



When the Apostles Became Kings: Ruling and Judging the Twelve Tribes of Israel in the Book of Acts

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Abstract

It is widely accepted that the two volumes of Luke-Acts are based on an inaugurated eschatological framework. The kingdom of Christ has already been established, but it is not yet present in its fullness. Given this framework of “already/not yet,” how do we understand Jesus’ promise to the Twelve in Luke 22:28–30 that they would “sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel?” If that is the promise, what does the fulfillment entail? Here we will examine Jesus’ promise in Luke’s Gospel and its fulfillment in the Book of Acts. The central proposal of this study is that the twelve apostles began to judge the twelve tribes of Israel in their inaugurated co-regency in the series of events following the ascension of Jesus and culminating in Pentecost.

Key words: co-regents, kingship, ruling, judging, thrones, eschatology, Luke-Acts

Living the life of royalty in a kingdom often conjures up images from animated movies. It is the common stock of childhood fantasies. But this was not the case in the first century when a young rabbi named Jesus told his disciples about his soon-to-be kingdom and their own soon-to-be thrones. The reality and plausibility of reigning in this kingdom was so powerful that some of these disciples asked their mother to make a request to sit next to Jesus in the kingdom (Matt 20:20–28). This request, as recorded in the Gospel of Matthew, reflects the larger Matthean theme of irony: the disciples do not know what they are asking for. The gospel writer Luke also had a penchant for irony, and his two-volume narrative also uses it to draw the reader into the narrative (Maxwell: 72, 154). In Luke’s Gospel, Jesus has to deal with the irony of arguing about who will be the great-

est disciple. He has to explain that the least is the greatest and the greatest is the least (Luke 9:46–48). The Lukan world is upside-down! (York: 42; Rowe: 102, 116). Ruling and reigning on the throne next to Jesus comes only through suffering and death. What is clear is that Jesus’ preaching

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about the coming kingdom of God produced real desire for something that today seems only for theme parks.

As noted above, the disciples not only tried to acquire power in this future kingdom through chicanery, they argued over who would be the greatest. Luke records one of these instances as well as Jesus' response in Luke 22:28–30. This text at the end of Luke's Gospel provides a vital but overlooked lens through which the book of Acts should be read. With respect to the two-volume corpus of Luke-Acts, the writer Luke wants his second volume to be read in light of the first, as well as Old Testament promises (Thompson: 17). To be clear, the framework of promise-fulfillment works together with intertextual references to provide coherence. In other words, the Hebrew Scriptures and the Greek copy of these scriptures known as the Septuagint, helped to interpret the "Christ-event" (Fitzmyer: 60). The Septuagint made the promise of Jesus coherent and understandable to those who believed that Jesus fulfilled Yahweh's promises. Following Stanley Porter (107), we do not need to choose between promise/fulfillment and coherence/meaning in Luke-Acts.

The promise-fulfillment motif works on two different but intertwined levels. First, promise-fulfillment works on the level of promises in the OT being fulfilled in the life and ministry of Jesus (the book of Luke) as well as in the acts of resurrected Jesus and his church (the book of Acts). Second, promise-fulfillment works on a much smaller scale so that promises made by Jesus before his ascension are fulfilled in the kingdom of God as depicted in Acts. In this vein, Alan J. Thompson (22) highlights how Luke uses the phraseology "in my former book" (Luke 1:1). Whereas the first level deals with *canon-wide* promise and fulfillment, the second level deals with *corpus-wide* promise and fulfillment.

The connection between Luke and Acts is literary: the book of Acts continues the story of Luke. The connection between Luke and Acts is also salvation-historical: the book of Acts continues to develop important themes such as God's kingdom, who the people of God are / should be, who the God of Israel is, and what this God has done for both Jew and Gentile by providing for salvation in Jesus. All of these connections take place within a world that rejoices in what has *already* taken place and joyfully anticipates what will come but has *not yet* occurred. This world of the already and not yet is summed up by the term "inaugurated eschatology." For example, N. T. Wright uses this very term to explain how Luke's Gospel frames the resurrection of Jesus

and the future resurrection foreshadowed by Jesus' "lost and found" parables in Luke 15 (2003: 438). More recently Wright has said that Jesus' message of hope for Israel was an "inaugurated eschatological message" (2012: 37). Others have been as bold as to conclude that "inaugurated eschatology" as found in the followers of Jesus parallels the writings in other Jewish literature such as the writings at Qumran (Beale & Carson: xxvii). So Luke's approach to eschatology would have likely been understood outside of the sect(s) of Jesus followers. We might say that "inaugurated eschatology" means that events that have begun to be fulfilled or accomplished by God do not reflect the total sum of what the promise entailed. Even where God has done mighty deeds, there will be more to come.

This study begins with the specific promise by Jesus to the twelve disciples at the end of Luke's Gospel (Luke 22:28–30):

You are those who have stayed with me in my trials, and I assign to you, as my Father assigned to me, a kingdom, that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. [ESV].

This promise is strange and surprising because it does not seem to have a clear fulfillment. When we read the book of Acts, there are *no* categorical statements such as "and thus Peter judged the twelve tribes of Israel." On the one hand, the Gospel of Luke provides us with a specific statement that encourages us to read Acts with certain anticipation. On the other hand, it seems to many that the restoration of Israel has begun without the thrones! To deal with this problem, we must do some inductive work by collecting data from Acts so as to clearly understand how Jesus envisions this judgment of the twelve tribes of Israel. We also have to make sure our reading of the pattern of narrative scenes in Acts comports with the way in which Luke foreshadows what kingship in Israel looks like in the whole textual unit of Luke 22:24–30.

The book of Acts opens with several important scenes or vignettes that set the stage for the rest of the book. First, the introduction of Acts refers to Jesus' discussions about the "kingdom of God" after his resurrection. This kingdom was inaugurated with the resurrection of Jesus (Acts 1:3). According to Jesus' promise in Luke 22:28–30, the apostles will judge the twelve tribes of Israel when the kingdom of God arrives. We should expect the book of Acts to follow

this pattern of kingdom arrival then judgment. But does it? Is the action of ruling and judging the twelve tribes related solely to a futuristic event connected with the Second Coming and final judgment? Or has this placement of the Twelve on twelve thrones already begun? *My goal in this study is to argue that the Twelve apostles became kings or co-regents after Jesus' resurrection; they have already begun to take up their thrones.*

The Twelve began to judge the twelve tribes of Israel in their inaugurated co-regency in the series of events following the ascension of Jesus and culminating in Pentecost. To build on N. T. Wright's recent book on the Gospels, we would state that the living God became king "on earth as in heaven" and that he shared this kingship with the Twelve (2012: 18). Because the fulfillment of kingdom promises has already begun, the Twelve should be understood as kings or co-regents under the authority of risen Lord Jesus, the Davidic king of Israel. While many scholars focus on the restoration of Israel, they do not identify the shared kingship with Jesus as having begun in the apostolic era. For example, William S. Kurz (77) states, "Now that the Twelve has been reconstituted and is again able to sit on twelve thrones over Israel (Luke 22:30), the stage is set for Pentecost" (see also Peterson: 120, 126 and Fitzmyer: 223). This thesis means that the installation of Matthias completed the Twelve apostles so that they could fulfill the Lukan promise of a reconstituted Israel with a reconstituted judgment and kingship (or co-regency). In light of the clarity with which this relationship has been stated, it is surprising that it has not been teased out more. This study will focus on using the promise-fulfillment motif and narrative-critical tools to develop the relationship between Jesus' promise to the Twelve in Luke 22:28–30 and its fulfillment in Acts.

There have been some recent challenges to the Lukan authorship of the Gospel that bears his name and Acts (Walters). But these challenges have not gained wide acceptance (Bird). The shared authorship of the two-volume work of Luke-Acts is based on authorship unity, theological unity, and narrational unity. With relatively little reservation, we may state that the author of Luke's Gospel also penned Acts. To return to the problem at hand: when it comes to the connection between Jesus' promise and the restoration of Israel through the Twelve, the discussion of their thrones and kingship drops out. To restate the problem: the current state of Lukan scholarship makes only broad and unclear

connections between Jesus' promise in Luke 22:28–30 and its fulfillment in Acts. We might ask: is "leaders" a sufficient title to explain the role of the Twelve (Peterson: 126). If they are simply leaders, why do they need a throne? If they are "patriarchs" as N. T. Wright suggests (2008: 17), does this include the patriarch David who was also a king? Howard Marshall (68) suggests that the Twelve were special in their roles as "apostles" but the "thrones" were something they could "look forward to." This is an example of a futuristic view that fails to explain why it is so important to have the Twelve reconstituted after the death of Judas. More recently, the commentary on Acts by Darrell Bock follows the pattern of contemporary scholars by calling the Twelve "the leaders of eschatological Israel" (74). Bock (82) also references a view similar to ours about kingship but does not provide any engagement with it. *Specifically, the problem is that the language of kingship is almost never used to explain the roles of the Twelve as they participate in the restoration of Israel and witness about Jesus' resurrection.*

This thesis that the Twelve should be understood as kings or co-regents rests on understanding the promise and its fulfillment. In the next section we will carefully stake out what Jesus' promise to the disciples meant and the definition of key words and concepts.

The Promise of Co-Regency in Luke's Gospel

In this section we will focus on Jesus' promise quoted above from Luke 22:28–30. The claim we seek to develop about the inaugurated kingship of the Twelve is consistent with the view that Luke-Acts is characterized by inaugurated eschatology. We are arguing that the promise Jesus made to the Twelve about their future place on twelve thrones did indeed have its inauguration at (or around) Pentecost. The place of the Twelve on their thrones reflects Jesus' own kingship and kingdom: it is now and not yet; it is here and it is coming. The co-regency of the Apostles differs from Jesus' own kingship in the sense that the Apostles did not rule from a resurrected body or from a heavenly throne. Nevertheless, they are sharing in the authority of the inaugurated Davidic kingdom that Jesus established with his ascension. We are not claiming that the task of the Twelve was totally fulfilled, as it is likely that this promise of Jesus does indeed have ramifications for the final judgment of the earth. There is room for further futuristic development and fulfillment of this promise

for national Israel. But this futuristic element does not negate the partial and inaugurated beginning of its fulfillment.

Jesus' description of the forthcoming rulers and judges of the twelve tribes of Israel occurs at the end of Luke's Gospel as Jesus approaches the cross. The speech of Jesus that "assigns" the Twelve as rulers and judges may have occurred during or shortly after the last Passover that Jesus transformed into the Lord's Supper in Luke 22:14–22. What is clear in the course of the Lukan narrative is that the inauguration of the kingdom of God that Jesus spoke of would not begin until something is "fulfilled" (Luke 22:16). Jesus explains that he "will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes" (Luke 22:18). The following discourse explains the giving of his body and the covenant in his blood. His death fulfills God's plan so that his kingdom may be established. The betrayal to come links the inauguration of the kingdom of God with the death of the Son of Man (Luke 22:22).

Given this information about the forthcoming kingdom of God, the disciples begin to argue about who will be the greatest in this kingdom. The idea of participating in the ruler-ship of Israel is so tantalizing that it provokes all types of ungodly responses. The inaugurated nature of this kingdom is clear when Jesus explains to them how leadership in this kingdom will work. Leadership comes by service and selflessness. But Jesus does not deny that the disciples will experience this kingdom in their lifetime; it is not a post-resurrection kingdom or a kingdom that may possibly be delayed.

One of the clarifications that Jesus' speech makes is that the role of the Twelve in the coming kingdom is office-like. The concept of an official office was present in the legal and governmental realms of the Hellenistic period (McRay 1990). The writer Luke refers to several office-holders and officers acting without explanation. Luke simply discusses Jewish sects such as the Sadducees and officials such as "the captain of the temple" (Acts 4:1) as though the implied reader would understand they had the official power to arrest Jesus-followers. The Roman use of offices and officers was pervasive and inseparable from the milieu in which we find Jesus and the disciples. This is why Jesus had to discuss the nature of ruling in the first place. The very nature of the office that the Twelve will possess is compared by Jesus to the "kings of the nations" (Luke 22:25). The Twelve will be kings or co-regents with Jesus at his table. Each will have

an "office" (Jervell 1996: 79). There is a strong element of continuity between kings such as Caesar and the members of the Twelve. Each member of the Twelve is a "king." Jesus uses the comparison with the kings the disciples are familiar with in their Hellenistic context in a negative manner. When Jesus transitions from the lordship of the Gentiles to the then future lordship of the disciples in Luke 22:26, he uses two different Greek words (*de* and *allá*) so that there is no doubt that a contrast is in view. The Gentile kings are examples of what the office of ruler and judge in the reconstituted Israel should not be like. Jesus turns the idea of what a ruler and judge is upside-down by reversing the common understanding. The Twelve will rule and judge with authority, albeit a derived and servant-like authority. In the comparison with the "kings of the Gentiles" in Luke 22:25 this is described as exercising "lordship."

It is within this context that Jesus makes his promise to the Twelve in Luke 22:28–30:

You are those who have stayed with me in my trials, and I assign to you, as my Father assigned to me, a kingdom, that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

There are three key elements that must be elaborated upon so that the whole speech may be unlocked: the kingdom, the thrones of judgment, and the twelve tribes of Israel. We will examine each of these in the order in which they occur in this significant saying of Jesus.

Defining the Kingdom of Jesus

The kingdom that Jesus refers to in Luke 22:28–30 has several significant qualities. We do not have space to elucidate upon every aspect of Jesus' kingdom in Luke or Acts. Our goal must be much more modest. We must seek to ascertain from the context what Jesus was speaking about when he referred to "my kingdom" in Luke 22:30. Here, we may draw out three distinct components of the kingdom of Jesus that appear in the textual units surrounding the promise under consideration.

- This kingdom is related to Jesus' own trials. The kingdom cannot be separated from Jesus' sufferings and the crucifixion in the upside-down world that Luke seeks to portray. From a narratological perspective,

this dialogue occurs immediately before a series of events in which the conflict between Jesus and Satan (Luke 22:31) is growing to a climax. As the story approaches the cross, images of internal and external conflict include: the sickle action in Luke 22:31, swords in Luke 22:38, and drops of blood in Luke 22:44. The kingdom of Jesus is one in which the ruling and conquering Danielic “Son of Man” must suffer by being betrayed (Luke 22:48) (Snodgrass: 307 n55).

- The kingdom of Jesus is intimately related to table-fellowship with himself. To participate in Jesus’ kingdom is equivalent to eating and drinking with the king. The kingdom is characterized by radical equality and access to the king. This radical access to Jesus comes only by professing his name and believing in him. Furthermore, this kingdom has its origin in Jesus’ God—the Father. Access to king Jesus is also inseparable from access to God the Father.
- This kingdom that Jesus speaks of is understood to be the fulfillment of the hopes of Israel that are testified to in the Scriptures. At the beginning of Acts, we get a clear picture of Jesus as the Davidic king of Israel through Peter’s sermon at Pentecost and his use of the “this is that” (Acts 2:16) approach to Old Testament prophecy from Joel and Isaiah. The “this” refers to the out-pouring of the Spirit upon the disciples and “that” refers to the promises Yahweh made to Israel as recorded in Scripture. The intertextual references to Joel and Isaiah in Acts 1–2 help the reader learn that the last days have come upon us with the resurrection of Christ. This means the outpouring of the Spirit’s power to provide prophecy, signs, wonders, and salvation. This kingdom has not yet come in power and fullness, but it has definitely begun. The fact that Jesus views himself as a king who has the ability to share the thrones in this kingdom lays important groundwork for the next two items.

Defining the Twelve Thrones

Because Jesus’ promise to the Twelve apostles in Luke 22:30 has proved to be so enigmatic, interpretive strategies have often turned to word studies in order to define what Jesus meant by “judging.” These word studies are hermeneutically paralyzed by unnecessary dichotomies. The judges are

either executors of a sentence or kingly rulers (McKnight: 145 n57). The thrones are regal or judicial (Twelftree: 24). The disciples as kingly rulers will provide negative condemnation or provide positive justice or governance (Croy: 71). The Twelve will be for the oppressed or against perpetrators of sin (ibid.). Many instances of this word-study approach are flawed because they are based on the logical fallacy of a false dichotomy. In sum, the problem with the word-study approach is that the judgment of the Twelve is isolated from the most important factor in word-meaning: the *context* of Luke’s upside-down narrative world that is shaped by the cross and resurrection of Jesus.

Defining the twelve thrones must begin with defining the throne of Jesus. The thrones are promised in light of Jesus’ own kingdom. This is reinforced by the repetition of first-person language in the pericope of Luke 22:28–30. Jesus refers to *my* trials, *my* Father, *my* table, and *my* kingdom. Whatever Jesus gives to the Twelve must be understood as flowing from him. The repetition inherent in Jesus’ first-person language provides a solid basis for concluding that the thrones of the apostles cannot be separated from his own throne; this is nothing less than derived co-regency or sub-regency. Jesus’ throne comes with real authority, real leadership, and real power. But there is a catch. This new reality is all redefined by Jesus’ example, not by the “kings of Gentiles” (Luke 22:25), as noted above. According to Jesus, the primary and immediate function of the Twelve’s co-regency will be self-sacrificial service. Before continuing this study we must also define the twelve tribes who will be the subjects of this new Davidic kingdom.

The thrones are offices which the Twelve share and derive from Jesus’ own Davidic throne. The thrones are best understood as having a progressive or inaugurated fulfillment. The thrones were obtained when the Twelve were reconstituted during the events after Jesus’ ascension. But they also have a futuristic element that is not totally clear but is discussed below. Because these thrones are derivative of Jesus’ own literal Davidic seat, it is not necessary to understand them as literal seats. This is reinforced by the reference to the replacement of Judas filling a place in “this ministry and apostleship” (Acts 1:25).

The thrones are offices of service and proclamation. The thrones of the Twelve are defined in relation to Jesus’ throne and his kingdom: the Twelve initially received spiritual thrones derived from Jesus’ own literal throne in heaven, and

futuristic fulfillment may result in literal thrones for them as well at the "day of the Lord."

Defining the Twelve Tribes of Israel

Just who are going to be the subjects or vassals of Jesus and the twelve kings? The problem with defining the twelve tribes is long-standing. I modify the terminology of Jacob Jervell (77), who argues that the Twelve function as "Israel's eschatological rulers and judges." First, I avoid the use of the nebulous word "eschatological." Second, I argue that the Twelve are *both* guarantors of the ecclesiastical tradition *and* rulers and judges in the realm of the kingdom/restoration of Israel (thus avoiding another unnecessary dichotomy). Third, I agree with Thompson (18, n4), who finds Jervell's identification of the church as Israel in Luke-Acts as "idiosyncratic" amongst contemporary scholarship. Rather, I view Jesus' reference to "Israel" in Luke 22:30 as ethnic and national. This does not mean there is no continuity between the nation of Israel and the church as the inclusive people of God; it simply means that Jesus' reference to the "twelve tribes of Israel" in Luke 22:30 cannot be understood in a figurative or symbolic way that extends beyond national Israel.

The apostles who were promised a throne over the "twelve tribes of Israel" were Jewish men in a Palestinian context and there is no contextual evidence that Gentiles-as-potential-vassals played a part in their own thinking. The Gentiles were tempting only as model lords or kings. Even if we were to grant that the name "Israel" is occasionally inclusive of, or refers to the church (with Gentiles) in some manner, that still does not explain the numerical reference to the "twelve tribes." The best explanation is that the reference to the "twelve tribes of Israel" in Luke 22:30 does not reference the church or Gentiles at all. From a broader perspective, Vittorio Fusco (3) points to the "nationalism" of Luke-Acts evidenced in references to the "hope of Israel" and the promises made to the "fathers" (e.g. Acts 28:20). Moreover, as Bruce Malina explains (7), references to and citations of Israel's Scriptures (such as Isaiah) would have made sense only to those who were Israelites. Thus, we are left with the salient point that Jesus and the Twelve themselves would have thought of the twelve tribes of Israel only as ethnic and national. With these definitions in mind, we may now seek to establish when the fulfillment of Jesus' promise to the Twelve actually began.

In sum, we are stating that Acts presents the kingdom of God and the restoration of Israel as inaugurated but not totally realized. The twelve thrones mentioned in Luke 22:28–30 are not totally fulfilled, but nor are they totally futuristic; rather, they are an integral part of the inaugurated kingdom of God that began when Jesus ascended to heaven at the right hand of God the Father and sat on his throne. The twelve apostles are integral to this kingdom because they witness to the risen Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8). This verbal proclamation of the king becomes a litmus test for those who would claim to be a part of the reconstituted Israel. The key idea for understanding the twelve thrones is that they have begun even as Jesus' kingdom has begun.

The Fulfillment of Co-Regency in the Book of Acts

Thus far we have set up the *promise* based on Jesus' brief pre-crucifixion speech to his disciples in Luke 22:28–30. Now we turn to the *fulfillment*. At this point, the disciples are anticipating the arrival of Jesus' kingdom because they themselves will be rulers and judges of this restored Davidic kingdom. But things do not turn out the way they expected. The path of following Jesus and living in the world-that-Luke-portrays is totally upside-down. In this section we will attempt to move between the forest and the trees of the Book of Acts in order to provide an account of the initial fulfillment of the co-regency of the apostles. To do this we will answer this one simple question: when did their co-regency begin?

The promise of co-regency in Luke 22:28–30 does not simply disappear in Luke's second volume, nor are there good reasons to believe that this promise should be exclusively futuristic and unrelated to Luke's inaugurated eschatology. On the contrary, the promise we are left with at the end of Luke's first volume is picked up immediately in the second volume as the details of the Kingdom emerge. A pertinent question about this kingdom appears in Acts 1:6: "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" Again, Luke's inaugurated eschatology comes into view. The disciples will not know when the restoration of Israel will take place because this is fixed by the Father (Acts 1:7). This is followed with the logical contrastive "but" in Acts 1:8. The Father's refusal to reveal his timetable is not the end of the matter. This contrastive is followed by the theological and geographic pathway from Jerusalem to Judea-

Samaria to the ends-of-the-earth.

There are manifestations of the already/not yet paradigm early in the book of Acts. On the one hand, the promise of the Holy Spirit's power and the sending of the disciples stands in contrast to the restoration of Israel. On the other hand, some promises will be fulfilled only in the future. This schema of inaugurated eschatology is required in order to understand Jesus' Davidic kingdom as well as the co-regency of the Twelve over the twelve tribes. To ascertain *when* the Twelve became co-regents with Christ, we must keep in mind that Luke peppered his narrative with elements of salvation-historical progress that are not always definitive or decisive in nature if they stand apart from the whole narrative. It is not possible to say that x event is the time when the co-regency of the Twelve began. Rather, we must sketch out a *series of events* that constitute the time when co-regency of the Twelve began.

The Twelve became kings or co-regents with Jesus in the events encompassed by the following:

- his post-resurrection appearances,
- the re-assembly of the Twelve,
- after they were empowered at Pentecost.

These events are distinct yet inseparable. At Jesus' ascension, his own speech to the Twelve ("you will be my witnesses...") creates and develops the mission of the Twelve (Acts 1:6-11). This occurs immediately before the narrative turns to the need to re-assemble the Twelve. It is evident from Acts 1:26 that Matthias completes what was lacking in the eleven apostles. The Twelve must be re-assembled before they become co-regents and fulfill the promise that Jesus left with them.

- The book of Acts begins with references to the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus to the disciples. Before the ascension, Jesus gave the apostles "commands" (Acts 1:2) and proofs of his suffering (Acts 1:3), and he spoke to them about the "kingdom of God" (Acts 1:3). The immediate reference to the kingdom of God and the need to wait for the fulfilling of promises creates strong literary and salvation-historical ties to the end of Luke's Gospel, including Jesus' promise to make the disciples his co-regents.
- We must examine the re-assembly of the Twelve in Acts 1:12-26. Joseph Fitzmyer (221) asks the appropriate question here: "Why, then, was a need felt

at the beginning to constitute the Twelve in the first important episode of Acts?" Fitzmyer looks *forward* to Pentecost to answer this question but he does not look *backward* to Luke's Gospel. By looking backward first, we can see that the need to reconstitute the Twelve flows from the expectation of Jesus' promise in Luke 22:28-30.

- Peter's speech at Pentecost opens with the critical fact that he was "standing with the eleven" (Acts 2:14). The empowerment of the Twelve at Pentecost seals and finally establishes the Twelve in their offices as apostles, servants, and kings over the reconstituted Israel. This event occurs in Jerusalem (Acts 2:5) because it is the center of the beginning of the restoration. Whereas Witherington (132) argues that the divided tongues of fire were *not* symbolic of "empowerment for leadership," the focus on Peter standing as a unit with the "eleven" (Acts 2:14) indicates that this event empowers the Twelve and presents them publicly to Jerusalem. Through the act of preaching, Peter and the Twelve engage the conflict about Jesus "*within Judaism*" (Witherington: 142). The reference to number "eleven" is a strong piece of narrative-critical evidence that ties Pentecost to the fulfillment of Jesus' promise to establish the twelve disciples as co-regents. After becoming empowered by the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, the re-assembled Twelve can now take their office as co-regents of the risen Lord Jesus.

There is undoubtedly a sense that something is incomplete when it comes to the co-regency of the Twelve. This is purposefully so. The kingship of the Twelve follows the pattern of David and Jesus, who entered into their kingship without the full benefits immediately available. David's own anointing as king of Israel by Samuel (1 Sam 16:13) is followed by twenty years until his appointment as king. Jesus' ascension follows this pattern because it requires faith to see his kingship until his visible return. If there is a futuristic element to the co-regency of the Twelve, the writer Luke is not *greatly* interested in it. It is clear that the writer Luke understands from Joel's prophecy that there will be a future event described in Acts 2:20 (before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day). In addition, the very ascension of Jesus to his Davidic throne entails a period of waiting till all of his enemies are his "footstool" (Acts 2:34-35). Given Luke's inaugurated eschatology and this reference to

Joel, there is ample warrant for viewing the Twelve as having a future role in judging and ruling Israel after the "day of the Lord" comes. Luke does not explain, however, what this entails beyond intertextual references and allusions. What is clear is that the focus in Acts is on the present and inaugurated fulfillment of Jesus' promise in Luke 22:28–30.

Klyne Snodgrass (307 n55) suggests that the promise that the disciples will set on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel "echoes Daniel 7:9 which describes 'thrones' being set up, as well as Daniel 7:14, which promises the Son of Man 'glory.'" One might deduce that the Twelve share in the same glory of the Danielic Son of Man. If this is correct, then the Twelve participate and share in the same glory associated with the kingdom, the authority, and the re-established house of David that is governed by the risen Lord Jesus. Once again, this glory is derived from Christ because it is a result of *his* trials, *his* Father, *his* table, and *his* kingdom. An accurate inaugurated eschatological outlook on this intertextual relationship cannot result in a triumphalistic perspective of glory. The upside-down kingdom of Christ is not like the rulers of this world, and glory is achieved only through following the Son of Man through suffering and death.

Conclusion

What exactly is the role of the Twelve in the inaugurated Davidic kingdom that began with Jesus' ascension into heaven? Are the Twelve "authorized delegates" as Alan Thompson suggests (181, 191)? Are they supervisors of the "Messianist mission" as Charles Talbert suggests (72)? Following after the pattern of the Davidic warrior-king, the co-regents of Christ do not rule the Twelve tribes with horse and rider and bow (cf. Pss. Sol 17:33). Rather, they rule at first with God's word and Spirit (Strauss: 41). It is only when we have a broader canonical view of texts such as Revelation 2:20 that this kingship is expanded in a futuristic fulfillment where judgment is executed from a literal throne. The Twelve are indeed co-regents or co-kings with the risen Lord Jesus. If they are kings, when did they become so? In this study we concluded that even if the anointing of the Twelve was completed and their appointment has begun, this does not rule out future fulfillment tied into the futuristic coming of the "day of the Lord" (Acts 2:20). The Twelve became kings through the series of events after the ascension of Jesus that culminated at Pentecost in Jerusalem.

If it is true that the Apostles entered into their co-regency with the risen Lord Jesus in his inaugurated Davidic kingdom, how would this have related to the context of the Roman Empire? We do not have time to explore this question completely, but we can make suggestions for further investigation. We can begin by observing, as Vernon K. Robbins notes (207), that the power dynamic at work in Luke-Acts is between Caesar (Rome) and the God of Israel (Jesus/Yahweh). One might even argue that the Twelve do not stand in direct opposition to Rome. For example, both Jesus and the Apostles submit to centurions (Robbins: 208). In Luke 7, Jesus submits to the request of the Roman centurion to come heal his servant. Likewise, in Acts 10, the centurion Cornelius is contacted by the Lord in a dream to aid Peter.

Before concluding that the relationship between the kingship of Jesus and his Twelve and Rome is totally symbiotic we must engage with two critical points. First, both these examples of submission to centurion representatives of Rome exemplify the more narrow context of the discussion about kingship at the end of Luke's Gospel. In Luke 22, Jesus needed to remind his disciples that interest in greatness reflects the leadership values of the "kings of the Gentiles" (Luke 22:25). But the kingship of the restored Israelite theocracy will not be like this. If the Twelve are kings as well as servants, they are following Jesus in turning the patron-client power pyramid upside-down. If the power relationship between the Empire of Rome and the kingdom of Christ is totally "symbiotic" as Robbins' suggests (210), how do we account for this kind of contrast between the kings of the Gentiles and the kings of the restored Israel?

The critical issue that a symbiotic view must engage with is the claim that Jesus is "Lord" of all in the same way that Yahweh is Lord of all (Rowe: 197–217). If the Twelve share in this kingship, they too are in conflict with Rome in some manner. More recently, Kavin Rowe (140) has presented a strong thesis that Luke's vision is neither "for" nor "against" the Roman jurisprudence. Our answers must be as complex and layered as Luke's own Gospel. This dovetails nicely with our conclusion that the Twelve have already taken up their thrones over Israel. The thrones of the Twelve and their authority relate to Rome through neither total symbiosis nor total opposition, but through an on-going tension that will not be resolved until Jesus returns to *finalize* his kingdom and *completely* establish the Twelve as rulers and judges. Until that time, the Twelve, who share authority with the

“Lord of all,” will be stoned, beaten, and driven out of town (Acts 8:1). Until that time of *full* restoration that only the Father knows (Acts 1:7), the Apostle’s co-regency with Jesus remains focused on the proclamation of Christ and the word of the Lord (Acts 8:4-5).

In conclusion, we agree with scholars such as Charles Talbert, who note that the Twelve “represent the judges for a reconstituted Israel” (72). But this is simply not robust enough to explain adequately the kingly thrones that so piqued the attention of the disciples. We have sought to clarify *when* this takes place and how it relates to the inaugurated eschatology of Luke-Acts and the opening scenes in the book of Acts. The restoration of national/ethnic Israel begins (but is not yet complete) with the establishment of the Twelve disciples as twelve kings or co-regents in the re-established Davidic kingdom. If N. T. Wright is arguing that the Gospels (including Luke) tell the “story of Jesus” which is the “story of how Israel’s God became king” (2012: 37), then we might add that Acts is the story of how Israel’s restored kings spread the message about Israel’s God-king Jesus. Restoration results in a repentant, forgiven people centered in Jerusalem (Acts 2:17-21), empowered by the Holy Spirit (2:1-4, 41), and led by Twelve *kings* whose news about Jesus is able to create a restored community (1:21–26) (De Long: 246).

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