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An Investigation of Some Aspects of the Biblical Theology of New Testament Preaching

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AN INVESTIGATION OF SOME ASPECTS OF THE BIBLICAL THEOLOGY
OF NEW TESTAMENT PREACHING

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by
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to determine the Biblical theology of New Testament preaching with respect to content and character. What was it that the Apostles preached and how did they preach it? What was "preaching" in the New Testament sense of the word? Because there are many divergent opinions and volumes on preaching which have poured out of the publishing houses in this twentieth century, the author was amazed that few have come to grips with answering these questions in a realistic and complete way.

Justification of the Problem

The content and character of New Testament preaching is important historically. William H. P. Hatch has pointed out that,

The historian of Western civilization, whatever his personal beliefs and feelings may be, is obliged to study and appraise a movement which, over a period of nearly two thousand years, has probably affected that civilization more profoundly than any other single force.¹

The preaching of the New Testament message has left its mark everywhere

¹William H. P. Hatch, "The Primitive Christian Message," Journal of Biblical Literature, Vol. 58, Pt. I (March, 1939), p. 2.

in Western civilization from art to the thoughts and actions of men. How can anyone fully appreciate Christianity without some knowledge of the first preachers and their message? Mr. Hatch has well pointed out that "no movement in history is intelligible without some knowledge of its beginnings."²

The theologian is also interested in the content and character of New Testament preaching. In order to understand the great doctrines of Christianity and their importance, he must know what was contained in the original Christian message.

The average person is interested in knowing something about the earliest phase of his religion. He then is in a position to better evaluate such an expression as "the post-Christian era".

Finally, the greatest reason for doing this study is the preacher himself. There is wanting a Biblical theology of preaching to justify the amount of time the minister is called upon to spend in Bible study. The author, numbered among this group, has had a personal interest in knowing what the message of the New Testament preachers was and how they delivered it. Of supreme importance was the desire to know what Christ intended preaching to be.

II. METHOD OF PROCEDURE

The method of solution in Chapter II was to determine the content of New Testament preaching by an investigation of the objects of the verb generally translated "preach" and an examination of the

²Ibid.

recorded sermons plus passages related to the content of preaching in the New Testament.

Chapter III had the burden to find the more prominent characteristics of New Testament preaching by an overall investigation of the New Testament with particular emphasis upon those passages using the word generally translated "preach".

Finally, in the summary the facts that have come to light in the study were condensed and tabulated first, in respect to the content of the Biblical theology of preaching and second, from the standpoint of its character.

III. DEFINITION OF TERMS USED

For the sake of clarity, certain definitions will be given.

Biblical Theology. Dr. A. H. Strong in his Systematic Theology gave the following definition of Biblical theology:

Biblical Theology aims to arrange and classify the facts of revelation, confining itself to the Scriptures for its material, and treating of doctrine only so far as it was developed at the close of the apostolic age.³

Preaching. "Preaching" refers to the rehearsal of "the story of God's redeeming action in Christ that this becomes a living reality in the act of preaching."⁴

³ Augustus Hopkins Strong, Systematic Theology (Philadelphia: The Judson Press, 1907), p. 41.

⁴ Donald G. Miller, The Way To Biblical Preaching (New York: Abingdon Press, 1957), p. 14.

Content of Preaching. "The content of preaching" refers to the actual message recorded as delivered by the preachers in the New Testament.

Character of Preaching. "The character of preaching" refers to the description of prominent traits and or characteristics displayed by the preachers.

Objects of the Verbs Generally Translated "Preach". "Objects of the verbs generally translated 'preach'" refers to what the Authorized Version of the Bible has rendered as the person, place, or thing of the verb "preach" in the New Testament. This is not to imply that no consideration has been given to English versions and to the Greek text behind these translations.

Corroborating Passages. "Corroborating passages" refers to certain selected portions of the Pauline Epistles which support the content of preaching found in the Acts of the Apostles.

IV. DELIMITATION OF STUDY

This study was limited to using as its basis the word translated "preach" in the New Testament of the Authorized Version of 1611. The Nestle Greek text and The New Testament In Four Versions were consulted, but "preach" as found in the Authorized Version remained the basis. This limitation dictated omitting The Epistle of James, The General Epistle of Jude, The First, Second, and Third Epistles of John, and The Revelation of Saint John The Divine.

It was not in the scope of this writing to give an extensive study of the Pauline Epistles supporting the findings of the content of the preaching in the Acts of the Apostles, but only to give certain corroborating passages.

No attempt was made to project a distinction between teaching and preaching in the New Testament.

CHAPTER II

THE CONTENT OF PREACHING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

I. INTRODUCTION

Facing the issue of the content of the Gospel preached by the Apostles, it becomes necessary to go back in time from the twentieth century to the first. What is it that the Apostles are preaching? What are they saying to the people? The New Testament will be the source material used to answer these questions on the content of the preaching.

A large body of material calls for examination. The first inquiry will be to determine the objects of the verbs generally translated "preach" in the New Testament. In addition to this, the sermons in the Acts of the Apostles will be viewed along with corroborating evidence in the Pauline Epistles. Finally, an exploration of the content of the Gospels, Hebrews, and Peter will be conducted.

II. THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

Our study will be confined to the Acts of the Apostles in this section. In the Acts of the Apostles there are four main words used for the activity of Christian preaching.¹

¹F. D. Coggan, The Ministry Of The Word (London: The Canterbury Press, 1945), p. 62.

Objects of the Verbs Generally Translated "Preach"

(1) Euaggelizo. In the papyri this verb is used of a slave coming with news of a general's victory.² In the New Testament it is used in various ways, but the one pertinent to this study is the "mention of the objects of the proclamation."³ The meaning of euaggelizo is to "bring or announce good news."⁴ It will be necessary to list the references in order to look for the objects of this verb. The underscoring was not in the original but added by the author for clarity.

Acts 5:42 "And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ."

Acts 8:4 "Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word."

Acts 8:12 "But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women."

Acts 8:35 "Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus."

Acts 8:40 "But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Caesarea."

²William Barclay, A New Testament Wordbook (New York: Harper & Brothers, n. d.), p. 42.

³William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 317.

⁴Ibid. The prefix eu implies that a good message is the object. Hence a verb-object relationship is necessary to translate it, although one word in the Greek. cf. eudokeo (to give consent); eupoieo (to do good).

Acts 10:36 "The word which God sent unto the children of Israel preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:)"

Acts 11:20 "And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus."

Acts 14:15 "And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein:"

Acts 15:35 "Paul also and Barnabas continued in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also."

Acts 17:18 "Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoics, encountered him. And some said, What will this babblers say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection."

It can be seen that in nine out of the ten occurrences given the objects or the content of the preaching is described. The passage in chapter eight and verse forty merely states that Philip preached in all the cities. The results could be summarized as follows: (1) Four of the nine passages reveal the object to be Jesus in four variations: Jesus (8:35), Jesus Christ (5:42), The Lord Jesus (11:20), and Jesus and the resurrection (17:18). (2) Two passages the object given of the preaching is the Word. It is spoken of as "the word" in 8:4 and as "the word of the Lord" in 15:35. (3) In the remaining three references hints

are given as to the content. In 8:12 it is "the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ." "Preaching peace⁵ by Jesus Christ" is the object in 10:36. Finally, the reference in 14:15 yields the object to be repentance, "that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God."

(2) Kataggello. The meaning of this word is to proclaim, announce, or publish. It is used in the New Testament to proclaim a thing or person as an object.⁶ There are six occurrences in the Book of the Acts of the Apostles.

Acts 4:2 "Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead."

Acts 13:5 "And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John to their minister."

Acts 13:38 "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins:"

Acts 15:36 "And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas, let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do."

Acts 17:13 "But when the Jews of Thessalonica had knowledge that

⁵What is this "peace?" cf. H. A. W. Meyer's comment that it is "the whole Messianic salvation" made known through Christ to the children of Israel (Acts, p. 212).

⁶Arndt and Gingrich, op. cit., p. 410.

the word of God was preached of Paul at Berea, they came thither also, and stirred up the people."

Acts 17:3 "Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ."

From these six references the following conclusions appear:

(1) There is one reference with the simple object "Jesus" (17:3), that He is the Christ. (2) One object is given as "the word of God" (17:13). (3) Two references contain as their object the word preached (13:5, 15:36) "They preached the word of God" and "where we have preached the word of the Lord." (4) One object is given as "the resurrection of the dead." (5) Finally, the remaining reference has as its object preached "the forgiveness of sins" (13:38).

(3) Kērussō. This is the most common word in the New Testament used to describe the act of preaching. It means to announce, to make known, or to proclaim aloud publicly and spread the story widely. It is used of proclamation that is religious in nature. It is used of the proclamation or preaching of the older prophets such as Elijah, Elisha, or Ezekiel, and of the contemporary preachers in the New Testament.⁷

Dr. Hunter gives the following definition: "to PROCLAIM with authority to all and sundry a message with which one has been entrusted."⁸ Dr.

⁷Ibid., p. 432.

⁸Archibald M. Hunter, The Message of the New Testament (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1944), p. 24.

Weatherspoon adds that it is a parable in one word:

Preaching is like a chosen herald of a king riding through the realm summoning men to arms or proclaiming a victory, announcing some new favor or demanding fresh tribute, speaking boldly and in the name of the King whatever word he has received.⁹

Our third word for preaching used in Acts of the Apostles occurs eight times. Its general meaning is "to herald."

Acts 8:5 "Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them."

Acts 9:20 "And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God."

Acts 10:37 "That word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judea; and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached."

Acts 10:42 "And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the judge of the quick and dead."

Acts 15:21 "For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day."

Acts 19:13 "Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth."

⁹Jesse Burton Weatherspoon, Sent Forth to Preach (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1954), p. 62.

Acts 20:25 "And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more."

Acts 28:31 "Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him."

Of these eight references only five are relevant to our purpose. The other three have three different objects. One has no object (10:42), one refers to the preaching of John the Baptist (10:37), and one to preaching which found its center in Moses (15:21).

Three of the five relevant to our purpose have as their object the simple word "Christ" (8:5) or "Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God" (9:20), or else simply "Jesus" as in (19:13). The two remaining references have "the kingdom" (20:25 R.S.V.) and "the kingdom of God" (28:31).

(4) laleō. The meaning of this fourth word is to "speak" and thereby "assert, proclaim, say something."¹⁰ Dr. Coggan made the following observation:

It is used frequently in the straightforward sense of "speaking" or "talking", and is itself suggestive of the informality of the early Christian preaching.¹¹

In all of the following passages where a form of laleō is used the Authorized Version translated it a form of preach, while Dr. Marshall

¹⁰Arndt and Gingrich, op. cit., p. 464.

¹¹Coggan, op. cit., p. 63.

translated it a form of the word speak.¹² It is more correct to take the meaning in the simple sense of speaking and talking.

Acts 8:25 "And they, when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans." The second occurrence of "preached" is euangelizo.

Acts 11:19 "Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only."

Acts 13:42 "And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath."

Acts 14:25 "And when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down into Attalia:"

Acts 16:6 "Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia."

One occurrence (13:42) throws no light on our study of the objects of the verb translated preached. Of the other four passages the object is "the word" or "the word of the Lord" (8:25; 11:19; 14:25;

¹² Marshall, Alfred, The Interlinear Greek-English New Testament (London: Samuel Bagster and Sons Limited, 1958), pp. 499, 516, 526, 531, 538.

16:6).

Summary

The evidence presented on the objects of the verbs generally translated "preach" in the Book of Acts has indicated that:

(1) The most favorite way of giving the content of the preaching in the Acts of the Apostles was by the phrase "the word". The description "of the Lord" or "of God" was used to describe what kind of word was preached. Thus it is suggestive that the preaching of Acts was the word which came from God, not just about Him.

(2) An equally popular way of stating the object of the preaching in the Acts of the Apostles was to give the name "Jesus". Sometimes it was elaborated on as "Jesus Christ" or "the Son of God". This was a simple center for New Testament preaching, yet profound when taken in its entirety of meaning.

(3) The connection between "Jesus" and "the word" was very close. See Acts 4:1-4 where the context indicates that "preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead" and "many which heard the word" was one and the same thing.

Acts 10:36 states "The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ." Here Peter's definition of the word equals peace by Jesus Christ. Finally, Acts 19:10 includes the phrase "all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus."

(4) Taking the other objects all together in a third group,

they become extensions of the first two. When the Kingdom of God was preached it was because Christ had taught it. When they preached "peace" or "forgiveness of sins" it was done through Jesus.

Examination of the Sermons in The Acts of the Apostles

This examination of the sermons in the Acts of the Apostles to determine the content of preaching is done with the assumption that these sermons are not complete discourses but often a summary form. They are, nevertheless, points which the speakers originally gave.

(1) Peter on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:14-40) saw a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. Verse 16 states, "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel." In effect Peter was saying that what was taking place on that day was what they had read in their own Scriptures. He concluded by stating that God had made this Jesus whom they knew about both Lord and Christ.

The Jewish idea of the Messiah was gleaned from their own Old Testament Scriptures. Dr. Coggan quoted Sir Edwin Hoskyns as stating that the early preachers' idea of the Messiah was "smelted and sublimed from the ore of the Old Testament Scriptures."¹³ The first emphasis then of the body of the sermon by Peter on Pentecost was on the fulfillment of the Old Testament proclamation of the coming Messiah. A study of the other sermons in the Acts of the Apostles will also reveal this,

¹³Coggan, op. cit., p. 66.

since Peter's sermon was taken as an example.

(2) The second emphasis of the sermons in the Acts of the Apostles was a reference to the earthly life of Jesus as evidence that He was the promised Messiah. Although they were not concerned to dwell on it, mention was made of the words of Jesus in Acts 20:35 "... remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." Mention was also made of the works and wonders of Jesus where Peter said that Jesus of Nazareth was "a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs" (Acts 2:22). Peter explained ancient prophecy and ended up by stating "unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities" (Acts 3:26).

Reference is made to the fact that Jesus went about doing good: "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him" (Acts 10:38).

It can be seen from these few references although thin and sparse that there was emphasis in the sermons contained within the Acts of the Apostles on the earthly life of Jesus. These early preachers were not in ignorance concerning it.¹⁴

(3) While there was an emphasis upon Jesus' life in the sermons found in the Acts of the Apostles, there was also emphasis upon His

¹⁴L. O. Bristol, "Primitive Christian Preaching and the Epistle to the Hebrews," Journal of Biblical Literature, Vol. 68, Pt. 11 (June, 1949), p. 93.

death. These early preachers saw it not as a tragedy but as a triumph containing the hand of God. It is recorded in Acts 2:23, "Him, being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." Again it is written, "For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done" (Acts 4:28).

To adequately present the early preacher's interpretation of the death of Christ would take us into another area far beyond the scope of this monograph. However, they recognized the vicarious aspect. Consider where Paul stated, "feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28). Note the words of Philip in explaining the good news of Jesus unto the Ethiopian eunuch who was puzzled over Isaiah 53, "Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus" (Acts 8:35). Read Peter's announcement of "remission of sins" through the name of Jesus in the tenth chapter and verse forty-three. The same thought is also seen in 13:38 where the same phrase occurs.

(4) The fourth emphasis the author found in the sermons in the Acts of the Apostles was upon the resurrection and exaltation of Christ. These concepts are to be taken together. C. H. Dodd has pointed out that they go together in an eschatological setting.¹⁵ References will

¹⁵C. H. Dodd, The Apostolic Preaching and Its Development (London: Hodder & Stoughton Limited, 1937), p. 47. The author has interpreted Dodd to mean that the early preaching was proclaimed with the conviction that the world was under judgment (Acts 10:42, 17:31).

be given first for the resurrection and second for the exaltation of Christ.

Acts 2: 24-27, R. S. V., "But God raised him up, having loosed the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it. For David says concerning him,

'I saw the Lord always before me,
for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken
therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced;
moreover my flesh will dwell in hope.'"

Acts 3:15 "... God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses."

Acts 4:10 "... Jesus of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead ..."

Acts 13:30 "But God raised him from the dead."

Acts 17:31 "Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."

The references to the exaltation of Christ are as follows:

Acts 2:33, 36, "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted ... God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."

Acts 3:13, "... the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus ..."

Acts 4:11, N. E. B., "This Jesus is the stone rejected by the builders which has become the keystone--"

Acts 5:31, R. S. V., "God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins."

Acts 22:8 "And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest."

Both concepts, the resurrection and the exaltation of Jesus Christ, go together in an eschatological setting. C. H. Dodd stressed that the Messianic Age will shortly reach its consumation in the return of Christ.¹⁶ At that time Christ will come again as both Saviour and Judge:

Whom heaven must receive until the time for establishing all that God spake by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old (Acts 3:21, R. S. V.).

And he commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that he is the one ordained by God to be judge of the living and the dead (Acts 10:42, R. S. V.).

(5) The fifth emphasis found in the sermons is repentance as seen from six references.

Acts 2:38 "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are far off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

Acts 3:19, 25-26, N. E. B., "Repent then and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out ... 'you are the heirs of the prophets: you are within the covenant which God made with your fathers, when he said to Abraham, "And in your offspring all the families on earth shall find

¹⁶Ibid., p. 42.

blessing." When God raised up his Servant, he sent him to you first, to bring you blessing by turning every one of you from your wicked ways."

Acts 5:31, R. S. V., "God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins."

Acts 10:43, R. S. V., "To him all the prophets bear witness that every one who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

Acts 20:21 "Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."

Acts 26:20 "But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance."

Importance is added to this particular emphasis if it be remembered that repentance is thought of as a reorientation of the whole person from a center made up of self to one of Christ.

In bringing this section to a close, it was observed that at least two of the five emphases discussed are contained in Paul's sermon on Mars Hill. Verses 30 and 31 are pertinent to our subject, and they read, "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."¹⁷

¹⁷At least five outstanding characteristics can be lifted out of

The fourth emphasis upon Christ's resurrection is proclaimed in verse 31, "he hath raised him from the dead." There can be no doubt that his audience understood this to be his emphasis because of what followed: "When they heard about the raising of the dead, some scoffed; and others said, 'We will hear you on this subject some other time'" (Acts 17:32, N. E. B.). The fifth emphasis, repentance, is contained in verse 30, "now commandeth all men every where to repent."

Summary

The evidence presented on the examination of the sermons in the Acts of the Apostles has indicated that:

(1) Peter began his sermon on the Day of Pentecost by announcing fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy connected with the work of Jesus Christ as the Jewish Messiah.

(2) Included in the sermons from the Acts of the Apostles was emphasis upon the earthly life of Jesus.

(3) These sermons contained the proclamation of the death of Jesus as being in the determinate counsel of God.

(4) The resurrection of Jesus Christ was preached, and added to this was His exaltation.

(5) Repentance was an essential ingredient of the sermons in the Acts of the Apostles.

this sermon which have their roots deep within the Old Testament. 1) God of creation, v. 24. 2) The goodness of that God, v. 25. 3) The unity of the human race, v. 26. 4) Day of judgment, v. 30. 5) Resurrection.

III. THE PAULINE EPISTLES

An extremely important source on the Biblical theology of preaching is the Pauline Epistles. The procedure will be to determine the objects of the verbs generally translated "preach" and to examine certain corroborating passages which support the content of preaching in the Acts of the Apostles.

Objects of the Verbs Generally Translated "Preach"

In the Pauline Epistles there are three main verbs used for the activity of preaching. Since all three words have been defined in chapter two, it will not be necessary to give their meaning again. The underscoring was not in the original but added by the author for emphasis.

(1) Euaggelizo. There are twenty occurrences of this word.

Romans 1:15 "So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also."

Romans 10:15 "And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!"

Romans 15:20 "Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation."

I Corinthians 1:17 "For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel ..."

I Corinthians 9:16 "For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I

preach not the gospel!"

I Corinthians 9:18 "What is my reward then? Verily that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge ..."

I Corinthians 15:1 "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand."

I Corinthians 15:2 "By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain."

II Corinthians 10:16 "To preach the gospel in the regions beyond you ..."

II Corinthians 11:7 "... because I have preached to you the gospel of God freely?"

Galatians 1:8 "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed."

Galatians 1:9 "... If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that which ye have received ..."

Galatians 1:11 "But I certify you brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man."

Galatians 1:16 "To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen ..."

Galatians 1:23 "... That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed."

Galatians 4:13 "Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I

preached the gospel unto you at the first."

Ephesians 2:17 "And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh."

Ephesians 3:8 "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ."

In nineteen out of the twenty occurrences given the object is described. The passage in I Corinthians 15:2 states that they must keep in memory what was preached unto them. The results could be summarized as follows: (1) Fifteen of the twenty occurrences have the object "gospel" or a variation such as "gospel of peace (Rom. 10:15) or "gospel of God" (2 Cor. 11:7). (2) One has the object "Son" (Gal. 1:16). (3) One has the object "the faith" (Gal. 1:23). (4) One has the object "peace" (Eph. 2:17). (5) Finally, the reference in Ephesians 3:8 yields the object "riches of Christ".

(2) Kataggellō. There are four references including this Greek verb in the Pauline Epistles.

I Corinthians 9:14 "Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel."

Philippians 1:16 "The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds."

Philippians 1:18 "What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice."

Colossians 1:28 "Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus."

From these references the following conclusions can be drawn:

- (1) There is one reference with the object "gospel" (I Cor. 9:14).
- (2) Two references show the object to be "Christ" (Phil. 1:16, 1:18).
- (3) In the last reference the object is not given, but the implication from the previous verse is "Christ in you" (Col. 1:27,28).

(3) Kērussō. There are nineteen occurrences of this word in the Pauline Epistles.

Romans 2:21 "... thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?"

Romans 10:8 "... The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is the word of faith, which we preach."

Romans 10:14 "... and how shall they hear without a preacher?"

Romans 10:15 "And how shall they preach, except they be sent?"

I Corinthians 1:23 "But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness."

I Corinthians 9:27 "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."

I Corinthians 15:11 "Therefore whether it were I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed."

I Corinthians 15:12 "Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead ..."

II Corinthians 1:19 "For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us ..."

II Corinthians 4:5 "For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake" (R. S. V.).

II Corinthians 11:4 "For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached ..."

Galatians 2:2 "And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles ..."

Galatians 5:11 "And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased."

Philippians 1:15 "Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will:"

Colossians 1:23 "If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;"

I Thessalonians 2:9 "For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God."

I Timothy 3:16 "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world,

received up into glory."

II Timothy 4:2 "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine."

Of these nineteen occurrences only thirteen are relevant to our purpose. The other six either have no object or do not apply to our discussion (Rom. 2:21, 10:14, 10:15; I Cor. 9:27, 15:11; Gal. 5:11).

Eight of the thirteen occurrences of kērusso relevant to our purpose have to do with "Jesus Christ" as the object of the verb or a variation. I Corinthians 1:23 has "Christ crucified", 15:12 has Christ risen from the dead, II Corinthians 1:19 has "Son of God, Jesus Christ", and 4:5 has "Jesus Christ as Lord" (R. S. V.). Both occurrences of the verb in II Corinthians 11:4 have Jesus as their object. The reference in I Timothy 3:16 has "God" which is translated "He" in the Revised Standard Version, and the implication is to Christ. The eighth reference is simply to "Christ".

The remaining five references give as their objects "the word of faith" (Rom. 10:8), "that gospel" (Gal. 2:2), "hope of the gospel" (Col. 1:23), "gospel of God" (I Thess. 2:9), and "the word" (II Tim. 4:2).

Summary

The evidence presented on the objects of the verbs generally translated "preach" in the Pauline Epistles has indicated that:

(1) The most frequent way of giving the content of the preaching in the Pauline Epistles was by the word "gospel". The description "of God" or "of peace" was used to describe what kind of gospel was preached.

(2) The next most frequent occurrence of stating the object of the preaching in the Pauline Epistles was to give the name "Christ". Sometimes the fuller name "Jesus Christ" or just "Jesus" was used. The phrase "crucified" and "as Lord" tell in what manner Christ was preached.

An Examination of the Content of Corroborating Passages

The first passage is Romans 1:1-5 "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, (which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures)", verses 1 and 2. The emphasis in these two verses is upon fulfillment of the Old Testament proclamation of the Messiah hearkening back to the promises given long ago by the prophets in the holy scriptures. The idea is this, that this gospel spoken of by Paul had been announced beforehand in the Old Testament through the prophets. Now the fulfillment has come in Jesus Christ, the Messiah, of whom Paul is His servant.

Continuing with verse 3 which states: "Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh." This verse emphasizes the earthly life of Jesus.

Verse 4 states: "And declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." Both the death, resurrection and exaltation of Christ are present in this verse.

The second passage to be considered in the Pauline Epistles is I Corinthians 15:3, 4: "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the

Scriptures: and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures."

The phrase "according to the Scriptures" needs to be taken in the light of Isaiah 53. Jesus shows his death in Luke 22:37 as fulfillment of Scripture, "For the Scripture says, 'and he was counted among the outlaws,' and these words, I tell you, must find fulfillment in me: indeed all that is written of me is being fulfilled." (N.E.B.) It is indicated here that Paul is referring to fulfillment of the Old Testament idea of the Messiah in Christ.

Christ's death and resurrection are both present. His death is found in the phrase "Christ died for our sins." His resurrection is seen in the account just given of how "he was buried" and that "he rose again the third day."

The third passage is I Corinthians 1:18 "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish, foolishness; but unto us which are saved, it is the power of God." Here the emphasis is upon the death of Christ. The phrase "the word of the Cross" carries a potent message. Dr. Coggan remarked concerning this phrase:

By it, St. Paul means, not the word which he seeks to preach about the Cross, but the word which the Cross itself ever preaches, its own self-authenticating Gospel.¹⁸

Galatians 3:1 emphasizes the crucified Christ as being the content of Paul's preaching. It is recorded as follows: "O foolish

¹⁸Coggan, op. cit., p. 68.

Galatians! Who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified?" (R. S. V.) As a result of the Apostle's preaching, the Galatians had Jesus Christ placarded and posted up before their very eyes as crucified.¹⁹ Luther is said to have paraphrased this passage from Galatians 3:1 in the following manner: "There is no painter who with his colours can so lively set out Christ unto you as I have painted Him by my preaching."²⁰

Another reference to the content of preaching in the Pauline Epistles is Romans 4:24, 25 "But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead: Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification."

The death and resurrection of Christ is emphasized with the concept of death for sins and the idea of justification. There is also the implication of fulfillment of the Messiah in Christ with the use of the verb "was delivered" (Isaiah 53:12).

The next reference is Romans 8:34 "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." The content contains: (1) Christ Jesus is the one who died, (2) He was raised

¹⁹Archibald Thomas Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1930), Vol IV, p. 291.

²⁰Coggan, op. cit., p. 70.

from the dead, (3) He is exalted at the right hand of God, and (4) He makes intercession for us.

The next passage is Romans 10:9 "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." The preceding verse is important: "But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach." The "word of faith" which was preached by Paul and his associates was a message of faith. Paul gives two pillars of the gospel message: man must believe that Jesus was raised from the dead and confess Him as Lord. The two pillars are the resurrection and the Lordship of Christ.

Another reference is found in I Thessalonians 1:9, 10, "For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come." The content can be summarized: (1) Paul was alive with the hope of the second coming of Christ. (2) Paul witnessed to the fact of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. (3) Paul alluded to the judgment day with the phrase "wrath to come."²¹

In close connection with the above teaching on the return of Christ, it should be noted that the expectation of His coming was central

²¹Robertson, op. cit., p. 14.

in both of the Thessalonian Epistles especially I Thessalonians 1:9-10. The expectation of the Lord's coming is closely related to belief in the resurrection and in fact is derived from it. This expectation is not everywhere so strikingly placed as it is in the Thessalonian letters. A text which expressed the same truth is Colossians 1:27 in a different form with the phrase "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (cf. also Titus 3:7).²²

One item remains in which great emphasis is given to the Lordship of Christ. This can be seen from a number of references in the Pauline Epistles but II Cor. 4:5 points to the preaching in particular.²³ It states, "For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord ..." (R. S. V.). Another reference emphasizing the Lordship of Christ is Romans 10:9, "If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved" (R. S. V.). The same construction is given in Philipians 2:11, "And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Summary

The evidence presented on the examination of the content of representative passages in the Pauline Epistles has indicated that:

²²J. Kahmann, CSSR, The Bible on Preaching of the Word (De Pere, Wisconsin: St. Norbert Abbey Press, 1965), p. 82.

²³cf. (I Cor. 12:3, 1:2, 8:6, 16:22; Col. 2:6; Phil. 2:6-11).

(1) Stress was placed upon the fulfillment of the Old Testament proclamation of the Messiah in Jesus Christ.

(2) Mention was made of the earthly life of Jesus as coming from the Davidic line.

(3) The most favorite content of these Pauline passages was concerning the death, resurrection and exaltation of Jesus. A descriptive phrase was occasionally added to give meaning to His death such as "delivered for our offences" or "raised for our justification" (Rom. 4:25).

(4) Reference was made to the intercession of Christ.

(5) The Lordship of Christ was proclaimed.

(6) The second coming of Christ was taught.

(7) An allusion to the judgment was given.

IV. THE GOSPELS

Content of Preaching in General

The Gospel of Mark opened with the fulfillment of prophecy, "As it is written in Isaiah the prophet, 'Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, who shall prepare thy way'" (Mark 1:2, R. S. V.). Next in the order of events in the Gospel of Mark came John preaching a baptism of repentance (1:4) and the coming of Christ (1:7). Key phrases were "preach the baptism of repentance" and "cometh one mightier than I." After John was arrested, Jesus preached "the gospel of the kingdom of God" with the admonition to "repent" and "believe the gospel" (Mark 1:14, 15).

The twelve disciples were sent out to preach "that men should repent"

(Mark 6:12). An act of love is connected with the next occurrence of preaching. Jesus replied, "Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her" (Mark 14:9).

From chapter 1 to 8:30 of the Gospel of Mark the content was concerned with Jesus as one who came to minister. The remainder of the Gospel of Mark records Jesus' passion. The expanded emphasis given to the passion of Christ corresponds to the prominent place afforded the cross in the Acts of the Apostles and the Pauline Epistles. The Gospel of Mark related another idea common to the Acts of the Apostles and the Pauline Epistles. It was the resurrection of Jesus. After His resurrection appearance He gave instructions to proclaim the gospel in all the world to everyone (Mark 16:15). Verse 20 of Mark 16 recorded, "they went forth, and preached every where."

New material in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke introduce the Davidic line of Jesus. The genealogies serve to testify to this fact. Another element is the appeal to the fulfillment of the Old Testament idea of the Messiah, especially so in the Gospel of Matthew.²⁴ The three Gospels so far seem to yield the following presentation: (1) the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus was the fulfillment of the Old Testament hope of the Messiah, and (2) He would be of the Davidic line.

Most certainly the Fourth Gospel reflects its harmony with the

²⁴Hunter, op. cit., p. 32.

other three Gospels. It was established by Matthew, Mark, and Luke that Jesus was the Messiah of the Old Testament. In the Prologue of John's Gospel is found the same truth. The Logos or the Word of God which was the factor in creation, had been expressed through the prophets was coming home to His people who did not receive Him as the Messiah. After this John records the baptism of Christ by John the Baptist. He then unfolded the teaching of Jesus along with miracles by Jesus.

Content of Jesus' Preaching

The preaching of Jesus had an ethical demand and an eschatological sanction.²⁵ The ethical demand was to repent, and the eschatological sanction was the fact of the Kingdom of God being at hand (Matt. 4:17). Repentance is understood to be a complete reorientation of the moral disposition. The Kingdom of God is more difficult, and it has been the object of much controversy. There can be found elements of eschatological dimension and also elements of non-eschatological magnitude.

An observation of the meaning of the word "kingdom" in its original milieu may prove helpful. The Aramaic malkutha in Jewish literature always means "kingly rule".²⁶ In the Targum of Onkelos Exodus 15:18, "The Lord shall reign for ever and ever" is paraphrased thus, "His malkuth stands for ever and ever."²⁷ The phrase "to take the yoke of

²⁵Robert H. Mounce, The Essential Nature of New Testament Preaching (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1960), p. 30.

²⁶Ibid., p. 33.

²⁷Ibid.

the Kingdom of God upon oneself" meant to accept the Torah as God's revealed will and recite daily the Shema (Deut. 6:4) plus acknowledge God as Lord and King.²⁸ In the New Testament, the nobleman of Luke 19:11-27 went into a far country to receive "kingly power" (R. S. V.). Taylor in his Jesus and His Sacrifice, page 9, concludes that in the overwhelming majority of Jesus' sayings about the Kingdom numbering more than fifty of the sixty references, "the thought is that of the Reign or Rule of God."²⁹

Besides the linguistic evidence, the history of the concept in Hebrew thought reveals, according to Dodd, that "'His kingly rule will be manifested to the confusion of all evil, is the burden of all prophecy."³⁰ When Christ proclaimed that the Kingdom of God was at hand it echoed the climactic culmination of the Jewish expectation, and therefore had an eschatological idea. Yet, this expectation needed modification. The important thing, in any event, is what Jesus meant, not what his contemporaries understood.

Summary

The evidence presented on the content of preaching in the Gospels has indicated that:

(1) The life, death, and resurrection of Jesus was the fulfillment of the Old Testament hope of the Messiah.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 34.

- (2) The Messiah would be from the line of David.
- (3) Repentance played a significant part in the preaching of Jesus and His disciples.
- (4) Jesus was sent to proclaim spiritual deliverance.

V. PETER AND HEBREWS

Peter's opening chapter dealt with fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies. A portion read: "This salvation was the theme which the prophets pondered and explored ... foretelling the sufferings in store for Christ and the splendours to follow ... And now it has been openly announced to you through preachers who brought you the Gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit sent from heaven" (I Peter 1:10-12, N. E. B.).

For Peter the center of the Gospel is Jesus, the Messiah, "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (I Peter 1:18, 19). Resurrection and exaltation of Christ is taught in the third chapter, "Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a clear conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers subject to him" (I Peter 3:21, 22, R. S. V.).

The last judgment is taught in the fourth chapter, "Who shall

give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead. For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God; and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?" (I Peter 4:5,17)

In Hebrews the note of fulfillment of prophecy rings out in the first verse. God has spoken in the past in many ways but now in his Son. The author is gathering up a basket of fulfilled prophecies in his opening remarks. Warning is given in 2:3 over neglect of salvation. As far as preaching was concerned the Gospel was preached unto them (4:2). A promise of entering into God's rest was proclaimed (4:6). Son of Man is mentioned in 2:6. Obedience to the Father was characteristic of Christ and was the determining factor (5:8, 10:7). His death on the cross was to deal with sin (12:2, 13:12). The resurrection of Jesus from the dead and His exaltation is given in 13:20, 1:3,13, 8:1, 10:12, and 12:2.

Summary

The evidence presented on the content of preaching in Hebrews and Peter has indicated that:

- (1) Old Testament prophecies found their fulfillment in the coming of Christ, the Messiah.
- (2) Resurrection and exaltation of Christ is taught.
- (3) The last judgment is taught.
- (4) A promise of entering into God's rest is proclaimed.

CHAPTER III

THE CHARACTER OF NEW TESTAMENT PREACHING

I. INTRODUCTION

Looking at the apostolic preaching from the standpoint of activity rather than content, what are the more prominent characteristics? There are certain recognized symbols on every dollar bill which are a guarantee to the holder that what he has is genuine. In like manner there are certain characteristics by which the New Testament preaching may be distinguished from that which is false. It is the burden of this chapter to find out what those prominent characteristics are. If these characteristics can be ascertained, will they not serve as criteria for all preaching in every age which seeks to go under the name Christian?

II. THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

(1) In preaching to Jewish audiences a polemic quality was employed. Dialegomai occurs ten times in the Acts of the Apostles, describing the activity of Saint Paul. It means to discuss or to conduct a discussion which would likely end in disputations or controversies.¹ It can also be used simply "to speak" or "preach" (Acts 18:4). Six of

¹William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 184.

the ten occurrences have reference to Paul's work for Christ in the Jewish synagogues.

Of particular instance is Acts 17:2-3 because of the time involved: "And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the Scriptures, Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ." Paul reasoned with them for three sabbath days. The word is also used (Acts 20:7,9) of Paul's preaching at Troas, and again of his defense before Felix (Acts 24:25).

Paul confounded the Jews proving that Jesus was the Christ in the ninth chapter and verse twenty-two. In Corinth and Ephesus (Acts 18 and 19) the story is the same. Toward the end of his career Paul was still trying to convince the Jews (Acts 28:23). When Jewish opposition was involved, preaching became polemic. Thus, preaching took on the flavor of not just announcement of some historical event but arguing, testifying, pleading, and proving became parts of early preaching.²

(2) The early preaching was dialogistic. Not only did dialogoi have a polemic character, but it also meant "to converse with, or discuss."³ Dr. Bruce Metzger in his Lexical Aids for Students of New Testament Greek has rendered the English word "dialectic" as coming

²Robert H. Mounce, The Essential Nature of New Testament Preaching (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1960), p. 56.

³Arndt and Gingrich, loc. cit.

from dialogomai.⁴ A dictionary definition of dialectics includes the idea of a question and answer period, so as to determine the validity of ideas presented.

Although our English word "dialect" comes from the Greek noun dialektos, Dr. G. Abbott-Smith in his Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament has indicated the dialektos was derived from or related to dialogomai.⁵ The meaning, then, of dialogomai is enlarged to include an exchange of ideas as in a dialogue as well as being polemic in nature when one person does the talking.

On the occasion of Eutychus falling asleep during the Apostle Paul's preaching as recorded in Acts 20:7-12, there is no indication that polemics was employed. Perhaps it was more discussion or lecturing. Dr. William Barclay in his commentary on The Acts of the Apostles wrote of this occasion as follows, "We must not take it that Paul spoke, as it were, even on. There would be talk and discussion but Eutychus was exhausted."⁶

Paul's preaching in Acts 20:7-12 was not related to the evangelism of the Jews, but he was talking to believers. The New Testament preaching, then, sometimes took on the character of discussion or dialogue, and thus became dialogistic.

⁴Bruce M. Metzger, Lexical Aids for Students of New Testament Greek (Princeton: Bruce M. Metzger, 1955), p. 41.

⁵G. Abbott-Smith, A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1954), p. 109.

⁶William Barclay, The Acts of the Apostles (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1955), p. 163.

(3) A third characteristic of New Testament preaching was apostolic, used by the author to mean a sense of divine commission. The classical Greek use of the word apostle was of a naval expedition or a ship ready for departure. In the New Testament the term is used of one sent with a commission.⁷ A divine commission was evident with Peter's preaching when he stated that the risen Lord had commanded them to preach to the people (Acts 10:42). This commissioning is noticeable also in Paul. God had chosen him for a special purpose (Acts 9:15). This commission could be supplemented with guidance by the Spirit (Acts 11:12) and encouraged through subsequent visions (Acts 18:9-10).⁸

That Paul was true to his commission is evident from his work at Ephesus where he served the Lord "with all humility and with tears and with trials" (Acts 20:19, R. S. V.). What characterized Paul was also true of the early Church. They answered the threat of imprisonment by "preaching the word" (Acts 8:4). Both the Apostles and the New Testament Church were conscious of a divine commission.

(4) The early preaching was characterized by boldness. The noun, *parrhēsia*, is used both as "free utterance" and as "courage, confidence, boldness, and fearlessness."⁹

The early preachers in the Acts of the Apostles prayed for boldness, "And now Lord, behold their threatenings; and grant unto thy

⁷Arndt and Gingrich, op. cit., p. 99.

⁸Mounce, loc. cit.

⁹Arndt and Gingrich, op. cit., pp. 635-636.

servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word" (Acts 4:29). They prayed for this boldness and there is evidence that they were richly endowed with it (Acts 4:31, "And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness."). The Apostle Peter earlier on the Day of Pentecost had experienced this boldness when he said, "Let me speak freely unto you" (Acts 2:29). It was said of Paul as he spent his last days in Rome that he preached and taught the things which concerned Christ with confidence (Acts 28:31). It could be translated "with boldness" since it is the same Greek word.

The verb form, parrhesiazomai, is used to describe the preaching in the Acts of the Apostles. In Acts 9:27 it is stated of Paul that "he had preached boldly at Damascus" or in 9:29 where "he spake boldly in the name of the Lord." Other references include 13:46 where "Paul and Barnabas waxed bold", 14:3 where they were "speaking boldly", 18:26 where Apollos "began to speak boldly", and 19:8 where Paul again "spake boldly". It was said in another place of the apostles concerning boldness that they had so much it caused some to marvel. The reference is 4:13, "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus." Boldness was a characteristic mark of the preachers whose records we have in the Acts of the Apostles.

(5) The New Testament preaching was elevated. This element of elevation is seen in the Greek word, apophtheggomai, which means to

... speak forth or declare boldly and to declare with enthusiasm.¹⁰ Dr. A. T. Robertson wrote of this verb as "used of eager, elevated, impassioned utterance."¹¹ He continued by stating that Lucian used it of a vessel when it strikes a reef. Dr. H. A. W. Meyer commented on apophtheggomai as "a purposely chosen word for loud utterance in the elevated state of spiritual gifts."¹²

References using this word are three in number. The underscoring was not in the original.

Acts 2:4 "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

Acts 2:14 "But Peter standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words."

Acts 26:25 "But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness."

Not only were the Apostles elevated, but here they became prophets in the Old Testament sense. The word was used "of the oracle-giver, diviner, prophet, exorcist, and other 'inspired' persons."¹³

¹⁰Ibid., p. 101.

¹¹Archibald Thomas Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1930), Vol. III, p. 22.

¹²Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer, Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Acts of the Apostles (New York: Funk & Wagnall's, 1889), p. 51.

¹³Arndt and Gingrich, loc. cit.

These men were full of the Holy Spirit, and the implication is that they were full of power in fulfillment of the promise of Jesus. The Expositor's Greek Testament has a comment concerning Stephen in chapter seven and verse fifty-five as follows:

In the power of the Holy Ghost, with which Stephen is represented as being full, as in life so in death, he saw (translation of Greek, "the glory of God"), in which He had appeared to Abraham.¹⁵

The idea presented is that Stephen's power was the power of the Holy Spirit.

The reference to Paul showed the power he had when faced with an emergency situation such as in Acts 13:9 where he confronts Elymas the sorcerer. Robertson wrote of this:

A special influx of power to meet this emergency. Here was a cultured heathen, typical of the best in Roman life, who called forth all the powers of Paul plus the special help of the Holy Spirit to expose the wickedness of Elymas Barjesus.¹⁶

Jesus had indeed fulfilled His promise and these preachers were "endued with power from on high" which was the power resulting from being filled with the Holy Spirit.

(7) The New Testament preaching was hortatory. This characteristic of the early preaching is taken from the Greek word parakaleō. This word has the meaning of "to call to, to beseech, to exhort" and "to comfort" in common Greek usage.¹⁷ In the New Testament it had the mean-

¹⁵W. Robertson Nicoll, ed., The Expositor's Greek Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1967), p. 201.

¹⁶Robertson, op. cit., p. 181.

¹⁷Gerhard Friedrich, ed., Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1967), Vol. 5, p. 773.

ing of to call to one's side, exhort, entreat, comfort, encourage or to console.¹⁸ It is used twenty-one times in the Acts of the Apostles. It is distinguished from one asking for help, and it is used for the wooing proclamation of salvation in the Apostolic preaching.¹⁹

The first reference is Acts 2:40 where Luke describes the preaching of Peter as "with many other words did he testify and exhort." (The underscoring in these references is not in the original.) Barnabas is characterized in Acts 11:23 as "exhorted them all." He seemed to have had a special gift for work like this, being called "The son of consolation" (Acts 4:36). Paul was involved in exhortation. Speaking to recent converts, Paul is characterized as "Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith" (Acts 14:22). Also it is recorded that Paul exhorted the Macedonian brethren. In the twentieth chapter there is much exhortation. Luke specifically states in Acts 20:2 concerning Paul that "when he had gone over those parts and had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece." There are places where parakaleō does not appear in the text but exhortation takes place. Paul was definitely exhorting the elders at Melitus when he sent to Ephesus and called them down to hear him at the close of his third missionary tour (Acts 20:17-35). A. T. Robertson commenting on verse 31 stated: "Paul has concluded his defence of himself and his warning. Now he exhorts on the basis of it (dio) because of which thing."²⁰

¹⁸Arndt and Gingrich, op. cit., pp. 622-623.

¹⁹Friedrich, op. cit., p. 795.

²⁰Robertson, op. cit., p. 354.

Two other men are mentioned in Acts 15:32 as being involved in exhortation: "And Judas and Silas, being prophets also themselves, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed them."

The other sixteen references to parakaleō do not particularly pertain to hortatory preaching. But enough evidence has been presented to show that Peter, Barnabas, Judas and Silas, and Paul were involved in a hortatory ministry.

(8) Another characteristic of New Testament preaching was testimonial. The Greek word martureō means to bear witness or testify concerning someone or something.²¹ It was written of Peter on the Day of Pentecost that "with many other words did he testify" (Acts 2:40). Diemarturato is used here to mean a solemn attestation or witness.²² Perhaps more than just a witness is involved here but it is a protest against false views of those Peter was addressing. The same word is used by Paul to characterize his own ministry in his address to the Ephesian elders at Miletus where it is recorded that he was "Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks" (Acts 20:21).

After declaring his Roman citizenship and giving his defence in chapters 22 and 23, Paul was caught in the great dissension that followed. He was rescued by the soldiers and spent the night in the castle for his own protection. Paul needed comfort, and the Lord appeared to him that night saying, "Be of good cheer ... for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome" (Acts 23:11). Here

²¹Arndt and Gingrich, op. cit., pp. 493-494.

²²Robertson, op. cit., p. 36.

is approval of Paul's witness in Jerusalem and his method of testifying.

Before King Agrippa Paul characterized his ministry saying that he had up to then been "witnessing both to small and great" (Acts 26:22). This hearkens back to the office of bearing testimony to which Paul was appointed in Acts 9:15. This same office is given the disciples of Jesus: "and ye shall be witnesses" (Acts 1:8). Testimonial was characteristic of New Testament preaching.

Summary

The evidence presented on the nature of apostolic preaching in the Acts of the Apostles has indicated that:

- (1) In preaching to Jewish audiences a polemic quality was employed. Jesus as the Christ was emphasized.
- (2) In preaching to believers a dialogistic method was sometimes used when not related to the evangelism of the Jews.
- (3) New Testament preaching in the Acts of the Apostles was apostolic. It had a sense of divine commission. Man did not enter into this ministry of his own sending. Only those who were commissioned by God were the New Testament heralds.
- (4) The early preaching was characterized by boldness. Out of an inner compulsion came the New Testament witness in the face of opposition and hardship. The New Testament preacher had a strong confidence in the things concerning Christ which nothing daunted.
- (5) The New Testament preaching was elevated. This elevation hearkened back to the prophets in the Old Testament.

(6) The preaching in the Acts of the Apostles was powerful. That is, it was Spirit-filled preaching which made it powerful. Christ in fulfillment of His promise had endued them "with power from on high." To be filled with the Holy Spirit was to be filled with power.

(7) The New Testament preaching was hortatory. It encouraged the believers to continue in the faith and sought to comfort them in trials of affliction.

(8) Testimonial was characteristic of New Testament preaching. The early preachers gave their witness of Christ and protested against false views of themselves and Christ.

III. THE PAULINE EPISTLES

(1) One of the prominent characteristics of New Testament preaching found in the Pauline Epistles was a readiness to preach the gospel. Romans 1:15 states "So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also." The Greek word, prothumon, means "ready, willing, eager of the spirit". Here it is used in the sense of "my eagerness", meaning the eagerness of the Apostle Paul to preach the gospel.²³ Not only was Paul ready, but he was eager. It is taken in the sense not of gaining glory for himself or because he felt the Romans would make better Christians, but it was because of his sense of obligation to make the gospel known to all people.

²³ Arndt and Gingrich, op. cit., p. 713.

(2) A second characteristic of New Testament preaching found in the Pauline Epistles was apostolic. It is stated in Romans 10:15 "And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" Paul states here in a question form that it is necessary to have a commission in order to preach.

For Paul his authority to preach resided in his apostleship. He had seen Christ and had been transformed by Him (I Cor. 9:1). Through the testimony of such a man preaching could be conducted with power which was the power of the Holy Spirit (I Thess. 1:5). To the Corinthians he declared that the words of his preaching are "not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth ..." (I Cor. 2:13). Paul's authority did not reside within his own skills as an orator, but in the passing on of what he himself had received (I Cor. 15:3). Paul's authority came as an apostle, "one who is sent".²⁴

Like the prophets before him, Paul had received an urgent call to preach. He says he has been "entrusted with a commission" (I Cor. 9:17, R. S. V.). He cried out in the previous verse, "Necessity is laid upon me. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel" (I Cor. 9:16, R. S. V.). He could declare to the Galatians "I must make it clear to you, my friends, that the gospel you heard me preach is no human invention. I did not take it over from any man; no man taught it me; I

²⁴Victor Paul Furnish, "Prophets, Apostles, and Preachers," Interpretation, Vol. 17, No. 1 (January, 1963), pp. 54-55.

received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal. 1:11-12, N. E. B.).

(3) A third characteristic of preaching in the Pauline Epistles was a pioneer spirit. Paul states in Romans 15:19, 20 "... from Jerusalem and as far round as Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ, thus making it my ambition to preach the gospel, not where Christ has already been named, lest I build on another man's foundation" (R. S. V.). Paul particularly sought to preach in new regions. He was called to be an apostle, not a pastor.

(4) Another characteristic of New Testament preaching found in the Pauline Epistles was reliance upon the power of God. The message demanded faith, and thus it was necessary that it be devoid of worldly wisdom. To dress up the message was to rob it of its power. Paul stated, "For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect" (I Cor. 1:17). Again he wrote, "And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power" (I Cor. 2:4). The purpose he also stated: "That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God" (I Cor. 2:5).

The thought running through Paul's mind seemed to be that where the cross is preached human wisdom can no longer stand, and he is anxious to show that he did not use any illicit means in preaching the gospel to the Corinthians. His words, however, had been accompanied with "demonstration of the Spirit and of power." This was not Paul's personal power but the power of the Holy Spirit. Thus the truth of Paul's preaching was witnessed to by God. He could make the claim "For our

gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake" (I Thess. 1:5).

Dr. Robertson made the following comment concerning Paul's preaching:

Preaching was Paul's forte, but it was not as a pretentious philosopher or professional rhetorician that Paul appeared before the Corinthians (I Cor. 2:1-5). Some who followed Apollos may have been guilty of a fancy for external show, though Apollos was not a mere performer and juggler with words. But the Alexandrian method as in Philo did run to dialectic subtleties and luxuriant rhetoric (Lightfoot).²⁵

(5) Mention is made of a characteristic of Paul's preaching as being self-control. In I Cor. 9:27 Paul states "I bruise my own body and make it know its master, for fear that after preaching to others I should find myself rejected" (N. E. B.). The word "bruise" means to deliver a blow to that part of the face which is under the eyes.²⁶ Paul is not engaged in a fight with himself but rather he keeps his body in line. Just as athletes keep their body under control so Paul does in order to live as a true Christian.²⁷

This discipline was not arbitrary and self-inflicted, but it was dictated by Paul's calling. He guards against a misuse of this practice in the Colossian Epistle (2:23).

²⁵Robertson, op. cit., p. 76.

²⁶F. W. Grosheide, Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1953), p. 215.

²⁷Ibid., p. 216.

(6) Another characteristic of New Testament preaching found in the Pauline Epistles was hortatory. This characteristic is taken from parakaleō which has been defined in the previous section. Every reference to parakaleō in the Pauline Epistles will not be dealt with, but only those characteristic of New Testament preaching.

Although it is not explicitly stated that Paul preached in a beseeching manner, he certainly wrote in one to the Corinthians: "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God" (II Corinthians 5:20). He continued in chapter 6 "We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also ..." (II Corinthians 6:1).

More specific is the characteristic of Paul's ministry in I Thessalonians 2:11, "As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children." A. T. Robertson wrote of this verse that "the three participles give three phases of the minister's preaching (exhorting, encouraging or consoling, witnessing or testifying)."²⁸

Paul in writing to Timothy is careful to include exhortation in his instructions to him. It is natural to assume that this was a characteristic of Paul which he wished to pass along to Timothy. His instructions were to "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (II Timothy 4:2).

²⁸ Archibald Thomas Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1930), Vol. IV, p. 20.

Summary

The evidence presented on the nature of New Testament preaching in the Pauline Epistles has indicated that:

- (1) There was a readiness to preach the gospel.
- (2) A second characteristic of New Testament preaching was apostolic.
- (3) A third characteristic of preaching in the Pauline Epistles was a pioneer spirit that manifested itself in carrying the gospel into new regions.
- (4) Another characteristic of New Testament preaching in the Pauline Epistles was reliance upon the power of God. Paul used the power of God so his converts' faith "should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God" (1 Cor. 2:5).
- (5) A fifth characteristic mentioned in the Pauline Epistles concerning preaching was self-control. Just as an athlete keeps his body under control so Paul does in order to live as a true Christian.
- (6) The preaching in the Pauline Epistles was hortatory.

IV. THE GOSPELS AND PETER

(1) One prominent characteristic of preaching found in the Gospels was the issuance of power to the twelve disciples before sending them out to preach. Matthew recorded, "And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease. And as ye go, preach, saying the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew

10:1, 7). The Gospel of Mark recorded the choosing of the twelve "to be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils" (Mark 3:14, 15). The Gospel of Luke also recorded the sending out of the twelve, "... gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases. And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick" (Luke 9: 1, 2).

(2) Jesus was conscious of being anointed to preach the gospel. In the Nazareth synagogue, He read from the prophet Isaiah, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives ..." and "To preach the acceptable year of the Lord" (Luke 4:18, 19). This consciousness of mission kept Jesus moving for He said, "I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore am I sent" (Luke 4:43).

(3) A third characteristic of preaching found in the Gospels was heraldic. The Greek word kērussō means to proclaim or to be a herald as defined in chapter II. It occurs eight times in the Acts of the Apostles as has been listed in the previous chapter, nine times in the Gospel of Matthew and Luke each, nineteen times in the Pauline Epistles, and one time in the First Epistle of Peter. But the most frequent occurrence of kērussō in any one book of the Bible is in the Gospel of Mark where it appears fourteen times.

The frequent occurrence in the Gospel of Mark of kērussō could be accounted for on the basis of Mark's desire to get quickly to the action

and also upon the intended Roman audience.²⁹ The herald was not peculiar to Christianity as seen in the account of the martyrdom of Polycarp when the proconsul sent his herald into the arena to announce three times that Polycarp was a Christian. However, enough evidence is found in the Gospel of Mark alone to characterize Jesus' preaching in the Gospels as heraldic.

(4) A fourth characteristic found in the Gospels was hortatory. The clearest reference to hortatory preaching concerns John the Baptist's ministry. Luke gives in his Gospel a summary of John's ministry. He wrote "And many other things in his exhortation preached he unto the people" (Luke 3:18).

(5) A characteristic of New Testament preaching found in the Epistles of Peter was that the good news was proclaimed in the power of the Holy Spirit. Peter could not forget Pentecost because he wrote in his First Epistle that certain matters have been made plain to his readers "by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven" (I Peter 1:12).

(6) Peter's preaching was hortatory. He wrote "By Silvanus, a faithful brother unto you, as I suppose, I have written briefly, exhorting, and testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand" (I Peter 5:12). His purpose in writing to these Christians is to exhort them to live for Christ in the midst of persecution. It would not be

²⁹Merrill C. Tenney, New Testament Survey (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1961), p. 157.

unreasonable to assume that Peter talked the way he wrote, especially in the light of Luke using the very same word for exhortation in describing Peter's preaching "With many other words did he testify and exhort" (Acts 2:40).

(7) Another characteristic of early preaching found in the Epistles of Peter was testimonial. The Greek word epimarturōn means "To attest".³⁰ The prefix epi strengthens an element in martureō. Epimarturōn is only found in the following reference: "By Silvanus, a faithful brother unto you, as I suppose, I have written briefly, exhorting, and testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand" (I Peter 5:12).

Peter characterizes his writing as "exhorting and testifying" which are the same two words used by Luke to describe his preaching in Acts 2:40.

Summary

The evidence presented on the nature of New Testament preaching in the Gospels and Peter has indicated that:

- (1) One prominent characteristic of preaching found in the Gospels was the issuance of power to the twelve disciples before sending them out to preach.
- (2) Jesus was conscious of being anointed to preach the gospel.
- (3) Jesus' preaching in the Gospels was heraldic.

³⁰ Gerhard Friedrich, ed., Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1967), Vol. 4, p. 508.

(4) John the Baptist's preaching was hortatory.

(5) A characteristic of New Testament preaching found in the First Epistle of Peter was that the good news was proclaimed in the power of the Holy Spirit.

(6) Peter's preaching was hortatory.

(7) Peter's preaching was testimonial.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

I. SUMMARY

In Chapter II, preaching was viewed from the standpoint of content, using the New Testament as source material. The evidence indicated that:

(1) The object of the verbs generally translated "preach" in the New Testament revealed the content to be "the word" with the description "of the Lord" or "of God" used to describe what kind of word was preached, and that

(2) The name "Jesus" was also used, sometimes lengthened to "Jesus Christ" or "the Son of God", and that

(3) Much of the content was an extension of the first two findings, and that

(4) By the word "gospel" with the description "of God" or "of peace" was used to describe what kind of gospel was preached, and that

(5) By the name "Christ", with the phrase "crucified" and "as Lord" to tell in what manner Christ was preached.

(6) The content of New Testament preaching contained fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies proving that Jesus was the promised Messiah.

(7) The New Testament preaching emphasized the earthly life of Jesus as coming from the line of David.

(8) The New Testament preaching contained the proclamation of the death, resurrection, and exaltation of Jesus along with a descriptive message "delivered for our offences" or "raised for our justification".

(9) Included in the New Testament preaching was a coming judgment.

(10) Repentance was an essential ingredient of the New Testament preaching.

(11) New Testament preaching proclaimed spiritual deliverance and entering into God's rest.

(12) A part of the content of New Testament preaching was the intercession of Christ.

(13) New Testament preaching proclaimed the Lordship of Christ.

(14) The second coming of Christ was part of the content of the New Testament preaching.

In Chapter III, the New Testament preaching was examined from the standpoint of character rather than content. The evidence presented in this chapter indicated that:

(1) In preaching to Jewish audiences a polemic quality was employed.

(2) In preaching to believers a dialogistic method was sometimes used when not related to the evangelism of the Jews.

(3) The New Testament preaching was apostolic.

(4) The early preaching was characterized by boldness.

- (5) The New Testament preaching was elevated.
- (6) The New Testament preaching was powerful.
- (7) The New Testament preaching was hortatory.
- (8) The New Testament preaching was testimonial.
- (9) The New Testament preaching was characterized by a readiness to preach the gospel.
- (10) A tenth characteristic of New Testament preaching was self-control.
- (11) The New Testament preaching was heraldic.

II. CONCLUSIONS

The object of the verbs "to preach" and the subject matter of the sermons in the New Testament all center in the Word of God which is Jesus Christ. It is the author's conclusion then, that the content of the Biblical theology of preaching is Jesus Christ.

The Biblical theology of preaching is to be identified by these characteristics: it was empowered with the Holy Spirit, endowed with a sense of divine commission, bold, elevated, hortatory, testimonial, heraldic, dialogistic, marked by a readiness to preach, and self-controlled.

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