολείπουσι τὰς οὐσίας υἰοῖς ἢ θυγατράσιν εἴτε καὶ ἄλλοις συγγενέσιν, ἔκουσίῳ γνώμῃ προκληρονομούμενοι, οἷς δὲ μὴ συγγενεῖς εἰσιν, ἐταίροις καὶ φίλοις· ἔδει γὰρ τοὺς τὸν βλέποντα πλοῦτον ἐξ ἑτοίμου λαβόντας τὸν τυφλὸν παραχωρῆσαι τοῖς ἔτι τὰς διανοίας τυφλώττουσιν.¹⁸²

The Therapeutae left their possessions “because of their anxious desire for an immortal and blessed life, thinking that mortal life to have already died” (εἶτα διὰ τὸν τῆς ἀθανάτου καὶ μακαρίας ζωῆς ἕμερον τετελευτηκένοι νομίζοντες ἤδη τὸν θνητὸν βίον, 13). What is mortal and immortal for them? At the end of *De vita contemplativa* the Therapeutae's existence is described as having “lived in the soul alone, citizens of Heaven and the world” (καὶ ψυχῇ μόνῃ βιωσάντων, οὐρανοῦ μὲν καὶ κόσμου

¹⁸²“Then such is their longing for the deathless and blessed life that thinking their mortal life already ended they abandon their property to their sons or daughters or to other kinsfolk, thus voluntarily advancing the time of their inheritance, while those who have no kinsfolk give them to comrades and friends. For it was right that those who have received ready to their hand the wealth that has eyes to see should surrender the blind wealth to those who are still blind in mind” (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:121)

πολιτῶν).¹⁸³ They rejected most earthly activities. By living this way, they experienced the “true excellence of life, a boon better than all good fortune and rising to the very summit of felicity.”¹⁸⁴ The expressions “immortal and blessed existence” and “have lived in the soul alone, citizens of Heaven and the world” need further study.

The word ἀθάνατος (immortal) appears in *De vita contemplativa* three times, in sections 6, 13 and 68. In section 6 the words ἀθάνατός and θνητός are used in the context of criticizing the demi-gods. “How could one and the same person be both mortal and immortal, to say nothing of the reproach attaching to the original source of their birth, tainted as it is with the licentiousness of wanton youth which they impiously dare to ascribe to the blissful and divine powers by supposing that the thrice blessed and exempt from every passion in their infatuation had intercourse with mortal women.” The striving for immortality in section 13 is connected to the striving of the mind/soul of a person.

There is an obvious connection here and in other texts with Plato’s philosophical ideas on the mind, soul and body. In Plato’s *Apology* Socrates urges young and old “not to care for your persons or your property more than for the perfection of your souls.”¹⁸⁵ He also encourages people to “care for virtue”¹⁸⁶ and calls for perfection in 36C.¹⁸⁷ Philo, in *Contempl.* 68, also talks about virtuous women desiring to produce not mortal (θνητῶν), but immortal (ἀθανάτων) descendants/grandchildren “which only the soul that

¹⁸³Philo, *Contempl.* 90 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:129).

¹⁸⁴Philo, *Contempl.* 90 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:129).

¹⁸⁵Plato *Apol.* 30B2.

¹⁸⁶Plato *Apol.* 31B7–8.

¹⁸⁷Plato *Apol.* 36C.

is dear to God can bring to the birth unaided because the Father has sown in her spiritual rays enabling her to behold the verities of wisdom.” In these passages there is a strong connection between the understanding of immortality of the soul with virtue and perfection.

This leads to the word soul, which is another key concept in Philo’s thought. The word ψυχή is used multiple times in *De vita contemplativa*. In section 2 the Therapeutae are described as the healers of the soul. “They are the beloved of God because they worship ‘the Self-existent who is better than the good, purer than the One and more primordial than the Monad.’”¹⁸⁸ In section 10 Philo argues that the Egyptians have lost the sight which belongs to the soul. In comparison, the Therapeutae aim at obtaining a vision of the living God. Philo gives an illustration of their soul’s heavenly ascent in *Contempl.* 11, “But it is well that the Therapeutae, a people always taught from the first to use their sight, should desire the vision of the Existent and soar above the sun of our senses and never leave their place in this company which carries them on to perfect happiness.”¹⁸⁹ This ascent of the soul happens by reaching beyond the sun, the brightest thing a human could see. Hadas-Lebel notes that in Philo, “More than any other sense perception, vision relates most closely to the soul. Always moving, always in a state of awareness, vision requires light, that finest of gifts, in order to contemplate the universe.

¹⁸⁸Philo, *Contempl.* 2 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:129). See also *De praemiis et poenis* 40, where Philo repeats this idea. On this, see Mireille Hadas-Lebel, *Philo of Alexandria: A Thinker in the Jewish Diaspora*, ed. Francesca and Robert Berchman Calabi, Studies in Philo of Alexandria (Brill: Leiden, 2012), 175. Hadas-Lebel suggests that the monad should be understood as “the intelligible world.” *Ibid.*, 181.

¹⁸⁹Philo, *Contempl.* 11 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:119). On the ascent of the soul in Philo see later in this section.

In this way, the eye is the stimulus of thought and, therefore, of philosophy.”¹⁹⁰ And yet, Philo notes, in this seeing of the mind, they have not left the confines of their community, as this is a journey not of the body but of the soul.

Contempl. 27 describes how at sunset, they pray that “the soul may be wholly relieved from the press of the senses and the objects of sense and sitting where she is [in the] consistory and council chamber to herself pursue the quest of truth.” As mentioned earlier, the Therapeutae were a community of Jewish ascetics who read the Holy Scriptures¹⁹¹ and obtained wisdom from the text allegorically “since they think that the words of the literal text are symbols of something whose hidden nature is revealed by studying the underlying meaning.”¹⁹²

The community followed a seven-day cycle. Thus they came together every seventh day, and after seven sets of seven days they had what was called “a banquet”¹⁹³ and celebrated the “exodus from Egypt.”¹⁹⁴ According to Pearce, they re-enacted the

¹⁹⁰Hadas-Lebel, *Philo of Alexandria: A Thinker in the Jewish Diaspora*, 160.

¹⁹¹As far as Philo’s works are concerned, they are generally divided into those that deal with the Jewish Scriptures, that is expository writings on the Law of Moses along with the exegetical commentaries, and the remaining writings which include philosophical, historical, and apologetic treatises. *De vita contemplativa* is under the category of historical and apologetic treatises. And, following Borgen’s further division, it goes under the “writings in which Pentateuchal material, in the form of literal narrative or/and of deeper principles, is applied to socio-religious factors in the Jewish community.” Peder Borgen, “Philo of Alexandria: A critical and synthetical survey of research since World War II,” in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt*, ed. Wolfgang Haase (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 1984), 118.

¹⁹²Philo, *Contempl.* 28 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:169).

¹⁹³Philo, *Contempl.* 73 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:157).

¹⁹⁴Philo, *Contempl.* 85–87 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:165–167).

celebration of the Exodus in their worship service, thus reaffirming “through their liturgy the migration of the soul from the land of the body.”¹⁹⁵ Some point out that exodus “signifies their spiritual exodus, their liberation from bodily servitude.”¹⁹⁶ On the seventh day during their worship gathering the oldest and the wisest of them speaks and his explanations do not sit on the tip of their ears (οὐκ ἄκροισι ὡσὶν ἐφιζάνει) but go through the hearing into the soul (δι’ ἀκοῆς ἐπὶ ψυχῆν).¹⁹⁷

The foundation of the Therapeutae’s concept for true development of the soul is found in self-control of bodily needs. “None of them would put food or drink to his lips before sunset since they hold that philosophy finds its right place in the light, the needs of the body in the darkness, and therefore they assign the day to the one and some small part of the night to the other.”¹⁹⁸ Some eat physical food only every three days, others every six days. So only “after providing for the soul [they] refresh the body also.”¹⁹⁹ They eat “only such things as are actually needed and without which life cannot be maintained.”²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁵Sarah J. K. Pearce, *The Land of the Body: Studies in Philo’s Representation of Egypt* WUNT 208 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 283. Pearce analyzes Philo’s statement in *Quaestiones in Genesim* IV.177 where he connects Egypt with bodily pleasures and coming out of Egypt as one who has accepted impassivity with joy. *Ibid.*, 82. For more see the section on Egypt as a symbol in *ibid.*, 87–89.

¹⁹⁶Hadas-Lebel, *Philo of Alexandria: A Thinker in the Jewish Diaspora*, 175.

¹⁹⁷Philo, *Contempl.* 31 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:131).

¹⁹⁸Philo, *Contempl.* 34 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:133).

¹⁹⁹Philo, *Contempl.* 36 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:133).

²⁰⁰Philo, *Contempl.* 37 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:135).

They avoid all satiety/indulgence as it is “a malignant enemy both to soul and body” (πλησμονήν ὡς ἐχθρόν τε καὶ ἐπίβουλον ψυχῆς τε καὶ σώματος ἐκτρεπόμενοι).²⁰¹

In sections 60 and 61 Philo criticizes the common vulgar love which “sets up the disease of effeminacy in their souls.”²⁰² That type of love brings damage to “their bodies, their souls and their property.”²⁰³ After seven sets of seven days they have a feast which is shared by aged virgins also. These women acquired wisdom as their immortal offspring “which only the soul that is dear to God can bring to the birth unaided because the Father has sown in her spiritual rays enabling her to behold the verities of wisdom.”²⁰⁴ As part of this feast, there is a banquet where the President speaks and instructs by “permanently imprinting the thoughts in the souls of the hearers.”²⁰⁵ He also does the exposition of the sacred scriptures, “For to these people the whole law book seems to resemble a living creature with the literal ordinances for its body and for its soul the invisible mind laid up in its wording. It is in this mind especially that the rational soul begins to contemplate the things akin to itself and looking through the words as through a mirror beholds the marvelous beauties of the concepts.”²⁰⁶ Philo concludes the document by saying that the Therapeutae “have taken to their hearts the contemplation of nature and what it has to

²⁰¹Ibid.

²⁰²Philo, *Contempl.* 60 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:149).

²⁰³Philo, *Contempl.* 61 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:149).

²⁰⁴Philo, *Contempl.* 68 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:155).

²⁰⁵Philo, *Contempl.* 76 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:159).

²⁰⁶Philo, *Contempl.* 78 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:161).

teach, and have lived in the soul alone, citizens of Heaven and the world.”²⁰⁷ In the *De vita contemplative*, the word soul (ψυχή) and the activities connected with it stand in contrast to the body and its functions. Thus, the control of the body’s desires for food and physical intimacy are strictly controlled. The soul is to be focused on contemplation, thinking, and God.

In Philo in general, the soul is connected with heaven and the body with earth. This concept is also found in “rabbinic and in apocalyptic sources as well as in Greek Platonic/Stoic tradition . . . man’s body is earthly, but his soul is heavenly. . . . On the basis of such an anthropology, the idea of the heavenly ascent of the soul is a natural development. Philo draws in *De opificio mundi* 70, as elsewhere, on the common picture of the soul as a winged bird.”²⁰⁸

Philo divides the soul into two different parts, rational and irrational²⁰⁹ and sometimes even three, mind and reason (νοῦς καὶ λόγος) as one part, the passion (τὸ δὲ θυμός) as the second part and desire/appetites (τὸ ἐπιθυμία) as the third.²¹⁰ In contrast to some Hellenistic authors, in Philo the soul is created by God. It is not divine itself but

²⁰⁷Philo, *Contempl.* 90 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:169).

²⁰⁸Borgen, *Philo of Alexandria: An Exegete for His Time*, 236, 237. On the soul, see also Samuel Sandmel, “Philo: The Man, His Writings, His Significance,” in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*, ed. Wolfgang Haase (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1980), 27, 28.

²⁰⁹Runia, *Philo of Alexandria and the Timaeus of Plato*, 469.

²¹⁰Philo *De confusione linguarum* 7.21 (trans. C. D. Yonge, 236.). Also, on this, see John Whittaker, “The Terminology of the Rational Soul in the Writings of Philo of Alexandria,” *The Studia Philonica Annual* 8 (1996): 1, 2.

seeks to ascend to its prior state.²¹¹ Only the rational part is created by God, but the irrational part is created by younger gods “because the irrational is susceptible to evil.”²¹² The rational part of the soul, the mind (νοῦς), is part of the divine λόγος and is the key element in the relation between God and man.²¹³ Man has a special place in the cosmos because he can contemplate and reflect on his own nature and situation which enables him to search and discover the Father and maker of created reality.²¹⁴ This is exactly what the Therapeutae were doing. They practiced “the βίος θεωρητικός in an exemplary way. All day and every day they search for wisdom, reading the sacred scriptures and extracting the deeper meaning by means of allegory. The passions of the soul and the needs of the body are almost entirely suppressed. On the Sabbath they enjoy a sober feast, but most of the time they appear to feed on air like crickets.”²¹⁵

²¹¹See Andrew Louth, *The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition: From Plato to Denys* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), 25. Compare with Runia, who stated that sometimes Philo held on to a divine part of the soul (Runia, *Philo of Alexandria and the Timaeus of Plato*, 329–332, 469; cf. Whittaker, “The Terminology of the Rational Soul in the Writings of Philo of Alexandria,” 1–20).

²¹²Peter Frick, *Divine Providence in Philo of Alexandria*, eds. Martin Hengel et al., *Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism* 77 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999), 157.

²¹³Philo *De opificio mundi* 143, *Quod deus immutabilis Sit* 47, 48, *Legum allegoriae* 1:39–41, *Quis rerum divinarum heres* 184, 185.

²¹⁴Runia, *Philo of Alexandria and the Timaeus of Plato*, 472, 473.

²¹⁵Philo, *Contempl.* 19, 27, 28, 35, 36 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:119). See Runia, *Philo of Alexandria and the Timaeus of Plato*, 473.

Philo believed that the virtuous soul will survive death and be reborn into “incorporeal” existence (παλιγγενεσία).²¹⁶ But the rebirth of the soul “which occurs after death seems to be on a continuum with the migration of the soul towards perfection before death.”²¹⁷ In other words,

Although the migrating soul can envision the intelligible world and experience an ethical rebirth while still in mixture with the body, it is after the mixture is dissolved, i.e., after physical death, that παλιγγενεσία occurs in any metaphysical or essential way. Philo does not present a clear, systematic statement about what incorporeal existence of the soul means, but he seems to imply that the soul continues to exist as a distinct entity in the presence of God. Incorporeal existence in the presence of God, however, is only for virtuous souls.²¹⁸

The immortality of the soul is a reality, not as an inherent quality of the soul, but because God worked directly in its creation.²¹⁹

As mentioned earlier, the rational part of the soul is responsible “for the ascent of the soul to God.”²²⁰ Philo describes the stages of the soul’s ascension until it reaches “the great King himself.”²²¹ Borgen makes a thorough analysis of the *De opificio mundi* 69–71 and shows how Jewish and non-Jewish elements are woven together in a passage on the

²¹⁶Fred W. Burnett, “Philo on Immortality: A Thematic Study of Philo’s Concept of *paliggenesia*,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, no. 46 (1984): 464.

²¹⁷Ibid. See also Philo *De Cherubim* 114; *De cofusione linguarum* 78; *De cofusione linguarum* 78; *Legum allegoriae* 19.

²¹⁸Ibid., 470.

²¹⁹Dieter Zeller, “The Life and Death of the Soul in Philo of Alexandria,” *Studia Philonica Annual* 7 (1995): 24, 25.

²²⁰Frick, *Divine Providence in Philo of Alexandria*, 160.

²²¹Philo *De opificio mundi* 23.69–71. God is called the “Great King” in the apocalyptic and Jewish sources in *1 Enoch* 84:2.5; 91:13; *Sibylline Oracles* 3:499.560; *Psalms of Solomon* 2:32.

heavenly journey in Philo.²²² He finds that the correspondence between soul/body and God/world was common in the ancient world and there was even more agreement on the soul being connected with heaven and the body with earth in the rabbinic and apocalyptic sources, as well as in Greek Platonic/Stoic tradition.²²³

Based on this anthropology with its understanding of the origin of the soul, the heavenly ascent of the soul makes more sense. In *De opificio mundi* 69–71 the ascent applies to every person, but in *De specialibus legibus* 1:37–50 the ascent refers to a certain group of persons, the philosophers.²²⁴ In *De specialibus legibus* 2:164–166 Philo states that when the multitudes went wrong and worshipped many different gods, “the nation of the Jews—to speak most accurately—set aright the false step of others by having looked beyond everything which has come into existence through creation since it is generate and corruptible in nature, and chose only the service of the ungenerate and eternal.”²²⁵ Borgen concludes that for Philo “the basic search for the vision of the true God, the Great King was hampered by polytheism. Thus, the true humanity was realized in the Jewish nation who chose the service of the Uncreated and Eternal God.”²²⁶ And the Therapeutae were “in this way model Jews, since to be a true Jew is to be a citizen of

²²²Borgen, “Heavenly Ascent in Philo: An Examination of Selected Passages.”

²²³For references in rabbinic literature see Borgen, *Philo of Alexandria: An Exegete for His Time*, 236.

²²⁴*Ibid.*, 238.

²²⁵Philo *De specialibus legibus* 2:166.

²²⁶Borgen, *Philo of Alexandria: An Exegete for His Time*, 240.

Heaven; cf., that a proselyte receives a place in Heaven when he becomes a Jew (see for instance *De praemiis et poenis* 152).²²⁷

The phrase, “citizens of Heaven and the world” (οὐρανοῦ μὲν καὶ κόσμου πολιτῶν) does not explicitly imply future events. It is difficult to determine if it is a hint at a belief in the eschaton. What were the Therapeutae looking forward to in the future, since they were so discontent with their earthly existence and had to separate themselves from the world into a separate community?

No changes are discussed regarding what will happen in the future that they would have clearly identified with heaven. The eschatological/messianic theme is not developed in *De vita contemplativa*. However, based on *Contempl.* 85, 86, David Hay talks about God having a victory over Egypt as the Therapeutae’s spiritual victory. It is possible that they looked to the future when God would overthrow the “Egyptians” again in an ultimate replay of the Exodus deliverance. Since Philo mentions that the Therapeutae interpreted the Scripture allegorically,²²⁸ Hay speculates that some eschatological or apocalyptic ideas may have been a part of the Therapeutae’s thinking.²²⁹ According to Hay,

If eschatology *was* important to the Therapeutae, it may have been a version of realized eschatology whereby the community saw themselves as already living a kind of heavenly existence. Philo says explicitly that the Therapeutae considered their mortal existence already at an end (paragraph 13). Such a mode of thought could

²²⁷Borgen, “Philo of Alexandria: A critical and synthetical survey of research since World War II,” 119.

²²⁸Philo, *Contempl.* 28, 29, 78.

²²⁹The Essenes’ interpretation of Scripture was also allegorical (see *Quod omnis probus liber sit* 82).

explain their principled separation from money and money-generating work, property, marriage, and the “world” beyond their community.²³⁰

Some conclude that eschatology plays a very peripheral role in Philo’s writings.²³¹

Ray Barraclough, based on *De praemiis et poenis* 169–171, says that here “one finds his most sustained description of the future restoration of Israel, of God’s gathering them to enjoy prosperity as a nation,” but “because the treatise ends by applying this promise to the budding of the soul to its full virtue. . .” he concludes that Philo “dehistorizes the coming events to the level of the individual soul and its virtues.”²³² As regards the messianic expectation, “the one whose coming Philo mentions, and hopefully awaits, is the Logos. . . . Yet when the Logos brings deliverance it is to be not the conquest of other nations through the leadership of a human warrior, but the deliverance of the soul, of the mind, which aspires heavenwards, redeemed by the ‘divine vision’ sent by God.”²³³

In an attempt to understand Philo’s eschatological views in *De praemiis et poenis*, Thomas H. Tobin compares it with two of the *Sybilline Oracles*, a collection of oracles from the second century BCE up to the seventh century CE. He looks for evidence “they can provide for the social and political contexts of the eschatological sections of *De*

²³⁰Hay, “Things Philo Said and did not Say about the Therapeutae,” 683.

²³¹Ray Barraclough, “Philo’s Politics, Roman Rule and Hellenistic Judaism,” in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt*, ed. Wolfgang Haase (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1984), 480, 481.

²³²Barraclough, ’480.

²³³Barraclough, ’481.

praemiis.”²³⁴ His conclusion is that as Philo is writing at a time of tension between Alexandrian Jews and their Egyptian and Greek neighbors, this left a mark on his understanding of certain things. Philo’s eschatological expectations, like all the Jews’ expectations, “involve not only Jews as individuals but also as a people.”²³⁵ At the end time and by God’s power, the Jews will gather in their land and the surrounding nations will recognize their supremacy. Philo’s eschatology is “almost devoid of violence and dependent on the observance of the Law and the practice of virtue by the Jewish nation.”²³⁶ And even non-Jews who want to worship the true God and practice virtue will join the Jewish nation (*De praemiis et poenis* 152).

Burton L. Mack also examines these passages, including *De vita Mosis* 1.289–91 and *De praemiis et poenis* 93–97, 163–172 and concludes that there is no apocalypticism in Philo whatsoever. According to Mack, for Philo “belonging to Israel was the same as being in the school of Moses. And being in the school of Moses meant living in the world in accord with wisdom.”²³⁷ For Mack, Philo “was hardly a strong candidate for an apocalyptic persuasion. . . . Wisdom in Philo? Yes. Apocalyptic? No.”²³⁸

²³⁴Thomas H. Tobin, “Philo and the Sybil: Interpreting Philo’s Eschatology,” *The Studia Philonica Annual* 9 (1997): 87.

²³⁵*Ibid.*, 102.

²³⁶*Ibid.*

²³⁷Burton Mack, “Wisdom and Apocalyptic in Philo,” *The Studia Philonica Annual* 3 (1991): 38.

²³⁸*Ibid.*, 39.

Borgen, on the other hand, studies these same passages in Philo's works *De vita Moysis* and the his treatises grouped together and titled *Exposition of the Law*, and sees the Jewish nation and a messianic "man" as playing a prominent role in Philo's eschatology.

In *On the Life of Moses* and the *Exposition of the Law*, "eschatology" means the realization of the universal aspect of Moses' kingship and of the universal role of the Hebrew nation. This universal realization of Moses' kingship did not take place in Moses' lifetime. It would be accomplished in the future by "a man" who would be commander-in-chief of the Hebrew army and would conquer the enemies and be emperor of many nations—i.e. of the world. . . . Philo prefers a peaceful ideological warfare but accepts, if necessary, military war, led by "a man" as commander-in-chief. The messianic prophecy about "a man" thus is a natural and integral element in Philo's interpretation of the Law of Moses, but the central and basic idea is the eschatological role of the Jewish nation as being the head of all nations.²³⁹

James M. Scott echoes Borgen and states that "Philo's restoration hope is thoroughly rooted in OT and Jewish expectations"²⁴⁰ and acknowledges "that the national and nationalistic motifs present in *On the Life of Moses* and the *Exposition of the Law* were central to Philo himself."²⁴¹ What is clear is that Philo writes as a Jew, not a

²³⁹Borgen, "'There Shall Come Forth a Man': Reflection on Messianic Ideas in Philo," 342. See also E. R. Goodenough, *The Politics of Philo Judaeus, Practice and Theory* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1938), 115–119; Borgen, "Philo of Alexandria," 233–280; Harry Austryn Wolfson, *Philo, Foundations of Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity and Islam*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1948).

²⁴⁰James M. Scott, "Philo and the Restoration of Israel," *Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers*, no. 34 (1995): 574.

²⁴¹Borgen, "'There Shall Come Forth a Man': Reflection on Messianic Ideas in Philo," 360.

Christian. The NT hope of heaven is not found in Philo perhaps because it is limited at best in the Hebrew Bible.²⁴²

From this analysis of these passages in Philo, it is clear that there is a lack of consensus on his eschatology among scholars.²⁴³ However, while not all agree, the majority lean towards the existence of eschatology in Philo and its importance. But Philo's eschatology is unique in its Hellenization. It includes the Jewish nation practicing the life of a virtuous soul already in the present rather than waiting for the future. While the existence of an eschatology in the wider writings of Philo exists, the topic is not developed in *De vita contemplativa*. The purpose of the life of the Therapeutae was the ultimate vision of God which is an eschatological goal. It does not seem clear, however, that they lived in their community with the idea that they were a part of an imminent eschatology. It may be that the community of the Therapeutae separated themselves from the world, denounced all worldly possessions and activities, observed the Law and practiced virtuous living because the changes for the Jewish nation would be coming in the future and they were the example of the beginning of those changes living "in the soul alone, citizens of Heaven and the world."²⁴⁴

²⁴²On Old Testament eschatology, see Bill T. Arnold, "Old Testament Eschatology and the Rise of Apocalypticism," in *The Oxford Handbook of Eschatology*, ed. Jerry L. Walls (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2008); Jiri Moskala, "The Message of God's People in the Old Testament," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 19, no. 1 & 2 (2008).

²⁴³It is possible that there is some competition between Philo's eschatology and his anthropology. One sees traces of this in the Church Fathers when the life of the soul, separate from the existence of the body, becomes the focus of the follower of God, the need for a future eschatology is diminished.

²⁴⁴Philo, *Contempl.* 90 (trans. Colson, LCL, 9:169).

Conclusions

The Therapeutae's beliefs manifested themselves in their practice of a community lifestyle. Their concept of *κοινωνία* or fellowship is manifested in an ascetic life lived together. The word *κοινωνία*, for Philo, conveys a philosophical ideal, placed before all in virtue of being created by God. In this context, this *κοινωνία* is achieved through a renunciation of personal wealth and entering into a life of "community sharing" for the purpose of providing a space for the individual to live a life pursuing the highest form of virtue. This is in contrast to the Jerusalem community in Acts where *κοινωνία* is something lived out day by day in using wealth to help the members of the community rather than those outside the community. Wealth in Acts is not seen as a hinderance to the life of the soul but rather to be used to sustain people in need.

They lived an ascetic life based in the belief of the existence of the soul in the body. The body is earthly and the soul is heavenly. So, the abandoning of physical possessions was the indication of abandoning everything earthly or mortal that would prevent them from experiencing the immortal or heavenly. The symbolic meaning of the exodus from Egypt signified the future liberation of the soul from bodily existence to ascend to God in heaven. But that liberation has already started in the bodily existence. Because they practiced virtuous living, the community of the Therapeutae considered themselves as citizens of heaven while still physically present on this earth.²⁴⁵ In Acts, the Jerusalem community did not see separation from the wider culture as necessary to their movement. While they did experience some degree of separation from the wider

²⁴⁵Philo, *Contempl.* 90.

Jewish community, this was more of a natural distinction appearing between the early Jewish Christian believers than rather than a necessary part of joining the movement.

The ascent of the soul applied not only to individual souls but to a group of devoted people. All humanity realized itself in the Jewish nation and the Therapeutae were the model Jews who were seeking the purification of the soul while still on this earth, before death. Giving up everything and purifying themselves by living as a spiritual community moved them a step forward towards a future heavenly existence in the soul. While it is clear that the Jerusalem community had a radically different approach to material possessions than the wider culture, it was not essential to be part of the group as seen in the story of Ananias and Sapphira.

CHAPTER IV

SHARING IN THE *DIDACHE*

The *Didache*,¹ an anonymous Jewish-Christian document dated by scholars typically from between 50–150 CE, has several verses that talk about giving, receiving and sharing.² The genre of this work is different than the previous two documents, the book of Acts and Philo's *De Vita Contemplative*. The previous two documents describe the life and κοινωμία of their respective communities. While the *Didache* has some

¹There are two lines in manuscript H that may point to the real title of this work. The first line says, "The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles" and the next line says, "The teaching of the Lord through the twelve apostles to the Gentiles [Or: nations] (trans. Ehrman, LCL, 1:417). On the issue of the title, see Dietrich-Alex Koch, "Die Debatte über den Titel der 'Didache,'" *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche* 105.2 (2014); Willy Rordorf and André Tuilier, *La doctrine des Douze Apôtres (Didachè)*, Sources chrétienne (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1978), 13–17.

²For a discussion on the dating of the *Didache*, see Appendix 1. This study views the document as originating in the early second century. On the issue of provenance, Jefford's statement surely still stands: "There is likely no greater issue that remains within modern research on the *Didache* about which is less known and more is assumed than (. . .) the question of the provenance of the text." Clayton N. Jefford, "The Milieu of Matthew, the *Didache*, and Ignatius of Antioch: Agreements and Differences," in *Matthew and the Didache: Two Documents from the Same Jewish-Christian Milieu?*, ed. Huub van de Sandt (Assen: Van Gorcum, 2005), 35. That being said, the two leading locations are either Syria or Egypt, with Antioch gaining more proponents in recent studies. For a recent article on the provenance, see Jürgen K. Zangenberg, "Reconstructing the Social and Religious Milieu of the *Didache*: Observations and Possible Results," in *Matthew, James, and Didache: Three Related Documents in their Jewish Settings*, ed. Huub van de Sandt et al. (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008), 45.

descriptive elements, it mostly gives instructions on the life of the community represented there.³ The *Didache* has most often been referred to as a document of church order among other descriptors.⁴ It consists of two major parts with a small final piece.⁵ The first is an ethical or catechetical section (*Did.* 1:1–6:1), called the “Two Ways” because of the opening words of the document Ὅδοι δύο εἰσὶ μία τῆς ζωῆς καὶ μία τοῦ θανάτου (“there are two paths, one of life and one of death”). This part (chapters 1–6) resembles the teachings of Jesus. The next section discusses church rituals (chapters 7–10) and rules on how to deal with traveling Christian teachers, apostles and prophets (chapters 11–15). The last chapter is an apocalyptic section about the final days (chapter 16).

³Thus, Pardee notes that the *Didache* is “essentially a collection of prescriptions for the life of the Christian community.” Nancy Pardee, *The Genre and Development of the Didache: A Text-linguistic Analysis*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 339 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 5.

⁴On the *Didache* as a document of church order, see Georg Schöllgen, “The *Didache* as a Church Order: An Examination of the Purpose for the Composition of the *Didache* and its Consequences for its Interpretation,” in *Didache in Modern Research*, ed. Jonathan A. Draper (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996). For a history of the interpretation of the genre of the document, see Pardee, *The Genre and Development of the Didache: A Text-linguistic Analysis*, 8–52. Many scholars have seen a development of the text of the *Didache* over a period of decades or more and it is thus referred to by them as a composite work. See, for example Draper, “The Jesus Tradition in the *Didache*,” 76. There have been recent suggestions for seeing the document as the production of essentially one author. The most prominent of these has been Milavec, *The Didache: Faith, Hope and Life of the Earliest Christian Communities, 50–70 C.E.*

⁵On the outline of the document, see for instance Clayton N. Jefford, *Didache: The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* (Salem, OR: Polebridge Press, 2013), 1–3.

The Greek text of the *Didache* used is second edition of the *Apostolic Fathers* in the LCL Series.⁶ The goal of the present study, while attempting to identify similarities and differences between the life of the community prescribed in the *Didache* and the life of the community described in the book of Acts, does not aim to suggest a dependence of the *Didache* on Acts (or any of the other Gospels) or vice a versa. Rather, it seeks to compare the two communities with an eye towards further understanding the beliefs that motivated the sharing of possessions in the book of Acts.

Since the *Didache* is written to a community at least within a few generations from the book of Acts, a comparison between the two will illustrate the variety of life of the early believers in the preaching of the disciples. As mentioned at the outset, this study is not primarily concerned with the question of sources and redactional activity behind the text of the *Didache*.⁷ Draper appropriately notes that “we do not know what occasion led to this compilation.”⁸ However, Varner is right in appreciating the untiring work of

⁶Edited and translated by Ehrman. In addition, there are several critical editions of the text. They are all primarily based on the lone complete manuscript published by Bryennios in 1883, labeled *Hierosolymitanus* 54 and referred to as H. On the history of the text, see Kurt Niederwimmer, *The Didache*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1998), 4–18; Rordorf and Tuilier, *La doctrine des Douze Apôtres (Didachè)*, 102–128; Draper, “The *Didache* in Modern Research: An Overview,” 1–4. Draper prefers the Rordorf and Tuilier edition in the SC series. Jonathan A. Draper, “The Apostolic Fathers: The *Didache*,” *The Expository Times* 117, no. 5 (2006): 177; Rordorf and Tuilier, *La doctrine des Douze Apôtres (Didachè)*. For the Greek text, this study has also consulted Rordorf and Tuilier’s edition. Another recent, helpful English translation is Michael W. Holmes ed., *The Apostolic Fathers* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2007).

⁷For a recent overview of these issues, see John H. Boyles, “Unevolved: A Study in Diverse Christian Social Organization” (Ph.D. dissertation, Emory University, 2016), 239–245.

⁸Draper, “The *Didache* in Modern Research: An Overview,” 24.

Milavec to demonstrate a sense of unity in the document rather than seeing it as a collection of a multitude of different sources.⁹

Introduction

The *Didache* has several sections that indicate a certain attitude toward sharing that was seen as essential to being a part of community. In *Did.* 1.5, 6 there is a command to give to everyone who asks and not to receive without need.¹⁰ In 4.5–8 the author gives a command to share with needy believers and not to call anything one's own. In verse 8 of this section, κοινωνία appears in the command to share all things with a needy brother. In 13:1-7, instructions are given for taking care of the needs of prophets within the community. These passages will be the focus of this chapter which seeks to understand how sharing took place in the community described by the *Didache* and what beliefs motivated this practice.

***Didache* 1:5, 6**

The first time in the *Didache* the topic of charity and the rule for giving to the needy appears is in *Did.* 1:5, 6. These verses are in the beginning of the Two Ways or “ethical” section. This section starts with an exposition about two paths, one of life and one of death.¹¹ In order to follow the path of life there are two commandments to be kept,

⁹William Varner, *The Way of the Didache: The First Christian Handbook* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2007), 58.

¹⁰There is a warning about being greedy in *Did.* 2.6 which is related to material sharing but does not warrant inclusion in this study.

¹¹*Did.* 1 (trans. Ehrman, LCL, 1:417).

“First, love God who made you, and second, your neighbor as yourself.”¹² Verses 3–6 describe loving God. The prescriptions for giving in verses 5 and 6 fall under this category.

Verse 5

Verse 5 reads:

παντὶ τῷ αἰτοῦντί σε δίδου καὶ μὴ ἀπαίτει· πᾶσι γὰρ θέλει δίδοσθαι ὁ πατήρ ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων χαρισμάτων. μακάριος ὁ δίδους κατὰ τὴν ἐντολήν· ἀθῶος γὰρ ἐστίν. οὐαὶ τῷ λαμβάνοντι εἰ μὲν γὰρ χρεῖαν ἔχων λαμβάνει τις, ἀθῶος ἔσται· ὁ δὲ μὴ χρεῖαν ἔχων δώσει δίκην, ἵνατί ἔλαβε καὶ εἰς τί· ἐν συνοχῇ δὲ γενόμενος ἐξετασθήσεται περὶ ὧν ἔπραξε, καὶ οὐκ ἐξελεύσεται ἐκεῖθεν, μέχρις οὗ ἀποδῶ τὸν ἔσχατον κοδράντην.¹³

These verses begin with a command to give to everyone who asks (παντὶ τῷ αἰτοῦντί σε δίδου).¹⁴ This initial statement (1.5a) functions both as a part of the preceding statement that if anyone takes your coat, give him your shirt also (1.4) as well as a bridge to the following cautions on giving and receiving (1.5b–1.6).

Milavec suggests that since the Romans placed such a high value on the unchangeableness of private ownership, they typically felt no need to take care of the poor. In reference to this command to give in 1.5 he writes, “Thus by this rule of action,

¹²*Did.* 1.2 (trans. Ehrman, LCL, 1:417)

¹³“Give to everyone who asks, and do not ask for anything back. For the Father wants everyone to be given something from the gracious gifts he himself provides. How fortunate is the one who gives according to the commandment, for he is without fault. Woe to the one who receives. For anyone who receives because he is in need, he is without fault. But the one who receives without a need will have to testify why he received what he did, and for what purpose. And he will be thrown in prison and interrogated about what he did; and he will not get out until he pays back every last cent.” *Did.* 1.5 (trans. Ehrman, LCL, 1:419).

¹⁴Niederwimmer, 78.

the former stubborn instincts governing possessions is broken down and replaced by the notion of stewardship, gratitude, and *imitation dei*.¹⁵ In this command, Milavec sees a progressive training program and thus suggests that this command is directed to the “novice” in the Christian community.¹⁶ While it seems apparent that this section is laying out the essentials of Christian benevolence, this should not cause the reader to restrict its application to only the new convert.

Some scholars suggest that, in light of 1.6, the giving described here was not to all and further, it was conditional in nature.¹⁷ But others argue against this and see here a command to give to all, even those outside of the community.¹⁸ *Did.* 1.5 says further, “How fortunate is the one who gives according to the commandment, for he is without fault.” The giver appears to be the one who does not carry the responsibility of knowing the needs of the recipients.

¹⁵Aaron Milavec, “When, Why, and for Whom Was the Didache Created? Insights into the Social and Historical Setting of the Didache Communities,” in *Matthew and the Didache: Two Documents from the Same Jewish-Christian Milieu?*, ed. Huub van de Sandt (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2005), 72. For more on the Roman cultural backgrounds to this call to giving, see *Ibid.*, 71-72.

¹⁶Syreeni agrees, regarding this section being a part of an initial training. Kari Syreeni, “The Sermon on the Mount and the Two Ways Teaching of the Didache,” in *Matthew and the Didache: Two Documents from the Same Jewish-Christian Milieu?*, ed. Huub van de Sandt (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2005), 88–90. Cf. Warren C. Campbell, “Consonance and Communal Membership in the Didache: Examining the Structure of Did. 1–7 in Light of Qumran Induction and Rabbinic Proselytism,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 71 (2017): 479–485.

¹⁷Frederick E. Vokes, *The Riddle of the Didache: Fact or Fiction, Heresy or Catholicism?* (London: SPCK, 1938), 21; Niederwimmer, 86.

¹⁸Milavec, *The Didache: Faith, Hope and Life of the Earliest Christian Communities, 50–70 C.E.*, 186–190; Harnack, *The Mission and Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries*, 55.

The verb δίδου is a present imperative. When an action is commanded in the present imperative, the force of the imperative is usually iterative. Iterative means “repeated action” although it is difficult at times to distinguish between repeated and continuous (customary) action.¹⁹ In other words, the command to give to everyone who asks is not a command to a single action, but a continued or repeated action.

There are two other significant words in this verse, τὴν ἐντολήν and ἀθῶος. Much attention has been given to the first in the clause, ἐντολή.²⁰ The second, ἀθῶος, appears twice. First in reference to the one who gives according to the commandment, and the second time in speaking of the one who asks and has a legitimate need. It is interesting that the *Didache* uses this word to refer to both the one who gives when asked and the one who receives when there is a need. It would seem that ἀθῶος refers to the fact that the giver would be innocent in terms of the ἐντολή.

¹⁹Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, 722; H.E Dana and Julius R. Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (Toronto, Ontario: The MacMillan Company, 1955), 300.

²⁰For a study on τὴν ἐντολήν in reference to alms, see Anthony Giambrone, “‘According to the Commandment’ (Did. 1.5): Lexical Reflections on Almsgiving as ‘The Commandment’,” *New Testament Studies* 60 (2014). “The adoption of the language of ‘the commandment’ in connection with almsgiving arises within a distinctly Jewish, Second Temple setting, in which a kind of ‘parallel cult’ grew up around the practice of charitable offerings. It appears to be no accident that the semantic trajectory of ἐντολή passes through the cultic practices of the Jewish–Christian *Didache*; and it is perhaps significant that later Christian sources attesting the usage are largely of Syrian provenance.” *Ibid.*, 465.

Giving to all in 1.5 bears a strong resemblance to Luke 6:30, where Luke records a command given by Christ to give to all—seemingly even to one’s enemies.²¹ In fact, the whole chapter of *Did.* 1 is very similar to Luke 6:27–36.²²

²⁷ “But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ²⁸ bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. ²⁹ If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. ³⁰ Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. ³¹ Do to others as you would have them do to you. ³² “If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. ³³ If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. ³⁴ If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. ³⁵ But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked.”

This passage in Luke and what follows in the rest of *Did.* 1.5, “For the Father wants everyone to be given something from the gracious gifts he himself provides” imply

²¹John Nolland, *Luke 1–9:20*, Word Biblical Commentary 35A (Dallas, Texas: Word Books, 1989), 302, 303. Kloppenborg argues that the *Didachist*, in writing this verse, knows Luke but not necessarily Matthew 5:25, 26, 42. John S. Kloppenborg, “The Use of the Synoptics or *Q* in *Did.* 1:3b–2:1,” in *Matthew and the Didache: Two Documents from the Same Jewish-Christian Milieu?*, ed. Huub van de Sandt (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2005), 127–129. Tuckett and Milavec have published on both sides of the question of whether or not the *Didache* presupposes a finished Synoptic writing or for independence between the gospel accounts and that of this document. Aaron Milavec, “Synoptic Tradition in the *Didache* Revisited,” *The Journal of Early Christian Studies* 11, no. 4 (2003); Christopher M. Tuckett, “The *Didache* and the Synoptics Once More: A Response to Aaron Milavec,” *The Journal of Early Christian Studies* 13, no. 4 (2005). While it is difficult to give a final determination here, this study sees a definite connection between them.

²²For a comparison of *Did.* 1.5a to Matt 42b and Luke 6:30b, see Christopher M. Tuckett, “Synoptic Tradition in the *Didache*,” in *The Didache in Modern Research*, ed. Jonathan A. Draper (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996), 125–127.

that “these actions, not done naturally by human nature, require supernatural enabling.”²³ Some also see a connection here to Lev 19:18 specifically in the command to “love your neighbor as yourself.”²⁴ In addition, Matt 5:42 has a similar command “Give to everyone who begs from you, and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you.”

Here the writer of the *Didache* is clearly similar to Luke and Matthew, that is, sharing to all who ask without distinction. But at the same time, the *Didache* softens the radical demands of the gospels. What is seen here is a strong imperative to members of the community to give, together with a warning to potential receivers not to accept charity when one has no need. This passage evidences that the Christians were finding some challenges with their commitment to give generously but were persisting anyway while at the same time seeking to minimize abuses they were observing.²⁵ This is further suggested by the warnings given in *Did.* 11 about false prophets where it seems that the church has had to deal with the reality that their generosity could be taken advantage of.

While the categorical command to give to everyone who asks applies to everyone in the community and clearly is a high ethical standard, the *Didache* quickly turns from the giver to the receiver in the second part of verse 5, highlighting unworthy recipients. “Woe to the one who receives. For if anyone receives because he is in need, he is without

²³John Martin, *Luke*, Bible Knowledge Commentary 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 220.

²⁴See Matthew Goldstone, “Rebuke, Lending, and Love: An Early Exegetical Tradition on Lev 19:17–18,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 136, no. 2 (2017): 311–314.

²⁵Milavec argues that this section is an initial training manual for new converts and 1.5 refers to new converts being commanded to practice almsgiving to all, including outsiders. Milavec, “When, Why, and for Whom Was the *Didache* Created? Insights into the Social and Historical Setting of the *Didache* Communities,” 71, 72.

fault. But the one who receives without a need will have to testify why he received what he did, and for what purpose. And he will be thrown in prison and interrogated about what he did; and he will not get out until he pays back every last cent.”²⁶ The responsibility falls on the person receiving the gift here. If he has a need it is legitimate to receive, but if he does not have a need he is at fault for taking what he did no need. But knowing whom to give to as recorded in 1.6 seems to mean that the giver is also responsible and needs to use discernment in deciding to whom to give.

The motivation for this practice of giving to all who ask is because of God’s will. The author points out that it is the Father’s will that everyone shares the gifts they have with all. This implies that everything that one has, whether property, possessions or money, is a gift from God.

Verse 6

Verse 6 reads, ἀλλὰ καὶ περὶ τούτου δὲ εἴρηται· Ἰδρωσάτω ἡ ἐλεημοσύνη· σου εἰς τὰς χεῖράς σου, μέχρις ἂν γνῶς, τίτι δῶς.²⁷

²⁶*Did.* 1.6 (trans. Ehrman, LCL, 1:419).

²⁷“For it has also been said concerning this: ‘Let your gift to charity sweat in your hands until you know to whom to give it.’” *Did.* 1.5, 6 (trans. Ehrman, LCL 1:419). It has been well noted that this saying has some similarity to Sir. 12:1. For a review of this interpretation, see Bridge, “To Give or not to Give: Deciphering the Sayings of *Didache* 1.6,” 560, 561. Bridge disagrees with this connection and instead proposes that rather than functioning as a limit on giving, it is encouraging it and thus is in agreement with *Did.* 1.5a. This saying is quoted often in later documents. On this history, see Niederwimmer, 84–86.

The imperative Ἰδρωσάτω²⁸ is in the aorist tense. Since it is a proverbial expression, the aorist is gnomic which means that the emphasis is on solemnity. It is a categorical command. There is an urgency in the action to make it a top priority but there should be no haste based on the sweat of your palm. Thus the proverb, “Your gift of charity must sweat in your hands.”²⁹ In verse 5 the command is to keep giving. Verse 6 goes beyond this and commands the believer to make giving a top priority, but not unconditionally. The condition seems to be the discernment of the giver’s part. Yes, he is to give to everyone who asks but evidently those gifts of giving were abused in that community. That is why there is a restriction given to the giver in verse 6 as to pause and think before he/she gives it to the ones asking for help.

In verses 5 and 6 many note a commonality to the Jewish demand for charity found variously in Deut 15:11, Prov 3:27–28, Dan 4:27 LXX and also Christian examples in Luke 6:30, Acts 20:35, 1 Pet 4:4.³⁰ The gifts given are God’s gifts (Deut 15:14) and therefore the ones giving are only the distributors of the divine gifts. The ones who give are blessed (μακάριος ὁ διδούς). A parallel of this can be found in Acts 20:35, “And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to

²⁸Bryennios changes H which reads Ἰδρωσάτω. Jefford, *Didache: The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, 22; Rordorf and Tuilier, *La doctrine des Douze Apôtres (Didachè)*, 146.

²⁹For a description of commands as a constative aorist see Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, 720, 721.

³⁰See also Tob 4:7–11; 12:9; Sir 3:30, 4:8–10; 2 Clem. 16.4; 1 Clem 2.7; Polycarp Phil. 10.2; Pseudo-Phocylides 22–24; Hermas Similitudes 9.24.2. Niederwimmer, 107–109; Milavec, *The Didache: Faith, Hope and Life of the Earliest Christian Communities, 50–70 C.E.*, 185.

receive.”³¹ God will repay all the alms that are given.³² The one giving was “an *imitatio dei* (imitation of God). . . . The implied reality was that the needs of the one giving had already been provided for by the Father. . . . The one receiving, on the other hand, was relieved of any necessity to feel inferior or indebted to the one giving since, in effect, what was received came from the Father.”³³ Milavec argues here that since the statement in 1.6 is uncertain as to its origin and its full meaning, the *Didachist* should not be understood as limiting the command to give to all but instead is leaving it open that indeed new believers should practice giving alms to everyone, both insiders and outsiders.³⁴ While it is granted that the provenance and precise meaning of the statement are unknown, the final clause, “until you know to whom to give it,” seems to suggest some degree of restraint and thus Milavec’s interpretation should be understood as overstated.

It should be understood here then, that God is the giver of all things and He commands Christians to keep sharing with those who ask, the ones who ask. However, in view of *Did.* 1.6 the giver is compelled to use discernment in knowing who has need. Later, in *Did.* 4:5–8, some degree of tension will be seen regarding this understanding. The level of person to person giving prescribed here is different than the community wide sharing of all things found in Acts.

³¹NKJV. See also Niederwimmer, 82.

³²*Ibid.*, 108.

³³Milavec, *The Didache: Faith, Hope and Life of the Earliest Christian Communities, 50–70 C.E.*, 197.

³⁴*Ibid.*, 188.

Didache 4:5–8

In 4:5–8 the rule for sharing is extended even to sharing “all things with your brother” (συγκοινωνήσεις δὲ πάντα τῷ ἀδελφῷ σου) and not calling anything your own (οὐκ ἐρεῖς ἴδια εἶναι).³⁵ The word κοινωνός and its derivative συγκοινωνέω are first used in *Did.* 4.8. A verse by verse analysis will help us understand this passage better.

Verse 5

Μὴ γίνου πρὸς μὲν τὸ λαβεῖν ἐκτείνων τὰς χεῖρας πρὸς δὲ τὸ δοῦναι συσπῶν³⁶

This verse starts with a prohibition, Μὴ γίνου (“Do not be the one stretching out your hand to receive”). The particle μὴ is used with the present imperative. According to Dana and Mantey, a prohibition using the present tense describes a stopping of an action that is already ongoing.³⁷ For Wallace the present imperative of prohibition can indicate either a cessation of activity in progress (progressive prohibition)³⁸ or a simple negative command (customary prohibition).³⁹ In such a situation the context becomes the determining factor in deciding whether it is progressive or customary.

³⁵*Did.* 4.8 (trans. Ehrman, LCL, 1:425).

³⁶“Do not be one who reaches out your hands to receive but draws them back from giving.” *Did.* 4.5 (trans. Ehrman, LCL, 1:423–425).

³⁷Dana and Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, 301, 302; See also Mounce, *Basics of Biblical Greek Grammar*, 315.

³⁸Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, 724.

³⁹*Ibid.*, 487, 724.

The immediate context of *Did.* 4.1–14 is one where all the commands and prohibitions are in the future tense except for two verbs. One of these is the present imperative of prohibition *Μὴ γίνου* in 4.5 and the other is an emphatic negation subjunctive *οὐ μὴ ἐγκαταλίπης* (“By no means should you abandon the commandments”) in 4.13.⁴⁰ When including all of the first four chapters of the *Didache*’s instructions, the future tense is used for prohibitions and present imperatives are used for positive commands including the command to keep giving to those in need found in *Did.* 1.5.⁴¹ Thus, *Did.* 1.5 describes the community as giving to everyone who asks, while in 4.5 there is a reinforcement of the command by prohibiting one to stretch out one’s hand for receiving and to draw back from giving. Thus, it seems reasonable to see the prohibition phrase *Μὴ γίνου* in *Did.* 4.5 as a command that prohibits an action that has already started. They have been receiving and not giving and this should be stopped.⁴² This command goes well with 1.5 where giving is strongly encouraged but the receivers should not ask without a need.

⁴⁰Translation mine. In the New Testament, the imperatival future is largely found in Old Testament quotations due to literal translation of the Hebrew. *Ibid.*, 718. Rordorf and Tuilier suggest an allusion to Dt 15:7 Rordorf and Tuilier, *La doctrine des Douze Apôtres (Didachè)*, 160.

⁴¹See Varner, *The Way of the Didache: The First Christian Handbook*, 62.

⁴²There are two purpose infinitives in this sentence, *πρὸς τὸ λαβεῖν* and *πρὸς τὸ δοῦναι* which should be translated as “in order to, for the purpose of, in order that.” Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, 591. Both infinitives are in the aorist tense, but infinitives have no time significance. The only difference is the infinitive’s aspect. According to Campbell, “aorist infinitives semantically encode perfective aspect.” Campbell, *Basics of Verbal Aspect in Biblical Greek*, 95. This means an undefined action which should be translated as “to receive” and “to give.” Mounce, *Basics of Biblical Greek Grammar*, 302. The construction “*μὲν. . . δὲ*” shows “contrast, emphasis or continuation.” Aland and others ed., 113.

Both of these passages demonstrate that the *Didache* is addressing a community that has a problem with its members receiving material goods. The church has too many people taking advantage of the giving mentality that church members are exhorted to have. So here in 4.5, a second warning is against only stretching out one's hands to receive but not being willing to also give. This idea is not found in Luke in the sayings of Jesus but finds agreement with Paul's statement discussed earlier in Acts 20:35. *Did.* 4.5, commanding those who receive to also give, highlights that this command to give is not one that is based upon one's economic class in the community. All, rich and poor, are given the same command. However, as in 1.5, it is clear from the next verses that support for fellow believers is very important and necessary and in fact it is a command from the Lord. The motivation for this practice is not specifically stated though the proceeding verses will supply several reasons for their additional commands.

Verse 6

ἐὰν ἔχης διὰ τῶν χειρῶν σου δώσεις λύτρωσιν ἁμαρτιῶν σου⁴³

This verse sets out the possibility that one may experience a side benefit to giving. The conditional sentence here is third-class condition, also called the more-probable future condition.⁴⁴ The context here suggests the category of imperatival future fits best

⁴³“If you acquire something with your hands, give it as a ransom for your sins.” *Did.* 4.6 (trans. Ehrman, LCL, 1:425).

⁴⁴It “presents the condition as uncertain of fulfillment, though still likely.” Black, *It's Still Greek to Me*, 145. Also see Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, 696. The verb δώσεις is used in the future tense. Future tense can have an imperatival force and can be used for a command. “Generally speaking, it has a universal, timeless, and/or solemn force to it.” *Ibid.*, 569.

the tense of δώσεις.⁴⁵ It is a command given to the community members, a command to give what they acquired by their hands that had been earned through their trade.⁴⁶ According to Bauer's comment on the phrase διὰ τῶν χειρῶν "the OT . . . has a tendency to speak of a person's activity as the work of his hand."⁴⁷ Based on this definition, Milavec suggests that members of the community occasionally had a surplus that should be given to those in need.⁴⁸ It is very likely that διὰ τῶν χειρῶν refers to a trade that is connected to the work of a person's hands.⁴⁹ Here again, it may be comparable to Paul's statement in Acts 20:34 regarding his work with "these hands" to provide for himself and to support the weak.

Giving to the poor in this verse seems to result in atonement for sins (δώσεις λύτρωσιν ἁμαρτιῶν σου). The idea of alms covering sins (λύτρωσιν ἁμαρτιῶν σου) and

⁴⁵Milavec argues, however, that the future tense is a simple future that is describing what will take place once a newcomer has been baptized and recognized as a full member of the community. While this interpretation solves some things relating to the development of the text, it seems to lack a real basis in the *Didache* itself. Milavec, *The Didache: Faith, Hope and Life of the Earliest Christian Communities, 50–70 C.E.*, 200.

⁴⁶Cf. Thomas O'Loughlin, *The Didache: A Window on the Earliest Christians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010), 37. O'Loughlin translates this verse "When you have earned your keep by the work of your hands, you should offer something for the expiation of your sins." Ibid., 164.

⁴⁷Bauer, BDAG, s.v. "κοινός."

⁴⁸He suggests that the members of the community were probably neither wealthy or extremely poor. Milavec, *The Didache: Faith, Hope and Life of the Earliest Christian Communities, 50–70 C.E.*, 201.

⁴⁹Thus Holmes translates, "If you earn something by working with your hands" *Did.* 4.6.

rescuing from death is found in other Second Temple⁵⁰ and Christian works as well. Tob 4:7–11 has several similarities with *Didache* 4.5–8. Tob 4:9-10 read “So you will be laying up a good treasure for yourself against the day of necessity. For almsgiving delivers from death and keeps you from going into the Darkness.” Here it seems clear that almsgiving has a redemptive effect on the giver. In addition, Sir 3:30 reads, “As water extinguishes a blazing fire, so almsgiving atones for sin.” While by itself, this proverb does not clearly indicate whose sins will be atoned for, if it is read in conjunction with Sir 3:31, it seems more clear that it is suggesting that almsgiving atones for the giver’s sins.

In the New Testament in 1 Pet 4:8, the apostle urges believers to “maintain constant love for one another, for love covers a multitude of sins.”⁵¹ This seems to be alluding to Prov 10:12 where it says that “love covers all transgressions.” In these biblical examples, it is possible that these actions do not cover one’s own sins but rather those of the receiver.⁵² However, in Dan 4:27, the prophet counsels the Babylonian king

⁵⁰Milavec notes examples of this in b. Baba Batra 9a–10a but this is later rabbinic material. Milavec, *The Didache: Faith, Hope and Life of the Earliest Christian Communities, 50–70 C.E.*, 205–207.

⁵¹It also appears in the Apostolic Fathers in 2 Clem 16.4, and Polycarp *Phil.* 10.2. Niederwimmer, 108. For Rabbinic examples see Hermann L. Strack and Paul Billerbeck ed., *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch*. (Munich: Beck, 1979), 2.561, 562 and 4.554, 555. See also Milavec, *The Didache: Faith, Hope and Life of the Earliest Christian Communities, 50–70 C.E.*, 205–207. For the laws of Israel on the protection of the poor see Carolyn Osiek, *Rich and Poor in the Shepherd of Hermas: An Exegetical-Social Investigation*, Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph 15 (Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1983), 18.

⁵²On the challenge of interpreting this idea, see Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, New American Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 2003), 212, 213. See also similar ideas in Prov 17:9 and Jam 5:20. In discussing whether the almsgiving described in 1 Peter covers the sins of the giver or the receiver, John Elliott

Nebuchadnezzar, to “atone for your sins with righteousness, and your iniquities with mercy to the oppressed” in an attempt to change his future as predicted in the dream. Here, clearly, the action of the giver would benefit him.

In *Did.* 4.6 it seems likely that the giving should be understood as benefiting the giver.⁵³ Garrison, in his helpful study on redemptive almsgiving in Early Christianity, writes, “For the *Didache*, the redemptive efficacy of almsgiving is vital for those who are not perfect.”⁵⁴ He notes that it is seen as a way to atone for sins committed after baptism.

Verse 7

οὐ διστάσεις δοῦναι οὐδὲ διδοὺς γογγύσεις γνώση γάρ τις ἐστὶν ὁ τοῦ μισθοῦ
καλὸς ἀνταποδότης⁵⁵

This verse again sets up something of a tension with *Did.* 1.5, 6. As discussed above on 1.6, the giver should pause to consider before giving. But here the believer is urged not to doubt whether to give nor grumble while giving. The verbs διστάσεις,

writes, “Whether the “covering” or forgiveness involves the sins of the one who loves (Luke 7:47; *1 Clem.* 50:5; *2 Clem.* 16:4) or of those loved (*T. Jos.* 17:2) is not a relevant issue here, since the mutuality of Christian relations is in view and the forgiving of *all* sins is implied.” John Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Yale Bible 37B (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 751.

⁵³Milavec, agrees that this almsgiving should be understood as atoning for the giver’s sins. Milavec, *The Didache: Faith, Hope and Life of the Earliest Christian Communities, 50–70 C.E.*, 194.

⁵⁴Roman Garrison, “Redemptive Almsgiving in Early Christianity” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Toronto, 1989), 239.

⁵⁵“Do not doubt whether to give, nor grumble while giving. For you should recognize the good paymaster of the reward.” *Did.* 4.7 (trans. Ehrman, LCL, 1:425).

γογγύσεις and γνώση are in the future indicative tense just like δώσεις in verse 6 and also carry an imperatival force.⁵⁶

The two key verbs, διστάζω and γογγύζω are straightforward as far as their meaning. The first, διστάζω, is used twice in the New Testament in Matt 14:31 and Matt 28:17, both with the obvious idea of “to doubt.” The idea implied by διστάζω is more of “to wait or hesitate.” This idea is similar to Prov 3:28 where it reads, “Do not say to your neighbor, ‘Go, and come again, tomorrow I will give it’—when you have it with you.” The second verb, γογγύζω, is used eight times in the New Testament, consistently with the idea of “to grumble.” The basic command is clear, believers are not to hesitate to give nor to grumble while giving.

In explaining the motivation behind this practice and the attitude that should be followed, *Didache* refers to God in an oblique manner. It uses the word ἀνταποδότης which is found in its noun form only here and in *Epistle of Barnabas* 19:11 which itself is a close parallel of this verse.⁵⁷ *Barnabas* reads, “Thou shall not hesitate to give, neither shalt thou murmur when giving, but thou shalt know who is the good paymaster of thy reward.”⁵⁸ BDAG offers the translation “paymaster,”⁵⁹ though its usage in its verb form,

⁵⁶As noted above in 4.6, Milavec argues that the future tense is a part of the narrative describing first a new believer and then a baptized member of the community. Thus he argues that it is not imperatival but a simple description of a future action.

⁵⁷Niederwimmer, 108. Its verb form, ἀνταποδίδωμι, appears in the New Testament seven times and multiple times in the LXX.

⁵⁸οὐ διστάσεις δοῦναι οὐδὲ διδοὺς γογγύσεις· γνώση δέ, τίς ὁ τοῦ μισθοῦ καλὸς ἀνταποδότης. *Barnabas* 19.11.

⁵⁹Bauer, BDAG, s.v. “ἀνταποδότης.”

ἀνταποδίδωμι, in the LXX suggests a meaning of “to repay.”⁶⁰ In other words, God will pay back the alms to the ones who are giving them to others.⁶¹ The motivation used in this verse is again a spiritual one. Even though God is not directly mentioned, it is a clear reference to Him.

What is not clarified, though, is whether this repayment is to be on this earth in a material form or in a spiritual or heavenly manner in the future. Perhaps, here, the *Didache* has Luke 14:13, 14 in mind, “But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. ¹⁴ And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.” Here the gospel author twice uses the same word, ἀνταποδίδωμι⁶² and provides a probable New Testament saying of Jesus on which the *Didache* may be drawing.

Verse 8

Verse 8 has several complex issues to analyze on who is the brother and what is it to share in immortality. Because of this, it is divided into two sections, 4.8a and 4.8b.

⁶⁰For example, Gen 44:4 reads “Why have you repaid evil for good” and Judg 1:7 reads “As I have done, so God has repaid me.” The verb form is used 86 in the LXX.

⁶¹Niederwimmer, 108. See also Luke 14:14, Sir 12:2, Tob 4:14, 2 Clem 20.4

⁶²Milavec also agrees with this idea of repayment in the world to come. Milavec, *The Didache: Faith, Hope and Life of the Earliest Christian Communities, 50–70 C.E.*, 204. However, as he does not see a strong connection at all between the *Didache* and the gospels, he does not use Luke 14:14 in support of this but rather finds the connections in Jewish sources.

Verse 4.8a

οὐκ ἀποστραφήση τὸν ἐνδεόμενον συγκοινωνήσεις δὲ πάντα τῷ ἀδελφῷ σοῦ καὶ οὐκ ἔρεῖς ἴδια εἶναι.⁶³

The verbs ἀποστραφήση, συγκοινωνήσεις and ἔρεῖς are in the future indicative with an imperatival force, continuing the pattern set in the previous verses. The participle τὸν ἐνδεόμενον is substantival and “behaves like a noun”⁶⁴ meaning “the one in need” or “the one who lacks.” The idea of not turning away from the one in need is closely connected with the previous verses, 5–7, where giving to others is encouraged. It is also connected with 1.5, “Give [or: “keep giving” since δίδου is a present imperative] to everyone who asks, and do not ask for anything back (παντὶ τῷ αἰτοῦντί σε δίδου καὶ μὴ ἀπαίτει πᾶσι).”⁶⁵

This line of the text in 4:8 extends the invitation of giving to “your brother” (τῷ ἀδελφῷ σοῦ)⁶⁶ in contrast to the command of giving to all in 1:5 (παντὶ τῷ αἰτοῦντί σε δίδου).⁶⁷ It is not immediately clear who the expression “your brother” includes. It is still possible to consider the word “brother” as a variation from the word “all” from chapter 1.⁶⁸

⁶³“Do not shun a person in need, but share all things with your brother and do not say that anything is your own.” *Did.* 4.8a (trans. Ehrman, LCL, 1:425).

⁶⁴Mounce, *Basics of Biblical Greek Grammar*, 271, 275; *ibid.*

⁶⁵*Did.* 1.5 (trans. Ehrman, LCL, 419).

⁶⁶*Did.* 4.8 (trans. Ehrman, LCL, 425).

⁶⁷*Did.* 1.5 (trans. Ehrman, LCL, 419).

⁶⁸So, Silva writes regarding ἀδελφός, “and fig. it could mean ‘companion, friend, fellow man.’” Moises Silva ed., “ἀδελφός” *New International Dictionary of New*

While there is strong scholarly support for understanding here a community of goods, whether inside or outside of the community, it is important to place more emphasis on the usage of the word ἀδελφός in this passage. Besides its only usage in *Did.* 4.8, the word ἀδελφός is found in Josephus *Bell.*, 1, 122 in the description of the Essenes.⁶⁹ There are many examples of the word ἀδελφός in the New Testament, and it connotes a physical and spiritual brotherhood of Israelites and Christians, fellow-Christians or Christian brothers.⁷⁰

With this pattern of usage in mind it seems reasonable to suggest seeing in *Did.* 4:8 a spiritual motivation (“you are sharers in the immortal how much more in the mortal?”) extended by “the community of goods to a boundless distribution of

Testament Theology and Exegesis (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 1:149. One might see an example of this in in Matt 5:22 where Jesus says, “But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever says to his brother, ‘You good-for-nothing,’ shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever says, ‘You fool,’ shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell” (NASB95). Here Jesus uses brother in the first two examples but generalizes in the last statement. Most would see here no distinction in Jesus’ line of thinking if the one speaking said these things to the natural-born brother, a brother in Christ, or any other person.

⁶⁹Plato uses it for compatriots in *Menex.*, 239a and Xenophone uses it for friends in *An.*, VII, 2, 25. It is used “for members of a religious society, both in the papyri and inscriptions and also in literature; e.g., *Vett. Val.*, IV, 11, p.172, 31.” Von Soden, “ἀδελφος, αδελφη, αδελφοτης, φιλαδελφος, φιλαδελφια, ψευδαδελφος,” *TDNT*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006), 1:146. In LXX and 4 Macc 9:23, 10:3, 15, 13:19, 27, it means “physical relationship” and in 1 Macc. 12:10, 17 it is used for “brotherhood established by covenant fellowship.” *Ibid.*

⁷⁰Fellow believers are addressed as brothers in Matt 5:22, 47; 6:3; 18:15, Acts 2:29, 37, 7:23, Rom 9:3, Heb 7:5. Jesus calls the ones who listen to Him and his disciples His brothers in John 20:17. He calls His disciples brothers in Matt 23:8 and Luke 22:32. And in Heb 2:11 Christians are called His (God’s) brothers.

possessions among needy brethren,” and not to a call to communal living.⁷¹ While it is possible to see some degree of Essene influence, the Christian pattern of Acts seems more likely. Thus, Van de Sandt and Flusser show that the exhortations here in *Did.* 4.8 go beyond the sharing material possessions confined to a group separate from the outside world as practiced at Qumran. They write that “the sharing of financial and material resources exceeds the limits of a closed sectarian community”⁷² It therefore seems

⁷¹Sandt and Flusser, *The Didache: Its Jewish Sources and its Place in Early Judaism and Christianity*, 186, 187. For the dependence of the *Didache* on the New Testament see Tuckett, “Synoptic Tradition in the *Didache*,” 92–128; B Layton, “The Sources, Dates and Transmission of *Didache* 1:3b–2:1,” *Harvard Theological Review*, no. 61 (1968): 343–383; B. C. Butler, “The ‘Two Ways’ in the *Didache*,” *Journal of Theological Studies*, no. 12 (1961); B. C. Butler, “The Literary Relations of *Didache*, Ch. XVI,” *Journal of Theological Studies*, no. 11 (1960); E. Massaux, *The Influence of the Gospel of Saint Matthew on Christian Literature before Saint Irenaeus I: The First Ecclesiastical Writers* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1990–1993), 144. On the other hand, Rordorf argued against such dependence in Willy Rordorf and André Tuilier, “Does the *Didache* Contain Jesus Tradition Independently of the Synoptic Gospels?,” in *Jesus and the Oral Gospel Tradition*, ed. H. Wansbrough (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), 394–423. Many others also argued for the common source that the *Didache* and the New Testament used. R. Glover, “Patristic Quotations and Gospel Sources,” *New Testament Studies*, no. 31 (1985): 234–251; Draper, “The Jesus Tradition in the *Didache*,” 85, 86; John S. Kloppenborg, “*Didache* 16:6–8 and Special Matthean Tradition,” *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*, no. 70 (1979): 54–67; Jean-Paul Audet, *La Didache: Instructions des apôtres* (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1958), 166–186; R. Glover, “The *Didache*’s Quotations and the Synoptic Gospels,” *New Testament Studies*, no. 5 (1958): 12–29.

⁷²Sandt and Flusser, *The Didache: Its Jewish Sources and its Place in Early Judaism and Christianity*, 180, 182–190. “Rather than pertaining to a restricted communism based on economic separatism, they imply a sharing of property with all.” *Ibid.*, 190. The sectarian concept of *κοινωνία* found in the Essenes with exclusive communal property “was transformed into an all-encompassing social concern under the influence of the existing hassidic position within semi-Essene streams.” *Ibid.* For the meaning of *κοινωνία* and its derivatives in Paul, see also M. McDermott, “The Biblical Doctrine of KOINONIA,” *Biblische Zeitschrift* 19 (1975): 64–77, 119–223. Also, see Panikulam, *Koinonia in the New Testament. A Dynamic Expression of Christian Life*, 57. It is known that not all Essenes lived communally. Only the one branch of them at Qumran is known to have done so.

improbable that the use of the word “all” in 1:5 and “brother” in 4:8a occur with the same meaning.⁷³

In *Did.* 4:8a the expression συγκοινωνήσεις δὲ πάντα (you shall share everything or all things) is very similar to the one in Acts 2:44 εἶχον ἅπαντα κοινὰ, (they had all things common). The expression οὐκ ἐρεῖς ἴδια εἶναι, translated as “you shall not say [it] is your own” (literally, “to be one’s own”) is the same as the one in the book of Acts 4:32 ἔλεγεν ἴδιον εἶναι, translated as “not anyone saying anything is his own” (literally, “to be one’s own”). The words συγκοινωνήσεις and κοιωνοί are derivatives from κοινωνία which has the meaning “fellowship,” “communion,” “association,” “participation” or “sharing.”⁷⁴ The word κοινωνία also means “partnership, as in common business venture.”⁷⁵ Some conclude that the meaning of “sharing” in the *Did.* 4.8 should include “the notions of a ‘business partnership.’”⁷⁶ Both words in 4:8 συγκοινωνέω (participate in, have a share) and κοιωνός (companion, partner, sharer) have the idea of somebody taking part “in something with someone.”⁷⁷ The verb συγκοινωνώ with the meaning “to contribute” as in Gal 6:6 and Phil 4:14–16 implies “an exchange of material and spiritual

⁷³Further analysis of 4.8b below will support this conclusion.

⁷⁴Bauer, BDAG, s.v. “κοινωνία.”

⁷⁵Justo L. González, *Faith and Wealth: A History of Early Christian Ideas on the Origin, Significance, and Use of Money*, 1st ed. (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1990), 83.

⁷⁶Milavec, *The Didache: Faith, Hope and Life of the Earliest Christian Communities, 50–70 C.E.*, 210.

⁷⁷Bauer, BDAG, s.v. “κοινωνός, συγκοινωνέω.”

riches.”⁷⁸ And the word *κοινωνία* clearly connotes material sharing. However, as will be seen below on 4.8b, *κοινωνία* is used here for both material sharing and spiritual sharing. In addition, while here *συγκοινωνώ* is clearly used with reference to sharing material goods, there is nothing to indicate that it is not used in the sense of sharing in a business. The material sharing and the spiritual sharing are very closely connected in this passage and the sharing is to be with needy brothers. Thus, it should be seen that there is a clear continuation of the Christian virtue of generosity and hospitality from Acts, but to see this as a prescription for a community-based sharing of all things as described in Acts seems unwarranted. Rather, it seems that the author of the *Didache* is interested in exhorting the readers to actions of generosity and giving such as those described in Acts. However, he does not describe any community structure to handle the collecting and distributing of a community wide sharing practice. This lack of community wide administration is also a difference between Acts and the readers of the *Didache*.

Verse 4.8b

εἰ γὰρ ἐν τῷ ἀθανάτῳ κοινωνοὶ ἐστε πόσῳ μᾶλλον ἐν τοῖς θνητοῖς⁷⁹

The second sentence in this verse (*Did.* 4.8b) provides a key to understanding the motivation for the sharing commanded by the *Didache*. The conditional sentence εἰ γὰρ ἐν τῷ ἀθανάτῳ κοινωνοὶ ἐστε πόσῳ μᾶλλον ἐν τοῖς θνητοῖς in verse 8 is a first class

⁷⁸Sandt and Flusser, *The Didache: Its Jewish Sources and its Place in Early Judaism and Christianity*, 187 fn. 144. See also Del Verme, *Didache and Judaism*, 125. On this interpretation of *κοινωνία*, see above on *κοινωνία* in Acts 2:42.

⁷⁹“For if you are partners in what is immortal, how much more in what is mortal.” *Did.* 4.8b (trans. Ehrman, LCL, 1:425).

conditional sentence and “assumes the reality of the protasis for the sake of the argument.”⁸⁰ Thus, the author assumes, for the sake of the argument, that the community members are partakers of the immortal (ἐν τῷ ἀθανάτῳ).⁸¹ And if they are, then how much more should they be sharers of mortal things (ἐν τοῖς θνητοῖς).

Κοινωνία occurs here meaning “fellowship” in relation to two terms, τῷ ἀθανάτῳ and τοῖς θνητοῖς. In this context, τοῖς θνητοῖς seems to refer to the material sharing being advocated in these verses while τῷ ἀθανάτῳ seems to refer to something beyond this material world. These two terms, one which the community is said to already have (τῷ ἀθανάτῳ) and the second (τοῖς θνητοῖς) which they are commanded to have, are both experienced through κοινωνία. While its usage here, referring to a non-material concept, may lead one to suggest that it should also be understood this way in Acts, this does not appear to be the case. In fact, its usage here in connection with τῷ ἀθανάτῳ is not typical of the New Testament or Apostolic Fathers.⁸²

Κοινωνία appears in a similar context in Paul, in Rom 15:26, 27 when Christians from Macedonia and Achaia help the now poor brothers in Jerusalem. “For if the Gentiles gave a share of their spiritual things [πνευματικοῖς] they also ought to serve to them in material things [σαρκικοῖς]” (εἰ γὰρ τοῖς πνευματικοῖς αὐτῶν ἐκοινώνησαν τὰ ἔθνη, ὀφείλουσιν καὶ ἐν τοῖς σαρκικοῖς λειτουργῆσαι αὐτοῖς). Here, while connected to *Did.* 4.8b through κοινωνία and its verbal root κοινωνέω, the parallel terms are τὰ πνευματικὰ

⁸⁰Black, *It's Still Greek to Me*, 144.

⁸¹Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, 690–694.

⁸²See, however *Epistle to Barnabas* 19.8 which has a parallel usage.

and τὰ σαρκικὰ rather than those used in *Did.* 4.8b, τῷ ἀθανάτῳ and τοῖς θνητοῖς.⁸³ Paul describes here the saints to whom this κοινωνία is to be shared, thus providing a limit of sorts on the understanding of who would receive the distribution.⁸⁴ The reason for this is shown in the analysis of 4.8b below.

A brief look at these terms, ἀθάνατος and θνητός and their cognates, will help clarify the meaning of this concluding sentence. The first term, ἀθάνατος, does not occur elsewhere in the *Didache*, though its nominal form, ἀθανασία, is used in *Didache* 10:2 . There, God is the one who gives immortality, “We give you thanks, holy Father, for your holy name which you have made reside in our hearts, and for the knowledge, faith and immortality (ἀθανασίας) that you made known to us through Jesus your child.”⁸⁵ This praise was to be offered after the thanksgiving meal (eucharist).⁸⁶ Niederwimmer refers

⁸³There is also a similarity to 1 Cor 9:11 with Paul’s same parallel terms τὰ πνευματικὰ and τὰ σαρκικὰ.

⁸⁴While Vand de Sandt and Flusser are correct in seeing a connection here, their connection to Luke 16:8 on the basis of the “sons of light” as a reference to the Essenes at Qumran seems a stretch. Sandt and Flusser, *The Didache: Its Jewish Sources and its Place in Early Judaism and Christianity*, 186, 187.

⁸⁵*Did.* 10.2 (trans. Ehrman, LCL, 1:431–433).

⁸⁶Much scholarly work has been devoted to the eucharistic meal in *Did.* 9, 10 with much being said about the document’s failure to mention the death of Jesus. See, for example, Dietrich-Alex Koch, “Eucharistic Meal and Eucharistic Prayers in *Didache* 9 and 10,” *Studia Theologica* 64 (2010); Jonathan Schwiebert, *Knowledge and the Coming Kingdom: The Didache’s Meal Ritual and its Place in Early Christianity*, ed. Mark Goodacre, Library of New Testament Studies 373 (London: T & T Clark, 2008); Alistair Stewart-Sykes, “The Birkath Ha-Mazon and the Body of the Lord: A Case Study of *Didache* 9–10,” *Questions liturgiques* 85 (2004); Matthew David Larsen, “Addressing the Elephant that’s Not in the Room: Comparing the Eucharistic Prayers in *Didache* 9–10 and the Last Supper Tradition,” *Neotestamentica* 45, no. 2 (2011); Jonathan A. Draper, “The Holy Vine of David Made Known to the Gentiles through God’s Servant Jesus: “Christian Judaism in the *Didache*,”” in *Jewish Christianity Reconsidered: Rethinking*

to this usage as one of the “goods of salvation.”⁸⁷ In *1 Clement* 35:2 one of the gifts that God gives is immortality (ἀθανασία), there combined with faith.⁸⁸ Salvation comes through the path of Jesus, “through this one the Master has wished us to taste the knowledge of immortality (τῆς ἀθανάτου γνώσεως)” in *1 Clement* 36:2.⁸⁹ Interestingly enough in the letter of *Ignatius to the Ephesians* 20:2 “gathering together (κοινῇ πάντες)” and “breaking one bread (ἓνα ἄρτον κλῶτες)” is “a medicine that brings immortality (ἀθανασίας), an antidote that allows us not to die but to live at all times in Jesus Christ.”⁹⁰ While ἀθάνατος does not occur in the Old or New Testaments, ἀθανασία is used several times. In a significant passage for this study, Paul uses it twice in 1 Corinthians 15:53, 54 in parallel with θνητός, similar to *Did.* 4.8 in referring to the immortality received by the resurrected believers.⁹¹ From these usages in the New Testament and the Apostolic

Ancient Groups and Texts, ed. Matthew A. Jackson-McCabe (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2007), 270–273.

⁸⁷Niederwimmer, 156, 167. He compares this list of knowledge, faith and immortality to the list given in *Did.* 9.2 where it gives life and knowledge.

⁸⁸Ehrman ed., 96, 97.

⁸⁹*Ibid.*, 100, 101.

⁹⁰*Ibid.*, 238–241.

⁹¹“For this perishable body must put on imperishability, and this mortal (θνητός) body must put on immortality (ἀθανασία). When this perishable body puts on imperishability, and this mortal (θνητός) body puts on immortality (ἀθανασία), then the saying that is written will be fulfilled: ‘Death has been swallowed up in victory.’” 1 Corinthians 15:53, 54. The only other New Testament usage is when 1 Tim 6:16 ascribes immortality to God alone.

Fathers, it is seen that ἀθάνατος/ἀθανασία has a strong connection to the reality of salvation that God gives those who believe in Him.⁹²

The second term in *Did.* 4.8b is θνητός (mortal). This is only used here in the *Didache*.⁹³ Wording similar to *Did.* 4.8 is found in the *Epistle of Barnabas* 19.8, “Thou shalt share all things with thy neighbor and shall not say that they are thy own property; for if you are sharers in that which is incorruptible [ἀφθάρτω], how much more in that

⁹²The *Epistle to Diognetus* connects immortality to the soul in *Diognetus* 6.8 where the soul is described as immortal in nature. Thomas Toews notes that *Diognetus* is the only Apostolic Father that discusses the soul in depth and, in addition, describes the soul as immortal. Thomas Toews, “Biblical Sources in the Development of the Concept of the Soul in the Writings of the Fathers of the Early Christian Church, 100–325” (Ph.D. dissertation, Andrews University, 2011), 79–82. Philo also uses ἀθανασία. He follows his pattern connecting immortality with the allegorical life of the soul in *De plantatione* 36, 37, where the tree of life or immortality is to be interpreted as the road leading to virtue. Cf. *De migratione Abrahami* 37. He also connects immortality with what is to be reached after the mind has perfectly learned the good and the bad. *De migratione Abrahami* 189. In the LXX apocrypha, the word ἀθανασίας is used “to describe the expected eternal life of the righteous (Wis. 3:4; 15:3; 4 Macc. 14:5)” Rudolf Bultmann, “θάνατος, θνήσκω, ἀποθνήσκω, συναποθνήσκω, θανατόω, θνητός, ἀθανασία (ἀθανατος),” *TDNT*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans. Geoffrey Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006), 3:24. In Wis 3:4 the wisdom of the righteous is “full of immortality” (ἀθανασίας πλήρης). And also in Wis 15:3 to know the power of God is “a root of immortality” (ρίζα ἀθανασίας). Sir 17:30, in the context of forgiveness extended to those who return to God, says, “For not everything is within human capability, since human beings are not immortal” (οὐκ ἀθάνατος υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου). In 4 Macc 14:6 and 18:23 the ψυχή is immortal (ἀθάνατος).

⁹³As with ἀθανασία in the *Epistle to Diognetus*, θνητός is used in this document in reference to the immortality of the soul which in this life is imprisoned in the body. “The soul dwells immortal in a mortal (θνητός) tabernacle.” *Epistle to Diognetus* 6.8. The Jewish historian Josephus uses it in referring to a mortal man (*Wars of the Jews* 6:84) or mortal nature (*Wars of the Jews* 7:345 and *Antiquities of the Jews* 19:345). In the *Wars of the Jews* 3:372 and 7:344 the body is mortal (σώματι θνητῷ). In *Antiquities* 18:18 the Essenes, in their teaching ἀθανατίζουσιν δὲ τὰς ψυχὰς. In Philo’s *De Cherubim* 1:43 mortal is associated with a man (ἄνδρως). It is also found in *De Opificio Mundi* 1:77 (θνητὸς ὢν ἄνθρωπος), in *De specialibus legibus* (ἄνθρωπος ὃς αὐτὸν καίτοι θνητὸν εἶναι), in *De sacrificiis Abelis et Caini* 1:7, and in *De mutatione nominum* 1:181.

which is corruptible [φθαρτοῖς]?”⁹⁴ The adjectives φθαρτός/ἄφθαρτος are synonyms to θάνατος/ἀθάνατος and mean perishable, subject to decay or destruction/imperishable, corruptible/incorruptible, mortal/immortal.⁹⁵

As mentioned above when discussing ἀθανασία, in the New Testament similar terminology is used in 1 Cor 15:53, 54, “For this perishable body (φθαρτὸν) must put on imperishability (ἀφθαρσίαν), and this mortal (θνητός) body must put on immortality (ἀθανασία).”⁵⁴ When this perishable body (φθαρτὸν) puts on imperishability (ἀφθαρσίαν), and this mortal (θνητός) body puts on immortality (ἀθανασία), then the saying that is

⁹⁴T. E. Page and W. H. D. Rouse ed., *The Apostolic Fathers: I Clement, II Clement, Ignatius, Polycarp, Didache, Barnabas*. (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1912). The topic of the *Didache*'s dependence on the *Epistle of Barnabas* is discussed in Appendix A.

⁹⁵Bauer, BDAG, s.v. “φθαρτός, ἄφθαρτος.” There are many instances of the Hebrew equivalent of the word φθείρω in the Old Testament with similar meanings, e.g. Jer 13:7 “to be corrupt,” Exod 8:20, “to destroy,” Exod 32:7 “to act badly.” For more examples see Gunther Harder, “φθείρω, φθορά, φθαρτός, ἄφθαρτος, ἀφθαρσία, ἀφθορία, διαφθείρω, διαφθορά, καταφθείρω,” *TDNT*, ed. Gerhard Friedrich, trans. Geoffrey Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006), 9:96. There are also many instances of the verb φθείρω in the LXX. In Hos 9:9 and Gen 6:11 it means, “to act in a morally corrupt way” or “corrupt walk” (Jer 6:28). In the Dead Sea Scrolls the Hebrew equivalent of the word φθείρω was understood as “to destroy,” (1QH 2:21, 3:12, 3:16, 3:18, 3:26, 5:6, 8:29; Damascus 14:2, 16:12; 1QS 4:12, 9:16, 10:19 and in Damascus 15:7 and 19:7 as a “corrupt way” of living. In Philo’s *De opificio mundi* 119 the body is mortal (σώματος φθαρταί) but the soul is immortal (ἀθανάτου ψυχῆς) and the imperishable world is described as ἄφθαρτα in *De opificio mundi* 82. As Harder notes, in Philo “There is juxtaposition and coinherence of a natural world of becoming and perishing and an inner, supernatural and incorruptible world made by God, φθαρτά and ἄφθαρτα have nothing to do with one another, Abr., 243.” For more information see Harder, “φθείρω,” *TDNT* (2006), 9:101. In Wisdom 12:1 God’s immortal spirit is in all things (τὸ γὰρ ἄφθαρτόν σου πνεῦμά ἐστιν ἐν πᾶσιν) and in 18:4 the light of the law is imperishable (τὸ ἄφθαρτον νόμου φῶς). In Wisdom 14:8 an idol is called a perishable thing (τὸ φθαρτὸν), but in 9:15 the body of a man is perishable (φθαρτὸν γὰρ σῶμα). In Wisdom 12:1 God’s spirit is incorruptible (τὸ γὰρ ἄφθαρτόν σου πνεῦμά ἐστιν ἐν πᾶσιν). In 2 Maccabees 7:16 men are described as mortal/corruptible (ἀνθρώποις ἔχων φθαρτός). In summary, in Jewish literature God gives immortality.

written will be fulfilled: ‘Death has been swallowed up in victory.’⁹⁶ These phrases are clearly used in the context of the future kingdom of God at the last trumpet. Paul describes human nature as θνητὸς and he ‘yearns to be clothed upon with the heavenly body, ἵνα καταποθῆ τὸ θνητὸν ὑπὸ τῆς ζωῆς 2 C. 5:4.’⁹⁷ The σὰρξ and σῶμα are described as θνητόν in 2 Cor. 4:11, Rom 6:12 and 8:11.⁹⁸ In 1 Tim 6:16, the Kings of Kings and Lord of Lords is the one “who has immortality (ἀθανασίαν), and dwells in unapproachable light” (NKJV). In 2 Tim 1:10 Christ Jesus abolished death and brought life and immortality (ἀφθαρσία).⁹⁹

In the New Testament the word φθαρτός and its cognates are “often used to denote the corruptibility of man, his subjection to death.”¹⁰⁰ In 2 Pet 1:14 and 2:19 φθορά means “corruption.” In 1 Cor 15:52 “For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible [οἱ νεκροὶ ἐγερθήσονται ἄφθαρτοι], and we shall be changed.” In 2 Timothy Jesus gives us future life and immortality (ζωὴν καὶ ἀφθαρσίαν). The word

⁹⁶In Rom 1:23 God is incorruptible (ἀφθάρτου θεοῦ) and man is corruptible (φθαρτοῦ ἀνθρώπου).

⁹⁷Bultmann, “θάνατος, θνήσκω, ἀποθνήσκω, συναποθνήσκω, θανατώω, θνητός, ἀθανασία (ἀθανατος),” *TDNT* (2006), 3:22.

⁹⁸See *ibid.*

⁹⁹“Christ’s death and resurrection are the eschatological event. . . . The destruction of death will come with the resurrection or with the change which comes with the *parousia*. When the expected events of the last time are completed, there will be no more death (1 C. 15:26; R. 21:4). Even now death has lost its sting for believers. They already have the victory (1 C. 15:55). As impending death negates the whole life of unbelievers, so the awaiting resurrection gives a new character to the whole of life.” Bultmann, “θάνατος, θνήσκω, ἀποθνήσκω, συναποθνήσκω, θανατώω, θνητός, ἀθανασία (ἀθανατος),” *TDNT* (2006), 3:18.

¹⁰⁰Harder, “φθείρω,” *TDNT* (2006), 9:103.

ἀφθαρσία for Paul is “a strictly future blessing of salvation which is understood in exclusively eschatological terms. . . . It will be manifested only with the *parousia*, 1C. 15:42, 50, 53 f. Like the divine δόξα and τίμη, it is still to be sought after here on earth and it always remains hidden (R. 2:7). There is a similarity here to the way in which apocalyptic speaks of the incorruptibility we are to wait for.”¹⁰¹

In contrast to the immortality ideas found in Philo’s discussion of the Therapeutae, the *Didache* uses terminology similar to the New Testament and has a definite connection to that eschatology relating to death and future immortality at the *parousia*. The same words are used for mortal/corruptible and immortal/incorruptible, and the meaning of these words is the same as in the New Testament. God gives salvation and immortality. This saying in 4.8b highlights further the earlier idea suggested that the sharing of κοινωνία is to be understood as taking place among the community members, not with the outsiders. It is those who share in the immortality of salvation of Jesus Christ who are in view here. Those outside do not share the immortal and thus are not called to share in the mortal.

The *Didache* exhorts the Christians, who see God and Christ as the giver of salvation and immortality, to further expand the scope of the sharing with their brothers beyond the reality of the future eschaton to include the present material needs that they have. Because the believers already share the belief in God’s salvation and Him giving immortality they are to share in their temporary, mortal things. Sharing mortal things comes from the belief in salvation that gives immortality.

¹⁰¹Harder, “φθειρω,” *TDNT* (2006), 9:105.

Conclusions

The more general command for giving to anyone who asks was given in *Did.* 1:5, 6. From the analysis above it becomes evident that *Did.* 4.5–8 also expresses a call to charity to the poor, but that call extends to a call of sharing within the community of believers in verse 8. Material sharing and spiritual sharing are tied together in this passage. The latter gives reasons for the former. Spiritual sharing of immortal things gives a reason for material sharing.

Verse 8b shows that the immortality and incorruptibility which the community of the *Didache* shared pertained to God since God is the only one who is immortal and incorruptible. In light of the broader context of the *Didache*, it is possible that the immortality/incorruptibility that the community shared was the belief that God would give this immortality/incorruptibility at the parousia. Thus, the consequence of that belief was the sharing of the mortal/corruptible on this earth. With the eschatological coming of the Lord all things mortal would change into the immortal and all things corruptible would change into the incorruptible.

***Didache* 13:1–7 and Sharing with Prophets**

Πᾶς δὲ προφήτης ἀληθινὸς θέλων καθῆσθαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἄξιός ἐστι τῆς τροφῆς αὐτοῦ.² ὡσαύτως διδάσκαλος ἀληθινὸς ἐστὶν ἄξιος καὶ αὐτὸς ὡσπερ ὁ ἐργάτης τῆς τροφῆς αὐτοῦ.³ πᾶσαν οὖν ἀπαρχὴν γεννημάτων ληνοῦ καὶ ἄλωνος, βοῶν τε καὶ προβάτων λαβὼν δώσεις τὴν ἀπαρχὴν τοῖς προφήταις· αὐτοὶ γὰρ εἰσιν οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς ὑμῶν.⁴ ἐὰν δὲ μὴ ἔχητε προφήτην, δότε τοῖς πτωχοῖς.⁵ ἐὰν σιτίαν ποιῆς, τὴν ἀπαρχὴν λαβὼν δὸς κατὰ τὴν ἐντολήν.⁶ ὡσαύτως κεράμιον οἴνου ἢ ἐλαίου ἀνοίξας, τὴν ἀπαρχὴν λαβὼν δὸς τοῖς προφήταις·⁷ ἀργυρίου δὲ καὶ ἱματισμοῦ καὶ παντὸς κτήματος λαβὼν τὴν ἀπαρχὴν, ὡς ἂν σοι δόξῃ, δὸς κατὰ τὴν ἐντολήν.¹⁰²

¹⁰²“Every true prophet who wants to settle down with you deserves his food.² So too a true teacher, like the worker, deserves his food.³ Therefore you shall take every first

Did. 13:1–7 is placed in the larger context of chapters 11–13 which provide instructions on how to show hospitality to the teachers of the gospel, to the apostles and the prophets.¹⁰³ In chapter 11 there are instructions on how to treat and test travelling prophets and apostles,¹⁰⁴ whereas chapter 13 gives instructions on how to treat prophets “who want to settle down with you.”¹⁰⁵ While this chapter says very little about sharing with those who ask (1.5) or the needy (4.8), it does address in some detail how to provide economically for the prophets who live permanently in the community. *Did.* 13:1–7 opens with the statement that every prophet who wishes to settle among the community is worthy of his food. This is the focus of the rest of the chapter.

portion of the produce from the wine vat and the threshing floor, and the first portion of both cattle and sheep, and give it to the prophets. For they are your high priests.⁴ If you do not have a prophet, then give it to the poor.⁵ If you make bread, take the first portion and give it according to the commandment.⁶ So too if you open a jar of wine or oil, take the first portion of it and give it to the prophets.⁷ And take the first portion of your money, clothing, and everything you own, as it seems good to you, and give it according to the commandment.” *Did.* 13.1–7 (trans. Ehrman, LCL, 437–439).

¹⁰³On the Christian workers in the *Didache*, see André de Halleux, “Ministers in the *Didache*,” in *The Didache in Modern Research*, ed. Jonathan A. Draper (New York, NY: Brill, 1996); Stephen J. Patterson, “*Didache* 11–13: The Legacy of Radical Itinerancy in Early Christianity,” in *The Didache in Context: Essays on its Text, History, and Transmission*, ed. Clayton N. Jefford (New York, NY: Brill, 1995), 326–328; Varner, *The Way of the Didache: The First Christian Handbook*, 81–88.

¹⁰⁴In the context of testing prophets in *Did.* 11, a further comment is made regarding giving to the poor. 11.12 reads, “Do not listen to anyone who says in the Spirit, ‘Give me money’ (or something else). But if he tells you to give to others who are in need, let no one judge him.” *Did.* 11.12 (trans. Ehrman, LCL, 437). Thus while a prophet could not solicit donations through the gift of the Spirit, it could command a believer to help a needy person. What is of note here is why this would even be necessary in a community founded upon giving to anyone who asks and not having anything as one’s own.

¹⁰⁵*Did.* 13.1 (trans. Ehrman, LCL, 437).

To accomplish this, the *Didache* directs its readers to give the first portion of the fruit or cattle to the prophets because they are the high priests (οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς).¹⁰⁶ It also directs the believers to give “the portion of your money, clothing, and everything you own” (ἀργυρίου δὲ καὶ ἱματισμοῦ καὶ παντὸς κτήματος λαβὼν τὴν ἀπαρχήν, ὡς ἂν σοι δόξη)¹⁰⁷ according to the commandment (δοῦς κατὰ τὴν ἐντολήν).¹⁰⁸ But if there is no prophet, they are to “give it to the poor.” The poor, then, become a substitute for the priests in representing God. This shows that concept of firstfruits was not ultimately about taking care of the physical needs of the church workers but rather about the spiritual command to give a portion of one’s earnings back to God. This connects the giving in chapter 13 back to the first command to give in *Did.* 1.5 where God wants the believers to share their gifts from God with others.

The word for giving in verse 3 is in the future tense. But in verses 4 and 5 the same verb is used in the imperative mood. The phrase “according to the commandment” (κατὰ τὴν ἐντολήν) appears twice, in verse 5 and in verse 7 of this passage. It is clearly a command to share. Earlier, after the discussions on sharing in *Did.* 4:5–8, verse 13 directs the believers not to abandon the commandments of the Lord.

The directive to support gospel workers is not unknown in the New Testament and its usage in the *Didache* is similar to Matt 10:9, 10. When Jesus sends out the twelve,

¹⁰⁶This is the first place in Christian literature where Old Testament laws relating to the priests and Levites are used as support for a system of providing for the economic needs of Christian workers.

¹⁰⁷This command for giving firstfruits (ἀπαρχή) of ἀργυρίου δὲ καὶ ἱματισμοῦ καὶ παντὸς κτήματος is qualified by the phrase “as it seems good to you.” This is probably the result of this type of giving not being referenced in the Old Testament firstfruits laws discussed below. On κτήματος, see above.

¹⁰⁸Cf. *Did.* 1.5.

He says, “Do not take along any gold or silver or copper in your belts; take no bag for the journey, or extra tunic, or sandals or a staff; for the worker is worth his keep.” A similar passage is found in Luke 10:7. The apostles are not to take anything with them as they travel from place to place. In addition, 1 Tim 5:18 quotes Deut 24:14,15 about the worker deserving his wages in reference to workers for the community of believers. Finally, in 1 Cor 9:13, 14, Paul when defending his right to be supported materially states, “Don’t you know that those who work in the temple get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in what is offered on the altar. In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel.” But while the New Testament discusses the need for providing materially for the needs of those who work for God, it does not speak of giving the first of everything you own (κτῆματος) to fulfill this obligation. One must look to the Old Testament to find the origins of this practice in the biblical context.¹⁰⁹

The concept of ἀπαρχή (firstfruits) is mentioned multiple times in the Old Testament as well as the New Testament. There is a difference, however. In the Old Testament, the word is used for the material giving of the first or best or even just a portion of one’s goods to the priests of God. It is used almost exclusively in the Pentateuch for describing the ceremonial offerings of Israel.¹¹⁰ However, in the New

¹⁰⁹In addition, this practice was not entirely unknown outside of Judaism and Christianity. The ἀπαρχή (firstfruits) were given by the Greeks to the gods before the remainder could be used for profane use. See for instance Homer’s *Odyssey* 14.422 and Herodotus’ *Histories* 1.92.2. Moises Silva ed., “ἀπαρχή” *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 1:345, 346.

¹¹⁰See below.

Testament, the idea takes on a spiritual dimension.¹¹¹ Used primarily by Paul, the believers in Rom 8:23 are said to have the firstfruits of the Spirit. Individuals can be the firstfruits (Rom 16:5) while Jesus is also listed as the firstfruits from the dead (1 Cor 15:20). Likewise ἀπαρχή in the Apostolic Fathers is typically spiritual in nature.¹¹²

The giving of firstfruits is an important feature in the Old Testament economy. Here the focus is not just on ἀπαρχή, which can include other types of offerings, but specifically on the firstfruits offerings themselves designated in Hebrew as בְּכוֹרִים or תְּשִׁיבָה. The Israelites are commanded to give the first things to the priests. Exod 22:29 says, “Do not hold back offerings from your granaries or your vats. You must give me the firstborn of your sons. Do the same with your cattle and your sheep. Let them stay with their mothers for seven days, but give them to me on the eighth day.” In Lev 23:10 the Lord commanded Moses to tell people to bring a sheaf of the first grain after they enter the promised land. In Num 15:19, 20 a portion is to be set aside for the Lord, “Eat the food of the land, present a portion as an offering to the Lord. Present a cake from the first of your ground meal and present it as an offering from the threshing floor.” Deut 18:4 also tells the Israelites what to give to the priests, “You are to give them the firstfruits of your grain, new wine and oil, and the first wool from the shearing of your sheep.” Deut 26:2–11 describes what the Israelites were to do when they entered the promised land and

¹¹¹There is one example of this in the Old Testament in Jer 2:3 where Israel is the firstfruits of God’s harvest.

¹¹²See for instance *1 Clement* 24.1 where Jesus is the firstfruits and 42.4 where people are described as firstfruits. *1 Clement* 29.3 compares the harvest of God to the Old Testament idea of a man gathering the firstfruits from his threshing floor. *Barnabas* 1.7 is the only other Apostolic Father to use ἀπαρχή outside of *Did.* 13.

settled it. “Take some of the firstfruits of all that you produce from the soil of the land the Lord your God is giving you and put them in a basket.” The offering of the firstfruits is tied with entering the promised land that the Lord gave to the Israelites. And the first fruits are mostly of an agricultural nature except in Exod 22:29 where the first-born sons are to be given to the Lord and redeemed.¹¹³

From this overview, it is seen that the *Didache* differs in one way. *Did.* 13:3–7 not only mentions agricultural products and animals, but in addition, it speaks of the firstfruits of money, clothing and everything you own that should be given to the prophets/priests (ἀργυρίου δὲ καὶ ἱματισμοῦ καὶ παντὸς κτήματος λαβὼν τὴν ἀπαρχήν, ὡς ἂν σοι δόξῃ). This addition may reflect a move from the agrarian economy of ancient Israel.¹¹⁴

One possibility for understanding this practice is that the giving of the first of everything is the same as the giving of tithe. This seems to be possible since the *Didache* mentions giving the first fruit of everything you own (13:7, παντὸς κτήματος), not merely the first fruits of one’s agricultural products as is stated in the Old Testament. But the word tithe is not used in the *Didache*. And the Old Testament clearly differentiates between first fruits and tithe. The Torah does not mention money, clothing or everything you have as part of the firstfruits offering. According to Num 18:8–32 the first fruits, along with other offerings, go to the priests and the tithes go to the Levites. The Levites

¹¹³This seems to echo back to Ex 13:2, 15 and the tenth plague on the firstborn.

¹¹⁴Josephus does briefly mention firstfruits in *Ant.* 16.172, noting that Augustus and Agrippa had permitted the Jews to carry their firstfruits back to Jerusalem without being harassed. Josephus does not elaborate on what is included in this offering in his time.

then pass on a tenth/tithe of this tithe to the priests. The offering of first fruits does not refer to a precise amount, but tithe is specified as the tenth.¹¹⁵ Also, in Neh 10:37, 38 the distinction between first fruits and tithes is clear with the first fruits going to the priests and the tithe going to the Levites. Thus, it seems clear that the idea of the first fruits of everything you own standing in place of tithe does not come from the Old Testament. The *Didache* does not specifically mention a “tenth” but only “first fruit.” Del Verme is convinced that the idea of first fruits of everything comes to the *Didache* from the *halakha* and contemporary Jewish practice of paying the priestly offering and tithes on all possessions.¹¹⁶ Strict and pious Jews who belonged to religious associations “originated the post-Torah expansions and elaborations of tithing and of other offerings” for the prophets and the poor in the Jewish Christian community.¹¹⁷

Some scholars say that giving firstfruits was a means of providing every day support for the prophets¹¹⁸ because every prophet is worthy of his food in 13:1. Milavec disagrees and argues that day to day support of the needs of the prophets obscures the

¹¹⁵E. P. Sanders, *Jewish Law from Jesus to Mishnah* (London: SCM Press, 1990), 289; Milavec, *The Didache: Faith, Hope and Life of the Earliest Christian Communities, 50–70 C.E.*, 298; Richard A. Horsley, *Bandits, Prophets and Messiahs: Popular Movements at the Time of Jesus* (San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row, 1985), 53.

¹¹⁶Del Verme, *Didache and Judaism*, 192, 196.

¹¹⁷*Ibid.*, 196.

¹¹⁸Schöllgen, “The *Didache* as a Church Order: An Examination of the Purpose for the Composition of the *Didache* and its Consequences for its Interpretation,” 58 fn. 89.

reason to give first fruit to the prophet and then have prophets offer it to the Lord.¹¹⁹ Also, it “obscures the distinction between first fruits and tithes. . . . The first fruits (a token portion) were set aside for the Lord; the tithes (a full tenth) were set aside for the Levites, who, in their turn, took a tithe of what they received and gave it to the priests.”¹²⁰ More than that, the prophets don’t need that support as they stay at somebody’s house as guests and eat their meals with them. Milavec says that the purpose of the first fruit is the acknowledgment of the fact that all the land belongs to the Lord, He is the owner of it, based on Lev 23:10–14. “Thus, the practice of offering first fruits would have been a settled instinct that new converts brought with them.”¹²¹ However, the Gentile converts are being taught that “apart from God, nothing happens” (*Did.* 3:10).¹²² The belief in God and in the idea that everything belongs to Him as taught in the Old Testament and reiterated in the New Testament motivated the community of the *Didache* to share their firstfruits with the prophets who are their spiritual teachers.

What is of note is that the poor are specifically directed to be the recipients of these possessions and funds of the firstfruits offering if there is no prophet available to receive them. No apostles, bishops or deacons are mentioned as other Christian workers who should receive the first fruits offerings in this Christian community if there is no prophet present. The position of prophet is the only one that is identified among the

¹¹⁹Milavec, *The Didache: Faith, Hope and Life of the Earliest Christian Communities, 50–70 C.E.*, 500.

¹²⁰*Ibid.*, 501.

¹²¹*Ibid.*, 504.

¹²²*Ibid.*, 505.

church offices as comparable to the high priest and thus able to receive the firstfruits offering.

With this attempt at connecting the practices of the early Christian church with the Old Testament, it is noteworthy that the poor are able to receive this offering. While there are clear commands to take care of the poor, especially as they relate to harvesting crops, there is no command in the Torah to take what belongs to the priests and give it to the poor. This new teaching of the church seems an attempt to bridge the new realities of the Christian community where the commands and practices of Judaism do not exactly correspond to those of the Old Testament from which the Jewish members of the community would have drawn many practices and traditions.

In summary, Chapter 13 is a confirmation of the Lord's command to share not only with fellow believers but with those who teach the gospel, namely the prophets who are the community's high priests. In the wider context the command is not to support only the itinerant prophets, but also to support them when they settle down. The belief that motivated giving in this passage of *Did.* 13:1–7 is to follow the Old Testament Levitical command of the Lord in the form of the firstfruits of all ones' possessions.

Beliefs that Motivated Sharing in the *Didache*

It is a challenge to determine the the underlying motivations for the *Didache's* prescriptions regarding sharing and giving in 1.5, 6, 4.5–8, and 13.1–7. While there are possible hints at these, it is important to clarify what sort of community is actually being described in this document as this will direct, to some degree, the understanding of the

motivations behind the giving and sharing practices the *Didache* prescribes.¹²³ There is also the challenge of understanding the difference in giving between 1.6 and 4.7–8b.

¹²³A possible motivation to sharing is suggested in *Did.* 16 which many scholars suggest reflects some of the content of the apocalyptic prophecy of the early Christian church (H. R. Seelinger, “Erwägungen zu Hintergrund und Zweck des apokalyptischen Schlusskapitels der *Didache*,” in *Studia Patristica 21: Papers presented to the Tenth International Conference on Patristic Studies held in Oxford 1987*, ed. E. A. Livingstone (Leuven: Peeters, 1989). Quoted in Draper, “The *Didache* in Modern Research: An Overview,” 41). See also Nancy Pardee, “The Curse that Saves (*Didache* 16.5),” in *The Didache in Context: Essays on Its Text, History and Transmission*, ed. Clayton N. Jefford, Supplements to Novum Testamentum (Leiden: Brill, 1995); Aaron Milavec, “The Saving Efficacy of the Burning Process in *Didache* 16.5,” in *The Didache in Context: Essays on Its Text, History and Transmission*, ed. Clayton N. Jefford, Supplements to Novum Testamentum (Leiden: Brill, 1995). Some scholars suggest that the Two Ways section (1:1–6:1) probably concluded with an eschatological section. Draper cites Niederwimmer’s reasoning, “the Didachist replaced this original conclusion obtained from elsewhere, since ch. 16 shares no material with the eschatological ending of *Doct.*” Draper, “The *Didache* in Modern Research: An Overview,” 39, 40. Cf. Kurt Niederwimmer, *The Didache*, 206–208. It is possible that *Did.* 16 was in fact this eschatological section. If this chapter on the parousia was placed after the Two Ways section with its commands for sharing, then an eschatological connection becomes much clearer in this document. This, however, is not easy to demonstrate and since this study has focused less on possible redactional activities and rather looked at the document as it is presented currently, this possible motivation is only suggested based on chapter 16 as the conclusion to the document. Draper summarizes Wengst (Klaus Wengst, *Didache (Apostellehre), Barnabasbrief, Zweiter Klemensbrief, Schrift an Diognet* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1984), 59–61), who notes that “ethics are given the first place in the way of salvation offered by the *Didache*, as in the Jewish proselyte catechesis from which it derives. Eschatology thus becomes a subordinate aspect of ethics, a simple piece of instruction about the “Last Things.” This, he maintains, represents a significant shift over against Jesus and earliest Christianity, where the expectation of the end included the hope of worldwide, fundamental upheaval, while ethics were an interim arrangement overshadowed by the eschatological horizon.” Draper, “The *Didache* in Modern Research: An Overview,” 41.

Didache 16 begins, “Be watchful for your life. Do not let your lamps be extinguished or your robes be loosed; but be prepared. For you do not know the hour when your Lord is coming.” There are clear eschatological overtones here from Christ’s words in the Gospels. Jesus states in Matt 24:42, “Keep awake therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming.” This is also seen in Luke 12:40 and Mark 13:33–37. What follows in this chapter is a call to gather together as a believing community. In the Christian tradition, the assembling together was important as part of waiting for the coming day of the Lord as seen in Heb 10:25. *Did.* 16.2b gives a call to perfection. “For the entire time of your faith will be of no use to you if you are not found

While 1.6 suggests some degree of caution when giving, 4.7–8b urges that there be no doubting over this and that furthermore, they should share everything with the needy. Both of these points will now be addressed.

In describing the community of the *Didache*, Draper posits a group of insiders who were physically separated from unbelievers.¹²⁴ And in that group, strong internal community interaction was commanded including a directive that “members are to share their material possessions without reserve (1.5; 4.5–8) on the principle that those who share in spiritual things should share still more in material things (4:8).”¹²⁵ He goes further to say that “the strong emphasis upon strict separation from non-members and warm intergroup interaction . . . can also be seen in the rest of the text.”¹²⁶ He notes that

perfect at the final moment.” From there on, the rest of the chapter focuses on deceptions involved in the final days before the return of Jesus in the sky.

Niederwimmer argues, “One should note that here the renunciation of property is not demanded on eschatological grounds (as it was of the disciples in the Jesus tradition).” Niederwimmer, 109 fn. 64. While this study demonstrates that there are eschatological dimensions to the renunciation of property in Acts, *Did.* 16 demonstrates that there is at least some hint of this here as well. The textual connections between the communal sharing of possessions and the expectations of the Lord’s return in the document are brought to light in 4.8, where the sharing of mortal and corruptible can be viewed as a result of sharing the immortal and incorruptible. There is no direct statement of imminence here. Nevertheless, it seems implied by the call to be watchful, be prepared. All of the signs that are discussed in the last part of chapter 16 indicate that while they need to be fulfilled before the parousia, nevertheless, one cannot wait before working towards Christian perfection. This, the *Didache* urges, must take place now because we don’t know when the Lord will come.

¹²⁴Draper, “Social Ambiguity,” 287.

¹²⁵*Ibid.*, 288. In fn. 13 on the same page, Draper admits that after his analysis of *Didache* 1.1–11.2 as initiation ritual he came to see the instructions related to giving in relation to insiders, not outsiders as he had stated earlier on pp. 43–46.

¹²⁶*Ibid.* Cf. *Did.* 8.1, 2; 9.5; 10.5; 16:2; 16.5.

this “twofold emphasis upon separation and community is characteristic of new religious movements which depend upon conversion.”¹²⁷

Niederwimmer sees in this text, based on Old Testament and Jewish tradition, the roots of limitless benevolence even to the point of renouncing one’s right to private property. He understands this sharing with brothers as sharing with fellow members of the religious community.¹²⁸ He points out that “the prescriptions he [the Didachist] gives later, in chaps. 12, 13, point in any case to an almost matter-of-fact joy in giving and readiness to sacrifice within the group (now with a Christian motive), an attitude by which the individual member achieved social security.”¹²⁹

Milavec similarly suggests that sharing was mostly motivated by economic necessity with spiritual implications of stewardship.

Having partnered together in defense against the economic exploitation and expansion in their society, they fashioned new bonds of reciprocal aid and service that effectively placed the resources of each at the disposal of all. . . . In so doing, members thought of their resources as a gift of the Great Patron who willed to distribute his gifts through them as his broker. Using the Lord’s resources accordingly, they expected to be called “faithful” servants when he came at the end of time.¹³⁰

¹²⁷Draper, “Social Ambiguity,” 289. Furthermore, Draper notes that the *Didache* presupposes a large enough community to support the prophets and teachers on their gifts of firstfruits. *Ibid.*, 309.

¹²⁸Niederwimmer, 108.

¹²⁹*Ibid.*, 109.

¹³⁰Milavec, *The Didache: Faith, Hope and Life of the Earliest Christian Communities, 50–70 C.E.*, 227. Milavec combats Crossan’s view of community sharing as the “companionship of empowerment.” John Dominic Crossan, *The Birth of Christianity. Discovering What Happened in the Years Immediately After the Execution of Jesus* (San Francisco, CA: Harper, 1998), 137.

Milavec then seeks to connect the economic value of sharing with the biblical commands for sharing that were prominent in the Old Testament.

Milavec states that the property relations in the Jerusalem church were different from that of the community of the *Didache*.¹³¹ In the community of the *Didache*, the new members joined a new kin group where “the sharing of resources within the community was much more than a pious spiritual exercise. Sharing constituted a veritable safety net whereby a man or woman might be secure” economically.¹³² For Milavec economic security was the main reason the community of *Didache* practiced sharing. Milavec sees the sharing described here in 4.8 is a teaching for the full member of the Christian community while the almsgiving of 1.5 is for the new or prospective member of the community. This internal sharing is only practiced among the insiders, which is in distinction to the surplus sharing in verses 6, 7 which is also shared with outsiders.¹³³ This distinction, however, does not seem warranted. Why would the document, as Milavec says, command sharing “surplus” goods in verses 6, 7 both with insiders and with outsiders while commanding that there be no personal property at all with internal members of the community? There does not seem to be any need or motivation to share surplus goods if all property is already common within the community. Thus the

¹³¹Milavec, *The Didache: Faith, Hope and Life of the Earliest Christian Communities, 50–70 C.E.*, 213.

¹³²*Ibid.*, 217.

¹³³Milavec, “When, Why, and for Whom Was the *Didache* Created? Insights into the Social and Historical Setting of the *Didache* Communities,” 71. See also Milavec, *The Didache: Faith, Hope and Life of the Earliest Christian Communities, 50–70 C.E.*, 201.

progression that Milavec describes from verses 5 through 8 seems to read too much into the text.

Del Verme considers the coexistence of the community of goods and the practice of charity or almsgiving in *Did.* 4¹³⁴ as being of Essene origin though he clearly recognizes that the *Didache* community was not an institution like what the Essenes had.¹³⁵ According to him, the community in *Did.* 4:8 shares perishable goods because they already share the imperishable goods of immortality.¹³⁶ This connects the sharing of material possessions not so much to the past ideas found in the Old Testament but to the future eschaton of the New Testament. Del Verme says that the Didachist might have built on the passages from other Christian sources. The connection between material and spiritual goods is found in Rom 15:26, 27 (“For if the Gentiles have been partakers of their spiritual needs, their duty is also to minister to them in material things”).¹³⁷

Del Verme notes that the “neuter plurals” of πάντα and ἐν τοῖς θνητοῖς in *Did.* 4:8 and ἐν πᾶσιν and ἐν τοῖς φθαρτοῖς in the *Epistle of Barnabas* 19:8 “indicate that the

¹³⁴Del Verme, *Didache and Judaism*, 121–136. For the support of the concept of the community of goods see also Audet, *La Didache: Instructions des apôtres*, 330–335. Against the Essene origins of the *Didache* practice, see Sandt and Flusser, *The Didache: Its Jewish Sources and its Place in Early Judaism and Christianity*, 182–190.

¹³⁵Del Verme, *Didache and Judaism*, 136, 137.

¹³⁶*Ibid.*, 136.

¹³⁷Also in the collection of Christian and Pythagorean moral sayings in the *Sentences of Sextus* (“Those who share a common God as their Father but do not share their goods are wicked”) and in *Ep. Clem. ad Iac.* 9:3 where there is a need of the community of material goods as a result of already existing spiritual goods. *Ibid.*, 136, 137 fn. 73.

community of goods is total.”¹³⁸ After all, everything belongs to God but is entrusted to man as indicated in Jewish thought and in the *Doctrina Apostolorum*.¹³⁹ But in this verse he sees a thematic progression, namely “the transition from general norms regarding charity and almsgiving to the particular situation of the community of goods among the members (or *some* members) of the community.”¹⁴⁰ The transition is expressed by the particle δὲ.¹⁴¹ Del Verme is convinced that all the ethical norms in the “Two Ways” section of the *Didache* can be traced to the Jewish sources. The concept of charity and the community of goods developed alongside many other religious groups during the Middle Judaism period (300 BCE–200 CE). He writes:

In my opinion it appears that the economic and charity situation of the community, regulated by and underlying *Did.* 4:8 is very similar to that found in some Essene groups which – in contrast with the Qumranites – lived scattered in the country that is in villages and cities of the Roman province of Judaea, as reported by Josephus. . . . These Essene communities described by Josephus (and by Philo) somewhat resemble the Zadokites of CD, who appear to be less extremist or radical than the ascetics of Qumran (cf. *IQS*) regarding private property and the practice of charity toward foreigners.¹⁴²

Although Del Verme is correct about the progression from “all” to “brothers” as it is in the Essene groups, this progression between giving alms to the ones in need in general in 1:5 to some form of sharing possessions with one’s brothers and not calling anything your own in 4:8 seems to follow a Christian pattern from Luke rather than simply the Essene pattern. Brothers are fellow believers with whom there is a command

¹³⁸Ibid., 117 fn. 17.

¹³⁹Ibid.

¹⁴⁰Ibid., 122.

¹⁴¹Ibid., 121.

¹⁴²Ibid.

to share. In Luke 6:30 there is a command to share with everyone in need. But later in Acts 2:44, 45 and 4:32–35 there is a community of goods where brothers/believers of the same Christian faith selflessly share with each other. The setting takes us to the question of beliefs that motivated such establishments.

What seems more probable is that the Didachist was writing to a Christian community with Jewish roots. Thus, Milavec is correct to see a connection to the Old Testament. Del Verme also rightly connects this as well to the Christian hope of the parousia. While these scholars' arguments for connections to economic social aid for the community or Essenes influence cannot be completely ruled out, nevertheless, they seem to be secondary to the biblical motives that are apparent.

As noted above, in *Did.* 1:5 there is an initial command to give to anyone asking. But then in *Did.* 4:7, there is a command to give as a ransom for sins because the Father is a good "paymaster." Then there follows reciprocal sharing with one's brother in 4.8, a pattern similar to Acts 2. All of the resources are a gift from God and should be shared with others, inside as well as at times outside the community; it was part of Jewish and Christian living.

In *Did.* 1.5, 6 the motivation for the practice of giving to all who ask seems motivated by a desire to follow God's will. It resembles Luke 6:30 which describes a command from the Lord to give. The author of the *Didache* points out that it is the Father's will that everyone shares the gifts they have with all, together with a warning to potential receivers not to accept charity when one has no need. Everything that one has, whether property, possessions or money, is a gift from God. The Christians were finding some challenges with their commitment to give generously but were persisting anyway while at the same time seeking to minimize abuses they were observing. God is the giver

of all things and He commands Christians to keep sharing with those who ask. But at the same time, in view of *Did.* 1.6 the giver is compelled to use discernment in knowing who has need.

Did. 4:5–8 also express a call to charity to the poor but that call extends only to the community of believers (brothers). Material sharing and spiritual sharing are tied together in this passage. Spiritual sharing of immortal things gives a reason for material sharing. The immortality and incorruptibility which the community of the *Didache* shared pertain to God since God is the only one who is immortal and incorruptible.

While the beliefs motivating sharing in chapters 1 and 4 have much in common with the Gospels and by extension the Old Testament, *Did.* 13:1–7 is more directly following the Old Testament. The Levitical commands regarding firstfruits do not appear in the New Testament, as well as the command to give to the poor if there is no prophet nearby. This demonstrates that the giving was not so much about taking care of the prophet's material needs, as ones standing in place of the Jewish priests, as it was the principle of giving the best to God as discussed in the Old Testament and dealing with the obvious disconnection from the contemporary Jewish priestly economy.

The beliefs that motivated sharing in the *Didache* are similar to the sharing described in the book of Acts and different at the same time. While there was no requirement or law recorded in Acts that compels the early Christians to have all things in common, in the Gospel of Luke there are commands for the followers of Jesus to share possessions. In many instances in Luke, sharing is presented as a command from the Lord. This provides the setting for the descriptions of the believers in Acts practicing material sharing. And in Acts, they do it voluntarily under the power of the Holy Spirit. When compared, the summaries of Acts 2:41–47 and 4:32–35 both end with a description

of the community's goods. That is something that is also seen in *Did.* 4.5–8 as sharing with a “brother.” But there is no context or mention of the Spirit in connection with sharing in the *Didache*. The men of the Spirit are chosen to continue the distribution of food in Acts 6:1–7. In Acts 11:27–30 the Spirit is clearly present in the prediction of the prophet which in turn leads believers to share according to their abilities with other believers who are in need. Also, the miraculous sharing of material possessions described in the early chapters of the book of Acts happened in the context of Acts 2:17, the belief in the “last days.” Although the last chapter of the *Didache* does describe the eschatological coming of the Lord, it is separate from the context of sharing.

CHAPTER V

COMPARISONS AND CONCLUSIONS

This research has studied the beliefs that motivated material sharing in three different communities existing in close time proximity, the community in the book of Acts, the community of the Therapeutae as described in Philo's *De vita contemplativa* and the community of the *Didache*. All three of these communities are said to practice the sharing of material possessions, though they each did so somewhat uniquely. In addition, there were several discernable differences in their belief systems that may have provided differing motivations to their commitment to not hoarding wealth. This chapter will briefly review the conclusions from the study on material sharing and community in the book of Acts and then compare these results with the study on Philo and the *Didache*.

As noted in the delimitations section of chapter 1, this study recognizes the difficulties in probing for personal motivations in both the descriptive and prescriptive documents studied here. However, this study seeks to highlight the different beliefs that may have contributed to the different ways that sharing was practiced and understood among the communities described in Acts, Philo's *De vita contemplativa* and the prescriptive exhortations given to the readers of the *Didache*.

Community in the Book of Acts

The Jerusalem community's sharing happens along with "breaking of the bread," (Acts 2:42; 2:46), the apostles' teaching and prayers and in the wider context of baptisms (2:41), wonders and signs (2:43) and in general in the context of all the first believers

being of one mind and heart (2:46). All of these activities happen under the power of the Holy Spirit which the believers receive on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2, with reaffirmation in Acts 4:31). The fellowship and sharing experienced in the community happens in the context of God's favor falling on the first believers with special signs and miracles done by the apostles as predicted for the "last days" (Acts 2:17).

According to Acts 3:1–6 the apostles do not share any possessions but share spiritual power with the beggar. In these verses the apostles have not yet taken on financial leadership for the growing community. In chapters 4 and 5, money and possessions will be brought to the feet of the apostles to distribute to the needy. And then in chapter 6, there are more people involved in distribution.

Acts 4:32–35 describes a community that was of one heart and one soul and the community's mutual support is expressed in the voluntary pooling of resources. The resources are used to help every person in the community who was in need.

Acts 5:1–11 is closely related to Acts 4:32–37. The members of the Christian community bring the proceeds of what they sell to the apostles' feet. Ananias and Sapphira, however, do not act as genuine believers. And their lying to the Spirit has tragic results. The story of Acts 5:1–11 makes it clear that personal property rights still existed within the community. This pericope in Acts 5 can be seen as in some tension with the general statements found in chapters 2 and 4, where all believers are described as participating in this sharing of everything they had. In Acts 5, Ananias and Sapphira are not interested in sharing "all" they had promised at first. And from Peter's reply, it is apparent that this would have been permissible (vs. 4). Thus, it seems that Ananias and Sapphira could still have been a part of the community without giving all of the proceeds

from the sale of their property even though 2:44 and 4:32 indicate that the community had “everything” in common” and “no one” claimed their possessions as their own.

In Acts 6:1–7 the Spirit continues to lead the believers in resolving the growing demand for sharing with all the believers. What is added in this chapter is the description of a new group of individuals that are now in charge of the food distribution. Those chosen individuals are men full of the Spirit (Acts 6:3). Thus, here the distribution is more structured and not the same as in chapters 2 and 4.

It is possible that the sharing here with the widows is different to some degree, or perhaps, just one manifestation of the broader “all things in common” sharing of Acts 2 and 4. Also, it is not clear if this group is in need of aid because of joining the Jerusalem believers and thus were not able to receive aid that was normally available for other widows or if the community naturally began helping their own widows separate from other aid from the wider Jewish community. Either way, the same Spirit that led the Christians to share is active here and helps in decision making concerning food distribution for the widows.

The same Spirit is at work in Acts 11 as in Acts 1–6. The same miracle of selfless sharing is reflected here. But in Acts 11 the sharing is collected in Antioch and is sent to the community in Jerusalem. The Jerusalem community could not sustain themselves any longer and needed external help from other locations. The same Spirit leads the first believers in Jerusalem, Antioch and Corinth. The sharing described here is not within the same community in Jerusalem any more. It is more of a personal almsgiving type of sharing rather than unified reciprocal sharing that we see earlier in chapters 2–6. Another example of personal sharing is described in Acts 20:35 where Paul gives a personal example of work to be able to provide for the weak. In Acts 24 :17 in his defense before

Felix Paul mentions his bringing alms and offerings to the Jews. Here again, it is more of a personal desire to give alms and offerings than representative of a reciprocal sharing.

In the Gospel of Luke, Luke has already demonstrated that sharing is a command from the Lord (6:30; 12:33; 14:33; 18:18–23). Sharing is commanded in specific situations with urgency and as a habitual action (12:33; 18:18–23). This kind of sharing is similar to the repeated sharing described in the book of Acts (2:42; 4:32). The community of Acts puts Jesus' commands to share into practice by developing a culture of community sharing under the power of the Holy Spirit.

It is true that the other Gospel writers and Paul encourage sharing with the needy (Matt 5:42; 6:1–4; Mark 10:21; Rom 15:26, 27; 1 Cor 16:1–4; 2 Cor 8:1–13; Eph 4:28; 1 Tim 6:18). They also did so under the power of the Holy Spirit and in living out the commands of Jesus. But in the early chapters of the book of Acts sharing reaches its highest fulfillment. The miraculous intervention of the Spirit moves the believers to continuous sharing with their brothers and sisters as a way of life. Everyone operates under the fear of the Lord while praying, breaking bread, fellowshiping and sharing all they have. There is no other place in the New Testament that produces this kind of continual, community sharing. The Spirit brings the transformation of the heart and the desire to share with fellow believers (2:38, 41).

This idea suggests two different possibilities in regard to beliefs that motivated sharing. One might be a simple lack of selfish desire towards material possessions, because of a Spirit-filling conversion, which led to a spirit of giving away of one's possessions. This motive appears strong in Acts 2 and 4. Another possibility is that this was a practice motivated by a general belief that what the individual possessed was to be given automatically to the leadership of the community to distribute "as each had need"

(4:34). Both of these perspectives have a degree of support in the text. What seems apparent is that Acts 2 and 4 should be read as descriptive of the general ethos of the community, that is, to sell property and even houses, and to bring the proceeds to care for the members of the community. It does not seem that this would be what everyone did with their personal homes, as they would presumably soon run out of places to stay in. It is in part, based on these practical realities, that the reading that they shared “all” should be tempered. In addition, the description of ownership of private property highlighted in Acts 5 with the story of Ananias and Sapphira further hints that private ownership of property was still practiced. They did not sell it all, but they considered everything they had at the disposal of all the community of the same believers.

The Spirit, however, beyond being the power of God uniting and animating the believers in their community sharing, is understood as a fulfillment of the Old Testament promise for the last days in Acts 2:17. Thus, in addition to the clear Spirit-led motivation to share material possessions, eschatological beliefs were also active in the community described in the book of Acts. The belief in the hope of the parousia did not lead simply to a desire to help someone less fortunate. It moved far beyond this to a community-based sharing. The Christians in Acts, led by the Spirit, came to believe that the needs of the community were just as important as their own. This led to a community-based approach as described in Acts 4–6. Individuals are called to care about and for each other in the same community of believers.

When suggesting that “last days” motivations were at work in the community, however, it should be understood that it was not simply a result of the belief that possessions would not be needed long because of the parousia, so therefore they could be given away with little cause for concern of a future need for them. Rather, the individual

shares with others not because they no longer have need of the possessions but because they have determined that other individuals in the community have need of them (2:45; 4:35; 5:3). The motivation is not the individual owners lack of need but rather someone else's need of them. This sharing is not an obligation (5:4), but the miraculous transformation of the heart by the Spirit (2:38, 41).

The focus of this research has not been on early Church eschatology, but scholars of this field are fairly unanimous in their belief that in the early period of the Christian church, apocalypticism “was the mother of all Christian theology.”¹ And they mean by this that the theology of the early church was marked by the belief of the soon return of the Lord. While from the vantage point of history or later biblical beliefs, one might question whether the community described in the book of Acts really believed in an imminent parousia or rather simply a return of Christ at some point in the undetermined future, nevertheless, early Church scholars are agreed that this was the viewpoint of the church in the first two centuries of its existence. While the return did not happen as expected by the early Christians, this does not diminish the experience of the believers in Acts concerning the sharing of material possessions.²

¹Ernst Käsemann, “Die Anfänge christlicher Theologie,” in *Exegetische Versuche und Besinnungen* (Göttingen: 1964), 2:100. This statement is quoted positively by Pelikan in support of his idea that the early church experienced a transformation of its apocalyptic vision around the end of the second century as the delay of parousia became permanent. Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100–600)*, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 123–131.

²It is of interest to note the fact that Jesus did not return when the Millerites expected Him in 1844 but it does not diminish the experience that those believers had and the beliefs which propelled them.

Community in Acts and in *De vita contemplativa*

After looking at both the Christian community in the book of Acts and the Jewish community of the Therapeutae as described in Philo's *De vita contemplativa*, a comparison of these two groups shows very few similarities in the area of community sharing. Both groups existed in a similar time and a similar general area. Similar vocabulary is used to describe possessions in both *De vita contemplativa* and the book of Acts. The word *κοινωνία* is used only once but in a pivotal manner in both documents. However, they each have a unique approach to possessions and community sharing. These few similarities are what make the comparison useful. This is because the multiple differences then stand out in the way that both groups experienced community and in how each group related to material possessions.

Different Practices

The community in the book of Acts valued possessions and saw them as having a positive purpose when put to good use in helping the needs of other fellow believers. Therefore, they desired to share them, not to abandon them. For the Therapeutae possessions were viewed somewhat negatively because of their philosophical connection to the material world. Material possessions were believed to be distracting from the more important life of the soul. This is seen in the Therapeutae's practice of leaving the material world and joining a separated community that had limited, if any, contact with the wider society.

It has been demonstrated that *κοινωνία* functions differently in the book of Acts. The Jerusalem community experienced *κοινωνία* through the act of material sharing along with other interactions between the members such as teachings, activities in the temple, breaking of bread from house to house, prayers and praising God on a regular

basis. In other words, *κοινωνία* as material sharing is experienced among a large group of people within a community. As for the Therapeutae, once the new inductees enter the community, they do not have anything material to share and *κοινωνία* is experienced once everything material has been given away.

As demonstrated in chapter 3, for Philo *κοινωνία* is a philosophical ideal of being a true part of humanity which is the focus of all who seek after virtue. In this context, “fellowship” is achieved through “community sharing” of values in pursuit of the highest form of virtue. While it is true that Philo’s personal philosophy is not to be entirely identified with that of the Therapeutae, nevertheless, this wider perspective in Philo matches very well with the way that *κοινωνία* functions in *De vita contemplativa*. It is not the kind of *κοινωνία* experienced by a husband and a wife, between friends, or even between God and humans. For the Therapeutae, it is the existence of being in close proximity to another human who is pursuing the same virtues.³ They live only close enough to each other to have protection from outside elements and not to be too close so as to be considered crowded. This closeness is in reality a physical distance as they do not see each other or interact with the other members of the community during the week. It is apparent, therefore, that *κοινωνία* is not a deep, intimate relationship between people. Instead, it is the human state which when experienced, makes possible the pursuit of contemplation and the higher virtues.

While the community described in the book of Acts lived differently than the rest of the Jews and the wider Greco-Roman culture, they did not completely separate

³Note how *Contempl.* 20 speaks of how the Therapeutae “know how unprofitable and mischievous are associations with persons of dissimilar character.” The goal is for the limited human interactions that the members do engage in to only be with others who are searching for the same vision of God.

themselves physically from the wider society. In Acts, separation occurs more a result of the fear that the outsiders experienced from watching the miraculous power of the Spirit at work. Thus, the believers would gather in the temple precincts as was common among the Jewish people but Acts describes that the outsiders did not dare join them. Unlike the Therapeutae there is no intentional separation from family, friends, or the wider culture required to become a member of the Jerusalem community. There is also no separation between the active life before joining the community and the later contemplative life that was required of all to join the community of the Therapeutae.

This fact is perhaps best illustrated in Acts 5. Ananias and Saphira's example is a voluntary giving of any amount they desired to give. In Acts 5:4 it reads, "While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control?" Their giving was not a prerequisite to acceptance into the community. While there was a community-wide attitude of sharing rather than hoarding within the Acts community, it did not carry with it an intrinsic negative attitude towards material goods. With the Therapeutae, however, giving up possessions marked the entrance into the new community of all contemplatives. Possessions in Acts were a part of their lifestyle of providing for the needs of the community of believers, not as a means of achieving a higher spiritual life as it was for the contemplatives in *De vita contemplativa*.

The Therapeutae separated themselves from society to experience solitary life and some degree of *κοινωνία*. The community of the Therapeutae abandoned possessions and rejected most earthly activities except the basic needs of food and limited human interaction with fellow contemplatives. They sought spiritual peace in the desert, isolated from the rest of the world. They searched for wisdom and a vision of the Divine. They spent most of their time in isolation and met only for *κοινωνία* and worship on Sabbaths

and on holidays. Possessions were part of the world they did not want to live in. They perceived themselves as partially living in this world and partially in the world to come. Contemplation and purification of the soul were the main goals of the community of the Therapeutae. And though it was not clear whether they believed the messianic age would come soon, they already lived a different lifestyle.

Different Beliefs

In addition to the different practices of material sharing in the community and a different understanding of *κοινωνία*, the beliefs that motivated sharing are different in Acts compared to Philo's *De vita contemplativa*. The Christians' understanding of anthropology impacted their view of the material world, including possessions. In Acts, as in the rest of Luke and the other New Testament writings, this study sees no dualism and separation of the mind/soul and body after death or before.⁴ In the book of Acts, the disregard of anything material, including possessions, does not equate to the purification

⁴It is recognized that this is a debated subject in New Testament studies. The traditional understanding of a dichotomy of the human person in Christian studies is well established. This is illustrated by Polhill's comments on Matt 10:28: "'Body' and 'soul' point to a fundamental dualism in human beings. In this life, of course, body and soul are closely united, and God will eventually reunite them in the resurrection body. But Scripture consistently teaches that the two are separated at death (see Luke 23:43; 2 Cor 5:1–10; Phil 1:23–24)." Polhill, 177, 178. In contrast to this view, seen by some as a Greek intrusion into the New Testament, Green argues that the New Testament took some elements of the basic Greek understanding and rejected others. Joel Green, "'Bodies-That is, Human Lives': A Re-Examination of Human Nature in the Bible," in *Whatever Happened to the Soul? Scientific and Theological Portraits of Human Nature*, ed. Warren S. Brown et al. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1998), 152–154. For studies on this, see Eduard Schweizer, "Psyche in the New Testament," *TDNT* 9 (1974); Joel Green, *Body, Soul, and Human Life: The Nature of Humanity in the Bible*, Studies in Theological Interpretation (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008); Nancey Murphy, *Bodies and Souls, or Spirited Bodies* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

of the soul.⁵ The destiny of the human being in Acts is a bodily resurrection at the second coming.

On the contrary, a dualism of the body and soul, with the understanding of the soul's spiritual purification before death and later ascension to its prior state, motivated the Therapeutae to leave their possessions and flee from society (*Contempl.* 13; 90). Material possessions are a hindrance to the spiritual self-realization for the Therapeutae because of their dualistic understanding of the nature of man. The passions of the soul and needs of the body are almost entirely suppressed. In the region of the Mareotic Lake, they lived a contemplative life with only very short interactions with each other as part of still living in the body.

In Acts, anthropology is connected with eschatology. The community of Acts shared possessions as a means to support fellow believers with the same destiny. Their minds were already transformed although their bodies will be changed after the second coming of God. Supernatural power is driving the community's life. Fellowship and communal sharing takes place in the context of fear of God falling on the first believers and special signs and miracles done by the apostles as predicted for the "last days."

There is no distinct eschatology in *De vita contemplativa*, only some hints to the coming, future changes. But those changes are related to the personal internal transformation of the soul after death and not an external power associated with the parousia or God's intervention into future events. The community of the Therapeutae

⁵Greek philosophy has long connected asceticism with preparing the soul for union with the divine. "In the mystery religions it was through the ritual, through union with the god, and, in some cases, through a life of ascetic purification of the soul, that the initiate attained a new, immortal life and expected to live with the gods after death." Richard Bauckham, *2 Peter, Jude*, Word Biblical Commentary 50 (Dallas, TX: Word, 1998), 180.

show signs of longing for the new world to come, but not the same kind of new world as the Christians in the book of Acts longed for. For the Therapeutae, the new world would bring the deliverance of the Jewish nation and the transformation of the souls of the whole nation along with the ones who joined them. Their beliefs were a mixture of Jewish and Platonic thought. There might be a Messiah who would free the purified souls of the Jewish nation, but there is no mention of any kind of resurrection in *De vita contemplativa* which was the key event of the Christian hope.

On another theme, the power of the Holy Spirit is very prominent in the passages of Acts connected with material sharing but plays no role with the Therapeutae. In Acts, this sharing happens as a miracle of the Spirit, who is guiding and leading the believers in selfless giving to others. The ultimate cause of the community's mutual support and sharing is the power of the Holy Spirit. It is only by being filled with the Spirit that the believers share in teaching, in prayer and in material possessions.

In addition to living in the power of the Holy Spirit, Luke's descriptions clearly portray this sharing in the context of a continuation of the command of Jesus to share one's possessions with others as found in Luke's Gospel. Christ's command to share is lived out voluntarily under the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit. Living under the Spirit produces the desire to share among the believers.

In conclusion, the two communities, the community of the Therapeutae and the community described in the book of Acts, are each unique on their own while at the same time both share a practice that is counter-cultural. Although they both gave up worldly possessions, the concept of *κοινωνία* is understood differently and the motivations for doing so are different based on their different beliefs. The motive in Acts was support of needy believers, under the power of the Holy Spirit, in light of the hope of the second

coming of Jesus, in fulfillment of the command of Jesus himself. In contrast, the motive for the Therapeutae was spiritual self-realization.

Community in Acts and in the *Didache*

The community of the *Didache* and that described in the book of Acts, as might be expected, share common traits both tracing their story to the preaching of Jesus of Nazareth. Both communities shared possessions with others. They both had spiritual reasons to do so. The community in Acts started the practice of sharing in connection with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost when they were “of one heart and one soul.” They gathered together, they prayed, they shared bread together and they witnessed miracles done by the apostles. The community of the *Didache* were called to share mortal, or material, possessions because the Lord commanded them to do so and because they already shared the immortal, the belief in the second coming of the Lord and its resultant immortality.

While there is no requirement or law recorded in Acts that compelled the early Christians to have all things in common, in the Gospel of Luke there are commands for the followers of Jesus to share possessions. In many instances in Luke, sharing is presented as a command from the Lord (e.g. Luke 6:30). This provides the setting for the descriptions of the believers in Acts 2 and 4 practicing material sharing. Even though some scholars argue for a strong social and economic benefit for sharing in the *Didache* community, this study sees a stronger connection to the commands from the Gospels for sharing and giving. The progression between giving alms to the ones in need in *Did.* 1:5 to some form of reciprocal sharing with the brother in 4:8 appears to follow a Christian pattern from Luke. Brothers are fellow believers with whom there is a command to share. In Luke 6:30 there is a command to share with everyone in need. But later in Acts 2:44,

45 and 4:32–35 there is a community of goods where believers of the same Christian faith selflessly share with each other.

Although there seem to be more similarities between the Jerusalem community in Acts and the prescribed actions for those reading the *Didache*, there are differences as well. First of all, the document of the *Didache* is different than the book of Acts. The *Didache* is a manual of behavior and not a story of the early believers as the book of Acts describes. The *Didache* gives multiple commands to guide the way of living for Christians. While Acts does have prescriptive elements in places, (2:38; 6:2; 20:35) and some places where normative truths are discussed (5:3, 4) nevertheless the general tenor of the pericopes related to this study are more descriptive in nature.

In Acts, the believers appear to have all things in common voluntarily under the power of the Holy Spirit. When compared, the summaries of Acts 2:41–47 and 4:32–35 both end with a description of the community’s sharing. That is something that is also seen in *Did.* 4.5–8 as sharing with a “brother.” But there is no context or mention of the Spirit in connection with sharing in the *Didache*. The men of the Spirit are chosen to continue the distribution of food in Acts 6:1–7. In Acts 11:27–30 the Spirit is clearly present in the prediction of the prophet, which in turn leads believers to share according to their abilities with other believers who are in need.

In addition, the miraculous sharing of material possessions described in the early chapters of the book of Acts happen in the context of Acts 2:17, the belief in the “last days.” Although the last chapter of the *Didache* does describe the eschatological coming of the Lord, it is separate from the context of sharing.

The practice in Acts 4 and 6 of the direct involvement of the apostles and their appointed helpers in the collection and distribution of goods is also something that is not

described in the *Didache* as taking place. While recognizing that it is difficult to be dogmatic regarding this point, it does seem that the sharing in the *Didache* is at a person to person level as an act of personal philanthropy while in Acts, at least in chapters 4–6, there is apostolic administrative control over the process. Thus, Acts describes more of a community-based sharing. And later, in chapter 6 there is a selection of seven additional men to further the carrying out this function in response to the need of taking care of the widows.

The beliefs motivating sharing in the *Didache* 1 and 4 have much in common with the Gospels and by extension the Old Testament. But *Did.* 13:1–7 more directly follows the Old Testament. The Levitical commands regarding firstfruits do not appear in the New Testament. Firstfruits is used metaphorically in Rom 8:23; 1 Cor 15:20, 23; 16:15; James 1:18; and Rev 14:4 usually in reference to believers. The New Testament also does not have the command to give to the poor if there is no prophet nearby. This demonstrates that the giving discussed in the *Didache* was not so much about taking care of a prophet's material needs with the prophets taking the place of the Old Testament Levitical priests. Rather, the *Didache* was urging the principle of giving the best to God as commanded in the Old Testament and dealing with the obvious disconnection from the contemporary Jewish priestly economy.

In summary, the beliefs that motivated sharing in the *Didache* show both similarities and dissimilarities to the book of Acts. The prescriptive pattern of the *Didache* follows Luke-Acts in fulfilling the command from Jesus to give to everyone who asks (*Did.* 1.5, 6) and also to share with your brother (*Did.* 4:5–8). But at the same time in chapter 13 it fulfills the Old Testament command to give firstfruits. There is no Spirit mentioned in the *Didache* and no eschatological beliefs connected with the sharing.

Conclusions

In the course of this study, it has been demonstrated that sharing material possessions with other believers is depicted as one of the extensions of Christian faith and love in the book of Acts. The material element of *κοινωνία* plays a prominent role in understanding several of the key texts in Acts analyzed in this study. The first believers continued in the teachings, in the fellowship of material sharing and in the breaking of the bread and the prayers. Property and possessions are concretely shared so that all believers have their needs met.

Studying two other contemporary writings, Philo's *De vita contemplativa* and the *Didache*, has contributed to a better understanding of the practice of sharing and the unique motivations suggested as behind the selfless sharing in Acts. It has helped in clarifying how the sharing that happened in Acts was unique in its nature in comparison to two contemporary parallels. Acts 2–6 illustrate a Spirit-led implementation of the teachings of Jesus in such a way that unity extended beyond beliefs and even practices to include a common sense of material possessions. This unique mix included a simple administrative structure that did not overwhelm the sense of Spirit-directed life of the community's sharing.

In contrast to spiritual self-realization among the community of the Therapeutae, the early Christians in Acts shared everything as a result of the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit that was among them that was promised in the "last days." While the Therapeutae were focused on an inward, contemplative life and lived separate from the world, the community in Acts was outward focused, interactive in learning from the apostles, communal in nature and focused in Spirit-led service based on the teachings of Jesus.

This type of Spirit-led community life stands in contrast with what eventually developed within the Christian church with a diminishment in the role of the Spirit and a concretization of administrative authority in the church hierarchy, perhaps in embryonic form illustrated in the *Didache*. While sharing, following the Lord's command and laws from the Old Testament, was still a vital part of community of the *Didache*, the Spirit is not mentioned there as it is in Acts. In Acts, there is no exhortation to live out *κοινωνία* through having "all things in common." Rather it seems to appear as an organic response to the power of the Spirit. In the *Didache*, however, the community must be called to a life of material sharing with the specifics of giving to those in need outlined for the members to read. Thus, the common description of the *Didache* as a church manual is appropriate. The members must be told what they must do.

The natural outflow of a community-based *κοινωνία* as a way of life is perhaps a most striking finding of this comparison between these communities. This then perhaps partly answers the question of why the practice died out. That is, it was never a normative command that had to be fulfilled in order to become a follower of Christ. Rather it was the supreme example of what might happen among a group of believers when a Spirit-empowered community lived in the expectation of the parousia.

When looking to further research that is suggested by this study, the question of the lasting effects of the three communities is one that bears further study. What were the effects of the Therapeutae and the *Didache* on early Christian monasticism? These are further questions to explore.

APPENDIX I

DATING OF THE *DIDACHE*

The *Didache* is an anonymous document, and since materials similar to the *Didache* were found in both Christian¹ and Jewish² writings from the first through the fifth centuries, different scholars have debated regarding its mixed composition from mixed sources and its different stages of development.³ It is apparent that the *Didache* has both Jewish and Christian elements.

¹For the Christian parallels to the *Didache* in the literature of earliest Christianity see *Epistle of Barnabas* 18–20, *Doctrina Apostolorum*, *Canons of the Apostles* 4–13, *Life of Shenoute*. See also, Leslie W. Barnard, “The Dead Sea Scrolls, Barnabas, the *Didache* and the Later History of the ‘Two Ways,’” in *Studies in the Apostolic Fathers and Their Background*, ed. Leslie W. Barnard (Oxford: Blackwell, 1966), 87–107; Francis Crawford Burkitt, “Barnabas and the *Didache*,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 33 (1932): 25–27; Frederick E. Vokes, “The *Didache* and the Canon of the New Testament,” *Studia Evangelica* 3, no. 2 (1964): 427–436; James Muilenburg, “The Literary Relations of the Epistle of Barnabas and the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles” (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1929), 41–44.

²The Jewish character of the first part of the *Didache*, the Tractate on the Two Ways, was noticed by many, especially after the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls. For the discussion of Jewish character in the *Didache* see Suggs, “The Christian Two Way Tradition: Its Antiquity, Form, and Function,” 62, 63; C. Taylor, *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles, with illustrations from the Talmud* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1886); Niederwimmer, 38–54; John Martin Creed, “The *Didache*,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 39 (1938): 377–379; Edgar J. Goodspeed, “The *Didache*, Barnabas and the *Doctrina*,” *Anglican Theological Review* 27 (1945): 230–247. Cf. Del Verme, *Didache and Judaism*.

³Audet, *La Didache: Instructions des apôtres*; Niederwimmer, 42–52; Schöllgen, “The *Didache* as a Church Order: An Examination of the Purpose for the Composition of the *Didache* and its Consequences for its Interpretation.”; Jefford, “Did Ignatius of Antioch Know the *Didache*?”; Wengst, *Didache (Apostellehre), Barnabasbrief, Zweiter*

Early scholars of the *Didache* date its composition differently. Bryennios has the date between A.D. 120–160 because the *Didache* uses material from *Epistle of Barnabas* and *Shepherd of Hermas*.⁴ One early prominent scholar who studied the *Didache*, Harnack, concludes that the *Didache* provides evidence for the life of the earliest Christian church and establishes the earliest order of apostles, prophets, and teachers versus bishops, priests and deacons in the later Christian church order.⁵ According to him the *Didache* is a mid-second century document (A.D. 140–165) from Egypt. He bases his argument on Clement of Alexandria’s use of the *Didache*, its dependence on *Epistle of Barnabas* and *Shepherd of Hermas* in the Two Ways Section and on the passage about the wandering brothers in chapter 11. Based on the command in *Did.* 8 not to associate with the hypocrites, Harnack considers the *Didache* as a set of instructions for Gentile Christians who have totally broken off their Jewish roots.⁶ Hilgenfeld follows Harnack and dates it between A. D. 160–190.⁷

Klemensbrief, Schrift an Diognet; Willy Rordorf, “The *Didache*,” in *The Eucharist of the Early Christians*, ed. Willy Rordorf (New York, NY: Pueblo, 1978).

⁴Philotheos Bryennios, *Διδαχὴ τῶν δώδεκα ἀποστόλων* (Constantinople: S. I. Boutura, 1883). Also see Draper, “The *Didache* in Modern Research: An Overview,” 4, 5.

⁵Harnack, *The Mission and Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries*, 319–368. For a similar position on the origin of the *Didache* see A. Krawutzcky, “Über die sogenannte Zwölfapostellehre, ihre hauptsächlichsten Quellen und Ihre erste Ausnahme,” *Theologische Quartalschrift*, no. 4 (1884); A. Hilgenfeld, *Novum Testamentum extra canonem receptum, Evangeliorum* (Leipzig: Weigel, 1884).

⁶Harnack, *The Mission and Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries*, 319–368.

⁷Hilgenfeld, *Novum Testamentum extra canonem receptum, Evangeliorum*, 87–121.

A large number of other scholars see the *Didache*'s origin as being from the Jewish Christian community and favor an earlier date.⁸ Zahn dates it between A.D. 80 and A.D. 120,⁹ Farrar at A.D. 100¹⁰, Lightfoot at A.D. 80 to A.D. 100¹¹ and Schaff between A.D. 90 and A.D. 100.¹² All of these scholars date it as early as the last quarter of the first century.

In the 1920s, Knopf dated the *Didache* between 90 and 150 A.D. in Syria-Palestine because of the reference to mountains, and he leads the scholarly consensus that the Two Ways section is not taken from *Barnabas* and *Hermas*, but “from a common source in a Jewish proselyte catechism, which contained chs. 1–6 without 1:3–2:1, and probably most of ch. 16 as an eschatological conclusion.”¹³

⁸For a list of early scholars who considered the *Didache* as a Jewish Christian document see Draper, “The *Didache* in Modern Research: An Overview,” 8, 9.

⁹Theod Zahn, *Forschungen zur Geschichte des N.T.-lichen Kanons und der altkirchlichen Literatur* (Deichert: Erlangen, 1884), 278–319.

¹⁰Frederic W. Farrar, “The Teaching of the Apostles,” *The Contemporary Review*, 45 (1884):698-706.

¹¹J. B. Lightfoot, “Results of recent Historical and Topographical Research upon the Old and New Testament Scriptures,” *The Expositor*, no. January (1885).

¹²Philip Schaff, *The Oldest Church Manual called the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1885), 122.

¹³Rudolf Knopf ed., *Die Lehre der Zwölf Apostel-Zwei Clemensbriefe* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1920), 2, 3. Quoted in Draper, “The *Didache* in Modern Research: An Overview,” 10.

Several scholars again argue for the *Didache*'s dependence, especially the first six chapters or the Two Ways, on early Christian writings such as *Barnabas*,¹⁴ Ignatius,¹⁵ and the Synoptic Gospels¹⁶ since a similar motif of two ways appears in those documents. Consequently, these scholars date the *Didache* in the third century.¹⁷

After the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, it became clear that the model of Two Ways existed before Christianity, which makes it possible that the Two Ways section comes from an early date. The work of Audet¹⁸ and Rordorf¹⁹ on the Two Ways tradition "has succeeded in removing any possibility that the *Didache* is dependent on

¹⁴J. A. Robinson, "The Epistle of Barnabas and the Didache," *Journal of Theological Studies*, 35 (1934): 225-248; Richard Hugh Connolly, "Barnabas and the Didache," *Journal of Theological Studies* 38 (1937); Muilenburg. Robinson also argued that the author of the *Didache* depended on Barnabas, Hermas and the gospel of Matthew (J. A. Robinson, *Barnabas, Hermas and the Didache: Being the Donnellan Lectures Delivered before the University of Dublin in 1920* (London: SPCK, 1920), 67.

¹⁵B. H. Streeter, "The Much Belaboured Didache," *Journal of Theological Studies*, no. 37 (1936).

¹⁶Massaux, *The Influence of the Gospel of Saint Matthew on Christian Literature before Saint Irenaeus I: The First Ecclesiastical Writers*; Wengst, *Didache (Apostellehre), Barnabasbrief, Zweiter Klemensbrief, Schrift an Diognet*; Tuckett, "Synoptic Tradition in the Didache"; Layton, "The Sources, Dates and Transmission of Didache 1:3b-2:1."

¹⁷Robinson, *Barnabas, Hermas and the Didache: Being the Donnellan Lectures Delivered before the University of Dublin in 1920*, 82.

¹⁸Jean-Paul Audet, "Affinités littéraires et doctrinales du 'Manuel de Discipline'," *Revue Biblique*, no. 59 (1952). Also in English Jean-Paul Audet, "Literary and Doctrinal Relationships of the 'Manual of Discipline'," in *The Didache in Modern Research*, ed. Jonathan A. Draper (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996).

¹⁹Willy Rordorf, "Un chapitre d'éthique judéo-chrétienne. Les deux voies," *Religious Studies Review*, no. 60 (1972). Also, in English Willy Rordorf, "An Aspect of the Judeo-Christian Ethic: The Two Ways," in *The Didache in Modern Research*, ed. Jonathan A. Draper (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996).

Barnabas. . . . However, the question of the relationship between the *Didache* and Barnabas may not yet be closed.”²⁰ According to Draper, “the *Didache* is closer to remnants of the Two Ways tradition found in the Rabbinic writings. . . .”²¹ With the Two Ways section of the *Didache* being independent of *Barnabas*, scholars have begun dating it earlier, even into the first century.

Many dispute the dependence of the *Didache* on the gospel tradition.²² Most of them conclude that the *Didache* and the canonical Gospels shared a common source.²³ Niederwimmer clarifies that “we should make a basic distinction between the sources (literary sources and oral traditions) and the redactor or compiler of the book.”²⁴ Draper and Niederwimmer point out that

²⁰Draper, “The *Didache* in Modern Research: An Overview,” 16. Also see Draper, “Barnabas and the Riddle of the *Didache* Revisited”; Rordorf, “The *Didache*”; Audet, *La Didache: Instructions des apôtres*.

²¹Draper, “The *Didache* in Modern Research: An Overview,” 15. See also Huub van de Sandt, “*Didache* 3,1–6: A Transformation of an Existing Jewish Hortatory Pattern,” *Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic and Roman Period* (1992); Gedaliah Alon, “Halakah in the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles (*Didache*),” in *The Didache in Modern Research*, ed. Jonathan A. Draper (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996); David Flusser and Huub van de Sandt, “The Two Ways,” in *Jewish Sources in Early Christianity* (Tel Aviv: Sifriat Poalaim, 1979), 232–252.

²²Glover, “The *Didache*’s Quotations and the Synoptic Gospels”; Jefford, *The Sayings of Jesus in the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*; Draper, “The Jesus Tradition in the *Didache*”; Rordorf and Tuilier, “Does the *Didache* Contain Jesus Tradition Independently of the Synoptic Gospels?”

²³Jefford, *The Sayings of Jesus in the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, 91.

²⁴Niederwimmer, 43. On the contrary, Kraft believed that the *Didache* was written by a community and not an individual (R. A. Kraft, *Barnabas and the Didache* (Toronto: Nelson & Sons, 1965), 4.

references to the ‘gospel’ only occur in passages attributable to the redactor of the *Didache*, and that the word does not refer to the proclamation of the salvation events but only to the *sayings of Jesus* from the Synoptic tradition. The ‘words of the Kurios’ become a new law of Christ, to regulate the life and conduct of the community. Yet there is nothing to prove one way or another whether the redactor of the *Didache* knew and used a written gospel.²⁵

Draper argues that the *Didache* and Matthew could have “evolved together in the same community.”²⁶ According to Niederwimmer several sources were available to the Didachist: “a superficially Christianized originally Jewish document *de duabus viis*, a (written or oral) archaic liturgical tradition concerning baptism and Eucharist, . . .” an “archaic tradition concerning the reception of itinerant charismatics, . . .” and an “apocalyptic description of the end time.”²⁷ “This material the Didachist compiled to form a whole (the Didachist is the compiler), expanded it by means of insertions, and interpreted it (the Didachist is the redactor).”²⁸ According to him the redactor compiled the document at the beginning of the second century.²⁹

Huub van de Sandt and David Flusser consider only the literary source (and not the oral tradition) and conclude that the material in *Did.* 1–6 suggests two layers of composition with the earlier layer (without *Did.* 1:3a–2:1 and 6:2, 3) “closely connected

²⁵Draper, “The *Didache* in Modern Research: An Overview,” 18.

²⁶*Ibid.*

²⁷Niederwimmer, 43.

²⁸*Ibid.*, 44.

²⁹Niederwimmer, 52, 53.

with the Jewish pattern of the Two Ways.”³⁰ Van de Sandt and Flusser, though admitting that the *Didache* is a compilation of several older sources, attempt “to discover the hand of the final editor—called the Didachist—modifying an older tradition.”³¹

More recent research by Milavec treats the *Didache* as a unity that circulated orally in various communities of householders “before any occasion arose that called for a scribe to prepare a textual version.”³² Milavec is open to the early dating (50–70 CE) of the *Didache* and argues “for its interpretation as a well-integrated and self-contained religious system that must be allowed to speak for itself.”³³ More recently, O’Loughlin has, in agreement with Milavec, argued for an early date.³⁴

Contrary to Milavec, del Verme, who has been advancing the research of the Jewish roots of the *Didache*, regards the text of the *Didache* as part of “evolved literature” which indicated “a writing of an active and traditionalist community rather than a book of a sole author.”³⁵ He describes the combination of Jewish and Christian in the *Didache* in the following way,

³⁰Sandt and Flusser, *The Didache: Its Jewish Sources and its Place in Early Judaism and Christianity*, 55.

³¹Ibid., 28. See further *ibid.*, 31–35.

³²Milavec, *The Didache: Faith, Hope and Life of the Earliest Christian Communities, 50–70 C.E.*, vii.

³³Ibid., 739.

³⁴O’Loughlin, *The Didache: A Window on the Earliest Christians*, 26. Svigel also agrees with O’Loughlin’s statement. Michael J. Svigel, “*Didache* as Practical Enchiridion for Early Church Plants,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 174 (2017): 78 n. 3.

³⁵Del Verme, *Didache and Judaism*, 84, 85 fn. 105. See also Kraft, *Barnabas and the Didache*, 4.

In my opinion, the phrase of ‘cohabitation’ of Christian Judaism with other contemporary Judaisms is well documented by the *Didache*, in particular by the earlier *strata* of the work [chapters 1–6], which maybe dated before 70 CE. In later *strata*, by contrast, those written around the end of the 1st century (or according to some, probably at the beginning of the 2nd century), there emerges a community situation that could be already defined as ‘Early Christianity,’ as presence of peculiar rituals and institutions seems to suggest. But there is no trace yet of the Church-Synagogue controversy, which will come to mark, in the second half of 2nd CE, the birth of two distinct religions, Christianity and Rabbinitism (or Rabbinic Judaism).³⁶

It is thus clear that the *Didache* has both Jewish and Christian elements. It contains the two ways, community practices (including the treatment of apostles and prophets), and the apocalyptic discourse.³⁷

In a summary of recent scholarly opinion, Draper concludes, “Although there is still no consensus on the exact date, the range of possible dates suggested does seem to have narrowed significantly among modern scholars, with few arguing for a date later than the beginning of the second century CE , with others arguing for a much earlier date from the mid- to late-first century.”³⁸ He insightfully adds, “it is not surprising that the document is contested and has been from the outset, because it touches in a fundamental way on deep-rooted historical constructions of the early church that relate to legitimations and vested interests of particular denominations and their ecclesiologies.”³⁹

³⁶Del Verme, *Didache and Judaism*, 75.

³⁷See Ehrman who nicely summarizes the tensions between all the parts of the *Didache* (Ehrman, 405–412.)

³⁸Jonathan A. Draper, “Conclusion: Missing Pieces in the Puzzle or Wild Goose Chase? A Retrospect and Prospect,” in *The Didache: A Missing Piece of the Puzzle in Early Christianity*, ed. Jonathan A. Draper et al. (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2015), 530. See also Boyles, 234.

³⁹Draper, “Conclusion: Missing Pieces in the Puzzle or Wild Goose Chase? A Retrospect and Prospect,” 530.

The section of 1.3–2.1 resembles the gospel tradition and is probably a later addition to the Two Ways section. The Two Ways section resembles an earlier Jewish tradition of the *Manual of Discipline*. The community was just starting to establish the “church” structure by starting to elect bishops and deacons as indicated in 15.1. In chapter 8 there is an emphasis on the need for the Christians to fast and pray differently from the Jews and there are clear Christian images of the eucharistic prayers. In the apocalyptic section it is not clear whether the author of the *Didache* relies on a written source or oral traditions and whether the apocalyptic section is taken from Christian (Matthew, Luke, Heb 10:25) or a Jewish proselyte catechism.⁴⁰ The final redactor of this Jewish Christian document most likely “worked with earlier sources (the two paths, the church order, the apocalyptic discourse), putting them together, providing transitions (e.g., 2.1; 7.1) and adding materials (e.g., the “Gospel Section”) as he saw fit.”⁴¹

The combination of Jewish and Christian elements in the *Didache* seems to argue for both too early a date as well as too late of a date of final composition. Too early of a date would not be probable because of the separation between Jews and Christians that is evident. But considering that there are obvious Jewish elements still present seems to preclude a date that gets too far into the second century as division between Jews and Christians is ever widening during this era. With the above evidence, it is reasonable to conclude that it was composed in the first quarter of the second century with parts, such

⁴⁰Draper, “The *Didache* in Modern Research: An Overview,” 10. See also Ernst Bammel, “Pattern and Prototype of *Didache* 16,” in *The Didache in Modern Research*, ed. Jonathan A. Draper (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996), 364.

⁴¹Ehrman, 410, 411.

as the Two Ways section, composed earlier. While a slightly earlier dating is possible, a date later than this seems doubtful.

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