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You Could Say that Again

Examining the Probability of Parallels Between Stephen and Moses in Acts 6-7

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Abstract

This thesis posits the idea that the author of Acts intentionally creates a literary parallel between Stephen and Moses. Comparative analysis seemingly confirms that Stephen is being portrayed as a parallel of Christ. However, little scholarly attention has been given to the possibility that the author of Acts 6-7 intentionally creates a connection between Stephen and Moses. Following an attempt to provide an objective foundation for asserting such parallels, the Stephen-Moses connections will be presented. Two implications follow from this parallel which impact the Stephen episode as well as the larger Acts narrative. The pertinent literature involves commentaries on the Stephen episode, books regarding Moses parallels throughout Christian literature, and works that help establish an objective framework through rhetorical criticism.

You Could Say that Again

Examining the Probability of Parallels Between Stephen and Moses in Acts 7

Introduction

The narrative units of Luke and Acts continue to provide adequate ground for interpretational debate. These two books are comprised of diverse forms including narrative, historiography, speeches, and prophecy. However, these two works provide a singular perspective on the person of Jesus Christ and the results of His life and teachings. Without the book of Acts in particular, any history of the early church would be nearly impossible to reconstruct. Understanding this author's purposes and theology requires examining the intentional narrative progression in the book of Acts.[1]

Stephen, in Acts 6-7, serves as a crucial figure in the Acts narrative. In these chapters, Stephen enters as one of the seven men chosen to help serve the Grecian widows. The author records Stephen as demonstrating "signs and wonders" among the people as he apparently teaches them about the Messiah. Some Jewish leaders concoct false charges against this man and accuse him of blasphemy against God, Moses, and the temple. Acts 7:1-53 records Stephen's response to these charges. Stephen's speech is the longest in the entire book of Acts, and he intentionally recites a theological perspective of Israel's history. After his condemnation of false Jewish beliefs and practices, his accusers stone him in a fit of rage. In his dying moments, Stephen sees the glory of God and the risen Christ while praying for the sins of his accusers. These chapters appear in a

1. The issue of authorship for Luke-Acts falls outside the scope of the present discourse. The generic word *author* will be used throughout to denote the original writer of the narratives.

crucial location in the book's progression. Accurately understanding this episode provides an important key for understanding the book.

Properly understanding the Stephen episode has long served as a topic for scholarly scrutiny. Many New Testament scholars see multiple parallels between Stephen and Christ.[2] However, consideration that the author of Acts might be establishing parallels between Stephen and Moses is left unconsidered.[3] Comparative analysis between the texts of Acts 6-7 and passages relating to Moses in the Septuagint suggests no less than four distinct verbal comparisons. These parallels are not direct citations from the Septuagint, rather they are verbal and thematic echoes which demonstrate a degree of similarity that reveals intentionality. Further, internal evidence within Acts 6-7 provides strong intimations of Mosaic parallels. The author of Acts seems to intentionally create verbal parallels between Stephen and Moses, and these parallels provide a crucial element to properly understanding this pivotal episode.

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2. F.J. Jackson-Foakes, "Stephen's Speech in Acts," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 49 (Fall 1930): 285-286, http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu:2048/login.aspx?direct=true&d=rfh&AN=ATLA0001336318&site=ehost-live; John B. Polhill, vol. 26, *Acts*, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 209. The connection between Stephen and Jesus will be considered on page 7 providing the grounds for the assertion of a dual-parallel.

3. The word "typology" has been intentionally avoided. This term proves controversial and difficult to define. The terms *parallel* and *connection* are used synonymously throughout to mean, an intentional authorial connection in narrative literature between one person or circumstance and another known person or circumstance for a literary purpose. This literary purpose provides for an implicit thematic connection between different ages and people. Samuel Sandmel in "Parallelomania," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 81 (1962):1-14 seems to be in accord with this definition as his work suggests parallels are author intended similarities for a purpose.

The work of Richard Hays helps to provide clarity to the definition of an *echo* as used in the New Testament.[4] Although Hayes never offers a precise definition for an echo, he clearly asserts that it is an intertextual allusion.[5] Further, these allusions are not direct quotes, but rather "fragments of an earlier text" which might share similar vocabulary or syntax.[6] Clearly, Hayes suggests that a legitimate echo must reference a previous work and does not have to be a direct quotation but should mirror similar vocabulary or style. The result of such echoes is "an intertextual fusion that generates new meaning."[7] More specifically, "allusive echo functions to suggest to the reader that text B [the more recent text] should be understood in light of a broad interplay with text A [the earlier text – the referent], encompassing aspects of A beyond those explicitly echoed."[8] An echo must be appropriate to further the intended meaning of the text given the interplay between the two distinct works. Extrapolation from Hayes's work suggests a feasible definition for a biblical echo: a subtle, intertextual allusion to a previous work reflecting vocabulary and/or style which helps express the author's intended meaning through the textual interplay. The proposed echoes between Stephen in Acts and Moses in the Septuagint follow this working definition in an attempt to partially found the assertion of an intentional Stephen-Moses connection.

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4. Richard Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, (Binghamton: Vail-Ballou Press, 1989), 1-33.

5. Ibid., 14.

6. Ibid., 14.

7. Ibid., 26.

8. Ibid., 20.

Neither the echoes with the Septuagint nor the internal Acts connections are based on the objective standard of direct quotations. As a result, the proposed Stephen-Moses parallel depends on an accumulation of evidence and not on some strict formula. No singular proof may support the full weight of a Stephen-Moses parallel. However, when all potential connections are considered collectively the assertion seems more reasonable. As a result, rejecting a singular proposed parallel does not undermine the central idea if the other connections are legitimate. The proposal must be judged as a whole and not merely by its individual supports. In the case of this literary device, the weight of the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Given the literary nature of Luke-Acts, such a carefully supported connection could be reasonable and even expected. A Stephen-Moses parallel, if legitimate, will be seen by considering all potential connections and not by looking for a singular, indisputable proof.

The following two quotes underscore the significance of intentional literary parallels. First, Dale Allison remarks on the significance of intentional parallels for all of literature, particularly religious texts. Allison suggests that the literary result of intentional parallels is that:

> We may behold an author's intention, which was to create a series of hermeneutical events in a community of readers, events which together add up to a typological conclusion: this person is like that person because their two stories have so much in common.[9]

Second, Robert Tannehill considers the literary results of echoes within the book of Acts. Although Tannehill's quote deals with Acts echoing the Gospel of Luke, the

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9. Dale Allison, *New Moses*, (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 1993), 7.

literary results of Stephen paralleling the life of Moses would be analogous. Tannehill aptly expresses the significance of parallels in the book of Acts:

> Characters and events in Acts echo characters and events already presented in the Gospel, and remembrance of these earlier characters and events suggests a complex set of similarities, differences, and fulfillments that deepens our experience of the story. In this way the narrative takes on resonance. The previous story resonates with the new events, so that significance is both amplified and enriched. We can also say that the previous story provides commentary on the current story. At some points this commentary seems clear and specific, so that the echo effect serves to control interpretation. The echo adds emphasis, helping to specify central meanings and ensure their communication. But the echoes multiply, producing tantalizing hints of meaning that are difficult to control. Echo added to echo produces a resonance that surrounds the central meanings with overtones that the author cannot fully control and readers or listeners cannot easily exhaust.[10]

Before considering these parallels, or echoes, two foundational elements must be examined and grounded. After these basic elements, four questions shape the rest of the discussion. The first question, "Could the author create Mosaic parallels?" examines whether the author demonstrates the literary ability to implement these echoes. Second, "Would the author create Mosaic parallels?" utilizes rhetorical criticism on the book of Acts to provide a more objective basis to make such claims of parallelism. Next, the section entitled "Did the author create Mosaic parallels?" examines the text of Acts 6-7 showing the possible connections with Moses. The final question, "Why did the author create Mosaic parallels?" considers two ramifications resulting from these comparisons in an attempt to better understand the Stephen episode and the book of Acts as a whole. Since the topic of Stephen-Moses parallels in Acts 6-7 has not been overtly considered by

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10. Robert Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts: A Literary Interpretation*, vol. 2, (Philadelphia; Fortress Press, 1994), 50.

scholars, the two great burdens prove to be evidencing the feasibility of these parallels and then proving their existence.

Primary Foundations

Unity of Luke-Acts

Acts 6-7 must be understood within the context of the entire work of which it is a part. At first it seems self evident that the book of Acts serves as the entire work that must be considered. However, the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts form a two-part unit.[11] Similar vocabulary, introduction, tradition, and theological sympathies prove sufficient to garner substantial support that Luke-Acts forms a single literary unit in two distinct works.[12] Understanding that these two books form a single unit allows for an interpretational spiral. As a single unit, these two books would share similar intent; understanding the purpose and themes of one book provides valuable help in discerning the purpose and themes of the other. Additionally, the individual elements of the works simultaneously shape and are shaped by Luke-Acts as a whole. Accepting Luke-Acts as a single literary unit follows from great internal and external support and allows for inter-book interpretation.

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11. Robert Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts: A Literary Interpretation*, vol. 1 (Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1986), 1; Robert Maddox, *The Purpose of Luke-Acts* (Edinburgh, T & T Clark, 1985), 2; Polhill, *Acts*, 41.

12. Maddox, *Purpose*, 2.

Jesus and Stephen Parallels

More specifically related to Acts 6-7, modern interpretation confidently asserts an intentional parallel by the author of Acts between Jesus and Stephen.[13] Ben Witherington lists ten elements that suggest the author of Acts intentionally connects Stephen with Christ. These parallels between Stephen and Jesus do not negate the possibility of additional parallels between Stephen and Moses. At the same time, disproving the Stephen-Jesus connections does not automatically disprove the Stephen-Moses connections which remain to be considered. Feasibly, the author of Acts could have created a dual connection between Stephen and Jesus as well as Stephen and Moses. The Stephen-Jesus parallels support the possibility of parallels between Stephen and Moses by providing a precedent for Stephen parallels in the book of Acts. However, the Stephen-Jesus connections are not necessary to justify the Stephen-Moses parallels of this paper. If Stephen and Jesus are connected in Acts then a dual connection could be made and a literary precedent is established; if Stephen and Jesus are not connected then the author could still be utilizing just Stephen-Moses parallels instead.

Parallels Considered

Could the Author Create Mosaic Parallels?

At times, creative literary skills project false parallels where none should be found. G. W. H. Lampe and K. J. Woolcombe aptly state the problem, "Can any criteria

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13. Ben Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*, (Grand Rapids, William B. Eerdmans, 1998), 253; Darrell Bock, *Acts*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 315; Jackson-Foakes, "Stephen's Speech," 285-286; Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, vol. 2, 99-100; Polhill, *Acts*, 209.

be discovered for making a distinction between legitimate and exegetically justifiable typology [parallels], on the one hand, and the unwarrantable exercise of private and uncontrolled ingenuity on the other?"[14] The concern proves valid. Given proper resources and a bit of creativity, supposed parallels could be proposed to exist where they never were intended. To provide a reasonable degree of objectivity, a probe into the author's literary ability will provide a basis to discern the feasibility of the author using Stephen-Moses parallels.

Proficiency with the Greek Language

The author of Luke-Acts demonstrates ample literary ability to implement such a complex literary device as character parallels or a dual parallel. Five observable elements suggest a literary ability capable of developing Stephen-Moses parallels. First, the author's proficiency with the Greek language underscores this capability.[15] This author utilizes more unique words than any other New Testament writer and even some secular Greek writers like Xenophon.[16] Further, the author carefully appropriates "accents" to diverse people groups.[17] Sheer quantity of vocabulary as well as colorful character

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14. G.W.H. Lampe and K.J. Woolcombe, *Essays on Typology*, Studies in Biblical Theology, 22 (Naperville: Alec R. Allenson, Inc., 1957), 21. Throughout their work, Lampe and Woolcombe use the word *typology* to denote an intentional literary connection between a present character and one who has gone before. For the present discussion, the word *parallel* functions as a legitimate substitute.

15. Hans Conzelman, *Acts of the Apostles* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), xxxv-xli. Also, Bock, *Acts*, 13.

16. Polhill, *Acts*, 42; Henry J. Cadburry, *The Style and Literary Method of Luke*, 2 volumes. Harvard Theological Studies, 6 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1920).

17. Polhill, *Acts*, 42. "Throughout Acts there is a verisimilitude in the narrative. Jews speak with a Jewish accent, Athenian philosophers speak in Atticisms, and Roman officials speak

development suggests an author with literary skill capable of producing the considered parallels.

Specifically, Greek literary devices further exemplify the author's ability. The Synoptic Gospels (Matthew – Luke), utilize a particular rhetorical device known as a *chreia*.[18] A chreia can be defined as "a saying or act that is well-aimed or apt, expressed concisely, attributed to a person, and regarded as useful for living."[19] For example, *a penny saved is a penny earned* would be regarded as a chreia. Chreiai (plural) in the Gospels follow the particular form required by Greek rhetoricians.[20] The Gospel writers utilize this particular device and evidence their literary ability.

Literary Precedent Within Acts

Second, the presence of similar parallels in the book of Acts demonstrates a literary ability suggesting the legitimacy of Stephen-Moses parallels. Acts 2-7 employs four other literary parallels all of which increases the likeliness of their presence between Stephen and Moses. First, G. K. Beale convincingly demonstrates that Acts 2 intentionally connects the Pentecost event with the theophanies of the Old Testament and

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and write in the customary legal style. Luke [the author] showed not only a familiarity with such linguistic idiosyncrasies but also the ability to depict them through his style of writing."

18. James Butts, "The Chreia in the Synoptic Gospels," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 16 (1986): 132-138.

19. Vernon Robbins, "The Chreia," in *Greco-Roman Literature and the New Testament*, (Location not known, Scholars Press, 1988), 2.

20. Robbins, "Chreia," 4-22; Butts, "Chreia," 133-137; Duane Watson, "Chreia," in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, eds. Joel Green, Scott McKnight, and I. Howard Marshall (Downer's Grove, Inter-Varsity Press, 1992), 105-106.

Sinai in particular.[21] Beale's contention is not accepted by all scholars, but he suggests that the Exodus event functions as the prototypical theophany and Acts 2 follows in this tradition.[22] Beale's article suggests that the author of Acts uses several different types of connections to make the link back to Exodus. The quantity of likely connections between Acts 2 and Sinai proves too numerous to be contrived and suggests intentional authorial inclusion. Acts 2 references a specific Old Testament event, the theophany in Exodus 34, to further support a theological point.[23]

The connection between Pentecost and Sinai, as proposed by Beale, supports authorial ability in two ways. First, the device in Acts 6-7 is a similar device as used in Acts 2. Both are complex literary allusions that make the connection in several different ways without a direct quotation. Second, both texts have similar referents. Acts 2 recalls the Exodus theophany and Acts 6-7 suggest a link between the main human character in that event, Moses. Acts 2 also refers back to a specific event to make a theological, author-intended point. Therefore, a Stephen-Moses connection in Acts 6-7 would not be an isolated parallel without a precedent in the work.

The second of such parallels can be found in Acts 3. Acts 3:1-10 recounts the first healing miracle after the ascension of Christ. Although this passage does not enjoy unanimous interpretation by all expositors, several suggest the concept that the author of

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21. G.K. Beale, "The Descent of the Eschatological Temple in the form of the Spirit at Pentecost: the Clearest Evidence," *Tyndale Bulletin* 56 (2005): 73-102.

22. Ibid., 76.

23. For Beale, the theological reason for making the connection between Pentecost and Mt. Sinai would be that the author of Acts attempts to show that Acts 2 suggests the founding of the eschatological temple as he proposes Sinai is the prototype. See: Beale, "Descent," 74.

Acts creates specific parallels between the lame man and the Christian experience.[24] Given the narrative nature of the book, the speech immediately following, and the healed man's presence later (Acts 4:14), it seems legitimate to suggest that the author of Acts is utilizing parallels to connect the healed man to the lives of Christians for the literary purpose of proposing a new paradigm.[25] The author of Acts uses a similar device by creating literary connections between the lame man and how the new believing community of Jews should respond. This similarity of the device as well as its proximity with the Stephen episode suggests authorial ability to create Stephen-Moses parallels.

The third of such parallels can be found within Acts 6-7. The widely accepted Stephen-Jesus parallels already mentioned in Acts 6-7 also underscore the author's ability to evidence parallels between Stephen and Moses. The author of Acts creates overt circumstantial parallels between the characters of Stephen and Christ. In this way, the author demonstrates his literary skill of creating parallels and expresses this ability within the context under scrutiny. The presence of these similar literary structures within the book of Acts suggests literary feasibility.

A final literary parallel within Acts closely resembles the proposed Stephen-Moses connection. David Moessner suggests that the author of Acts intentionally creates an organic connection between Jesus and all of the main prophets within Acts as being

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24. Paul Walaskay in "Acts 3:1-10" *Interpretation* 42 (1988), 174 suggests that the sign is of an eschatological-Christian reality. Also, Dennis Hamm, "Acts 3:12-26: Peter's Speech and the Healing of the Man Born Lame," *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 11 (1984), 199-217. Hamm suggests the lame man serves as a "paradigm" for necessary Christian belief.

25. Robert C. Tannehill, "Composition of Acts 3-5: Narrative Development and Echo Effect," *Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers* 23 (1984), 219.

the "servant like Moses."[26] Moessner suggests that Jesus is the prophet like Moses *par excellence*, but Peter, Stephen, and Paul all function as prophets who must suffer like Christ. If Moessner is correct, then the author of Luke-Acts has created a similar device connecting distinct people together through thematic parallels.

Literary Precedent in Other Works

Third, Dale Allison authored *The New Moses*, a ground-breaking work that proves relevant.[27] Allison contends that the Gospel of Matthew creates an intentional parallel between Jesus and Moses. Further, Allison grounds this suggestion by showing the presence of Moses parallels throughout the Jewish-Christian literary tradition. For example, Allison shows that Joshua, Samuel, David, Jeremiah, and others all reflect the life of Moses. Allison continues the book by showing that Moses parallels were used in the intertestamental period and after the New Testament period. His work does not examine the possibility of any Mosaic parallels in the New Testament apart from Matthew. However, Allison's assertion that Mosaic parallels are present in Jewish literature before, after, and during (in Matthew) the New Testament provides a precedent for its possible existence in Acts 6-7.

Employment of Complex Themes

Fourth, Luke-Acts apparently utilizes a variety of themes, delicately expressed, further demonstrating authorial ability. Polhill suggests eight themes uniting the

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26. David Moessner, "'The Christ Must Suffer': New Light on Jesus – Peter, Stephen, Paul Parallels in Luke-Acts" *Novum Testamentum* 28 (1986), 220-256.

27. Dale Allison, *New Moses* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 1993).

narrative.[28] Tannehill urges that Acts revolves around one central concept, a salvation-historical narrative, but his commentaries explore various emphases throughout the Luke-Acts narratives.[29] These themes continuously re-emerge throughout Luke-Acts and serve as indicators of the author's intended meaning.[30] The narrative style used to emphasize these various themes involves a complex arrangement and forces respect for Luke-Acts as a developed literary system.[31] The multiple themes of Luke-Acts underscore the author's literary skills providing confidence in his ability to create a Stephen-Moses parallel.

Knowledge of Old Testament

Fifth, the author of Luke-Acts demonstrates substantial knowledge of Old Testament history as well as the Greek translation of the Old Testament, the Septuagint. William Clarke plainly states the generally accepted thesis that the book of Acts quotes directly from the Septuagint in a number of cases.[32] This assertion finds broad support today among scholars.[33] The author quotes or alludes to the Septuagint no less than

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28. Polhill, *Acts*, 57-71.

29. Tannehill, "Israel in Luke-Acts: a Tragic Story," *Journal for Biblical Literature* 104 (1985), 69-85; Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, vol. 2, 3.

30. Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, vol. 1, 4.

31. Ibid., 4.

32. William K. L. Clarke, "The Use of the Septuagint in Acts," in *The Beginnings of Christianity*, eds. F. J. Foakes Jackson and Kirsopp Lake (London: Macmillan, 1922), 2.1.66-105.

33. David Pao, *Acts and the Isiaianic New Exodus* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2000) 6-10; Howard Marshall, "Acts" in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, eds. G.K. Beale and D.A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 516-517; Polhill, *Acts*, 43. Although minor debate continues over which exact form of the Septuagint the

twenty-four times in the book of Acts.[34] Further, he references the Septuagint during the immediate context of the Stephen episode.[35] The author of Acts clearly utilizes the Septuagint directly through quotations and demonstrates familiarity through allusion.[36] The author's ability to use the Old Testament stories, and the Septuagint in particular, provides an objective foundation to demonstrate that the author possessed the necessary cognitive facts to create Stephen-Moses parallels.

These five elements, ability with Greek, presence of other parallels, existence of Mosaic parallels throughout the Jewish-Christian literature, complex themes, and Old Testament knowledge, evidence authorial ability to create such parallels. Although these elements are derived mainly from a study of the work, they exhibit the author's literary ability to create a complex story and use complex devices. Clearly, the author of Acts possesses the skills to create the literary device of a Stephen-Moses parallel even if this creates a dual parallel between Stephen and Moses as well as Stephen and Jesus.

Would the Author Create Mosaic Parallels?

These first two sections complement each other by providing an objective framework to ground the comparison. Whereas the previous section discussed literary

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author of Acts uses, his dependence on some form seems indisputable and the supposed differences prove trivial.

34. Acts 1:20; 2:17-20, 25-28, 30; 3:13, 22, 25; 4:11, 25-26; 8:32-33; 13:22, 33-35; 15:16-17; 23:5; 28:26-27. Howard, "Acts," 513-601.

35. Acts 7:3, 5-6, 18, 27-28, 30, 32-35, 40, 42-43, 49-50

36. Marshall, *New Testament*, 513.

ability, this section utilizes rhetorical criticism to examine the text in order to discern whether a Stephen-Moses parallel proves rhetorically appropriate regardless of ability.[37]

Rhetorical Criticism Explained

In order to rhetorically analyze the book of Acts, a brief explanation of rhetorical criticism seems necessary. Although no universal definition for rhetoric exists, many resemble Edward Corbett's definition in *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student*, "Rhetoric is the art or the discipline that deals with the use of discourse, either spoken or written, to inform or persuade or motivate an audience, whether that audience is made up of one person or a group of persons."[38] Rhetorical criticism, then, is the objective study of those discourses deemed to be persuasive. Edwin Black offers his insight:

> [T]here will be a correspondence among the intentions of a communicator, the characteristics of his discourse, and the reactions of his auditors to that discourse. … If there is no correspondence between the intentions of a communicator and the characteristics of his discourse, then expression is impossible.[39]

This correlation between the intention of the speaker, the content of the speech-act, and the reaction of the audience makes rhetorical criticism possible. Since the connection exists between authorial intent and discourse content, a study of the present

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37. It can legitimately be argued that the preceding section regarding "Literary Ability" appropriately fits under the heading "Rhetorical Criticism." However, the author's ability to implement a literary device seems to be *a priori* independent of a rhetorical analysis as done here. Although a form of rhetorical criticism must have been implemented in the previous section, its logical primacy suggested its own treatment. The study of literary ability regards a study of the author; rhetorical criticism of the rhetorical situation.

38. Edward Corbett, and Robert J. Connors, *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), xi.

39. Edwin Black, *Rhetorical Criticism* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978), 16.

text can offer insight into authorial intention. Specifically applied to the New Testament, George Kennedy states, "The ultimate goal of rhetorical analysis, briefly put, is the discovery of the author's intent and of how that is transmitted through a text to an audience."[40] Rhetorical criticism occupies itself with understanding authorial intent as garnered from the text and the rhetorical situation.

Much modern literary theory challenges authorial intent as the goal of understanding.[41] However, practical experience mandates that communication depends on seeking to understand and to be understood.[42] Rhetorical criticism offers one method of attempting to discover an author's intentions and therefore his intended meaning.

The rhetorical situation proves vital for understanding rhetorical criticism. Lloyd Bitzer first used the term *rhetorical situation* in an article promoting the necessity of understanding various elements that instigated and resulted from the rhetorical discourse.[43] Understanding the rhetorical situation, as presented by Bitzer, provides a starting point for rhetorical criticism.

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40. George Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 12.

41. See: Grant R. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2006), 471-474 for a summary and response of this modern practice.

42. For the primacy of authorial intent in hermeneutics: see Osborne, *Hermeneutical Spiral*, 24,465-521. Also: Anthony Thiselton, *New Horizons in Hermeneutics: the Theory and Practice of Transforming Biblical Reading* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 1-132; 471-557.

43. Lloyd F. Bitzer, "The Rhetorical Situation," in *Readings in Rhetorical Criticism*, ed. Carl R. Burgchardt, (State College: Strata Publishing Inc., 2005), 58.

According to Bitzer, "a particular discourse comes into existence because of some specific condition or situation which invites utterance."[44] The speaker uses rhetorical discourse in an attempt to change reality through audience persuasion. "These three constituents – exigence [reason for speaking/acting], audience, constraints – comprise everything relevant in a rhetorical situation."[45] These three elements make up the rhetorical situation in which the discourse existed. Any discourse can only properly be understood, not by merely describing the background in an unorganized manner, but by systematically examining these necessary elements of rhetorical discourse. No rhetorical discourse exists apart from a rhetorical situation, and the discourse has significance due to the rhetorical situation necessitating a fitting response.

The exigence, the audience, and the constraints form the primary consideration for the rhetorical critic. First, the *exigence* is "an imperfection marked by urgency; it is a defect, an obstacle, something waiting to be done, a thing which is other than it should be."[46] The primary exigence is the obstacle that prompted the discourse. Variously stated, it is what the speaker wants to change utilizing rhetoric. Second, the *audience* encompasses another situational factor for consideration. The audience is necessary for rhetoric, since the goal of rhetoric is audience persuasion to affect the exigence.[47]

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44. Bitzer, "Rhetorical Situation," 60.

45. Ibid., 63.

46. Ibid., 62

47. Ibid., 63.

Constraints comprise the third element of the rhetorical situation. Bitzer's explanation proves difficult to summarize and will be quoted at length to expound the idea:

> [Constraints are] made up of persons, events, objects, and relations which are parts of the situation because they have the power to constrain decision and action needed to modify the exigence. Standard sources of constraint include beliefs, attitudes, documents, facts, traditions, images, interests, motives, and the like; and when the orator enters the situation, his discourse not only harnesses constraints given by the situation but provides additional important constraints – for example his personal character, his logical proofs, and his style.[48]

These three factors deserve study distinct from the text, though the information gathered may be text-dependent. Studying the rhetorical situation provides for a better understanding of the rhetoric employed and the author's intent.

Rhetorical Criticism Implemented

Exigence. Operating on the understanding of rhetorical criticism as outlined above, the three elements of the rhetorical situation must be examined to see if Stephen-Moses parallels serve to augment the author's apparent purposes. First the exigence, or the obstacle to be overcome through rhetoric, in Acts 6-7 seems to be thematic. Clearly, the author of Luke-Acts relates history for a purpose.[49] Since, according to Edwin Black, the form of an effective discourse relates to the intention of the author, understanding the themes of Acts reveals the intentions of its creator. David Pao convincingly shows how the book of Acts reveals a New Exodus motif that Israel comes to reject throughout the

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48. Ibid., 63.

49. Brian Rosner, "Acts and Biblical History" in *The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting*, eds. Bruce Winter and Andrew Clarke (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1993), 68, 79, 81; Maddox, *The Purpose*, 2.

course of the narrative.[50] Israel's rejection of God's plan through the rejection of Christ and His prophets surfaces consistently in Acts. Robert Tannehill suggests that Israel's rejection of the Messiah functions as a tragic story of unfulfilled expectations.[51] Israel's rejection of God's plan can best be evidenced through the narrative format as given in Luke-Acts. Therefore, the exigence the author hopes to overcome is the audience not knowing the salvation-history story of the early church and Israel's tragic rejection of Jesus. The author's use of the Stephen-Moses parallels helps to overcome the exigence by providing further narrative strength to Israel's rejection of God's prophets.

Audience. Understanding the intended audience reveals rhetorical appropriateness since the author writes to a certain audience possessing certain characteristics. Both Luke and Acts are directly addressed to Theophilus.[52] Some have attempted to symbolize the name claiming it means God-lover or the like. However, Theophilus is a common Greek name and no other audience should be supposed unless made explicit by the author.[53] Luke 1 refers to Theophilus as "most excellent" (κράτιστε). Such a term is usually reserved for high-ranking officials.[54] That Theophilus is mentioned as the sole addressee

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50. Pao, *Acts and the Isiainic*, 70-110.

51. Tannehill, *Israel in Luke-Acts*, 69-85. Tannehill is quick to clarify that this does not mean that Acts as a whole is tragic, only the one element of Israel's rejection. Also: Polhill, *Acts*, 65.

52. Luke 1:1-4, Acts 1:1. For further information regarding the culture and lifestyle of the Roman world see: James Jeffers, *The Greco-Roman World*, (Downers Grove: IVP, 1999).

53. Polhill, *Acts*, 78; Witherington, *Acts*, 63.

54. Robert H. Stein, *Luke*, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 26; Polhill, *Acts*, 78; Witherington, *Acts*, 64.

of a work like Luke-Acts further suggests his social status. However, the author of Luke-Acts probably intended Theophilus as the primary audience and a wider audience of believers as secondary recipients.[55] Theophilus specifically, and a wider body of Christian believers in general, are the target audience of the author.

Based on content analysis, the audience must be analyzed to provide information regarding, not merely their identity, but their abilities and mindset. Since a connection exists between discourse content, authorial purpose, and audience persuasion, information can be gleaned about Theophilus and the wider audience. The author of Acts would write in a way that would be meaningful to the audience; understanding these meanings provides a window to understanding that audience.

Clearly, the audience possesses at least familiarity and probably great competency with the Hebrew Bible.[56] The author's numerous uses of the Old Testament within the two volume work suggests that these references would be meaningful for the audience. In order for them to be meaningful, the audience would need knowledge and familiarity with them. The audience knows of and respects the Hebrew Bible.

Also, the audience would be a regenerated body of believers.[57] The intentional use of the pronoun "us" in Luke 1:1-2 signifies that the audience would be included within the group of believers. Witherington notes that the use of the word "us" is the

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55. Polhill, *Acts*, 78.

56. Bock, *Acts*, 28; Witherington, *Acts*, 63.

57. Witherington, *Acts*, 63.

language of insiders.[58] A non-believing Jewish audience would be familiar with the use of the Old Testament within Luke-Acts but could not be considered as the target audience since they would not be one of "us."

Further, another element of the audience's makeup may be deduced from the content of Luke-Acts. Although the author presents a message revolving largely around the Jewish people, his decision to include elements of Greek rhetoric reveals that his audience would understand these tools and would have basic knowledge of Greek schooling. Ben Witherington states it well:

> Luke's decision to use the methods and rhetoric of Greek historiography, even though his message is in so many ways an essentially Jewish one with many resonances with the OT, suggests an audience with a Hellenistic education in at least some rhetoric and Greek history prior to coming to Christian faith, and surely prior to becoming a synagogue adherent as well.[59]

The final element regarding the mindset of the audience can be inferred from the stated purpose of the book of Luke coupled with the content of Luke-Acts. Combined, these reveal that the audience needs reassurance regarding the legitimacy of this new movement or that they are not properly informed regarding its particulars and history.[60] Luke 1:4 states that the author writes "so that that you [Theophilus] may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught." J. Nolland suggests convincingly that Theophilus may have come out from the synagogues and needs reassurance regarding the legitimacy of "the Way" as well as an explanation for Jewish rejection and Gentile

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58. Ibid., 63.

59. Witherington, *Acts*, 65.

60. Polhill, *Acts*, 78; Witherington, *Acts*, 63, 64.

inclusion.[61] Such a hypothesis fits with the required knowledge to make sense of the Old Testament references as well as allowing Theophilus to be part of the "us" in Luke 1. Whatever Theophilus's background, the author writes to inform and to undergird his faith. In summary, the author of Luke-Acts presupposes a group of believers familiar with the Old Testament who have knowledge of Greek rhetorical devices needing information and support regarding the fledgling Christian movement.

The audience analysis reveals that a Stephen-Moses parallel in Acts 6-7 would be legitimately understood by Theophilus. The audience's knowledge of the Old Testament and familiarity with Christianity suggests they would be able to appreciate the literary parallels between Stephen and Moses. Further, knowledge of Greek literary and rhetorical devices enhances the chances that the author of Acts would create a parallel since it would be discerned by this learned audience. Finally, the stated purpose of Luke-Acts to inform and encourage complements the results of a Stephen-Moses parallel. An objective study of the audience provides a framework to support the probability of Stephen-Moses parallels.

Constraints. Two significant constraints impact rhetorical appropriateness. First, the author of Acts utilizes a narrative and not a didactic format. The author of Luke-Acts does not merely state abstract truths in propositional form. Rather, stories and historical details are woven together in a narrative filled with nuances and shades of meaning. Although narrative raptures the mind and the imagination, the likelihood of misinterpretation increases with the use of narrative over didactic works. Second, if the

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61. John Nolland, "A fresh look at Acts 15:10," *New Testament Studies* 27 (1980): 105-115.

Stephen-Moses parallels prove too oblique, the audience may not have been able to realize the comparisons. These constraints also show rhetorical plausibility. Since one significant theme of Acts revolves around salvation-history and Israel's rejection of God's plan, the narrative format effectively teaches these truths through concrete example rather than abstract reasoning. Also, the author's constant use of the Old Testament throughout Luke-Acts suggests that the constraint of recognition would be overcome by the audience. These constraints offer possible limits to the rhetoric, but they do not preclude possible parallels.

Rhetorical criticism seeks to understand the author's intention by examining the rhetorical situation. By studying the rhetorical situation surrounding Luke-Acts, the audience would understand a parallel between Stephen and Moses, thus overcoming the exigence and being effective in spite of the constraints. Therefore, no foreseeable reason exists to deny the rhetorical feasibility and workability of a Stephen-Moses comparison.

Thus far, an objective basis for accepting the feasibility of Stephen-Moses parallels has been offered. Based on an examination of the works, the author demonstrates the necessary literary ability to use such a device. Further, a rhetorical analysis of the book of Acts shows that a Stephen-Moses parallel proves to be appropriate given the rhetorical situation. Now the parallels will be considered.

Did the Author Create Mosaic Parallels?

An intentional comparison between Stephen and Moses seems to fall well within the author's abilities and fits the rhetorical situation. The author of Acts does not use direct quotations from the Septuagint to establish this Stephen-Moses parallel, but rather

echoes particular phrases and situations in the Septuagint. The present study seeks to avoid the problem of "misreading coincidence for purpose" by showing that these parallels cannot be merely coincidental.[62] Although one isolated parallel may be contrived, the cumulative evidence of the various parallels suggests intentionality. Apart from direct citations, no simple formula provides complete assurance of echoes, but careful analysis provides strong suggestions.

Allison provides six criteria to help establish a legitimate parallel that avoids subjective contrivance.[63] Although these six safeguards can never provide sure confidence of a parallel's presence, they do provide a legitimate basis for sincere affirmations. First, one text can only intentionally allude to another that is previously written. Second, probability will be increased if it can be shown that a passage's supposed referent holds significance for the author. Third, apart from direct quotes, both parts of the parallel should have one of the following: similar circumstances, similar key words and phrases, similar narrative structure, or similar syllabic sequence/poetic resonance. Fourth, a parallel should be to a prominent figure or event. Fifth, a connection proves more likely if the constituent elements have been used for parallels in different writings. "Precedent enhances probability."[64] Sixth, the more obscure elements the two texts share, the more likely the probability of a parallel. These six elements are all met in the following explanation of the Stephen-Moses parallels.

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62. Allison, *New Moses*, 7.

63. The following can be found in Allison, *New Moses*, 21-23.

64. Ibid., 22.

From the text of Acts 6-7, three distinct types of parallels emerge. First, the author of Acts creates verbal links between Stephen in the book of Acts and Moses in the Septuagint. These four verbal comparisons will be referred to as *intertextual* since the verbal connections are between distinct texts. Second, within the Stephen episode itself, two distinct *inner-textual* connections surface. Inner-textual connections are those parallels between Stephen and Moses within the Acts narrative. Third, two new *circumstantial parallels* seem self-evident although no verbal connection exists. These final parallels make a thematic connection between Acts and the Septuagint. These three types of connections will be examined after a brief review of the relevant literature.

Literature Review

Despite the connections which follow, seemingly no contemporary scholar entertains the possibility that Stephen can be seen as a parallel to Moses. Perhaps unsurprisingly, many scholars seek to offer insight into Stephen's purpose for his speech.[65] Although many do acknowledge that the author included the Stephen episode for his own particular purpose, an echo of Moses is not considered as a potential element.[66] James Sweeney comprehensively deals with Stephen's speech. In part, he

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65. James P Sweeney, "Stephen's Speech (Acts 7:2-53): is it as "Anti-Temple" as is Frequently Alleged?" *Trinity Journal* 23 (Fall 2002): 185-188, http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu:2048/login.aspx?direct =true&db=rfh&AN=ATLA0001406363&site=ehost; Foakes-Jackson, 283-284.

66. Polhill, *Acts*, 183-184; Simon J Kistemaker, "The Speeches in Acts." *Criswell Theological Review* 5 (Fall 1990): 34-35, http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu:2048/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rfh&AN=ATLA0000847624&site=ehost-live; Julius J. Scott, "Stephen's Speech: a Possible Model for Luke's Historical Method." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 17 (Spring 1974): 96, http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu:2048/login. aspx?direct=true&db=rfh&AN=ATLA0000743787&site=ehost-livef; Witherington, *Acts*, 251-

promotes the idea that Stephen is not anti-Jewish and that Stephen answers the charges of the Sanhedrin in a detailed way.[67] Sweeney never examines whether the author treats Stephen as a parallel of Moses for the furtherance of the plot. T. L. Donaldson deeply examines the Mosaic section of Stephen's speech; however, no possibility of Stephen being a type of Moses is posited.[68] He even goes so far to say that the author did use a "Moses Typology" in Acts 7, but only in the sense that "Jesus is the eschatological prophet like Moses promised in Dt. 18:15-18 in that, like Moses and all the prophets, he was rejected and persecuted by his own people."[69] This statement proposes that Stephen appealed to Moses as a parallel to Christ, but he does not propose that Stephen himself serves as a parallel. David Pao sees the main purpose of the Stephen episode to further the anti-idol sentiment of the author.[70] The recent commentary by Darrell Bock fails to see these significant parallels although he deals with the Stephen episode in depth.[71] These scholars do not suggest any intentional connection between Stephen as a parallel of Moses.

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278. It is usually assumed that the author's purpose for including the Stephen episode is to introduce the prototypical martyr and/or to establish the concept that the temple is not requisite for true worship and/or to show that the history of Israel is marked by rebellion.

67. Sweeney, 194-210.

68. Terence Donaldson, "Moses Typology and the Sectarian Nature of Early Christian Anti-Judaism: a Study in Acts 7." Journal for the Study of the New Testament 12 (July 1981): 27-52, http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu:2048/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rfh&AN=ATLA0000786155&site=ehost-live.

69. Ibid., 28.

70. Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic*, 207-208.

71. Bock, *Acts*, 268-315.

Robert Tannehill, though not formalizing the connections, appears to suggest some sort of literary connection between these two characters. When discussing Stephen, he states, "Moreover, Stephen's wisdom links him to Joseph and Moses, scriptural figures who also share with Stephen the qualities of 'grace' and 'power.'"[72] Tannehill also correctly sees the connection with the English phrase "wonders and signs" but does not take his conclusions to the level of intentionality.[73] For Tannehill, three distinct types of literary connections can be made between characters: (1) those that the author intentionally includes to further the message, (2) those that are incidental and not emphasized but do not impair the author's intentions, (3) and those that are unintentional that betray cultural limitations and concealed drives.[74] According to his own standard, Tannehill evidently considers any connections between Stephen and Moses to be of the second type since they are not explored or emphasized in his own work. As will be shown, these intentions are too obvious to be merely incidental and do function to further the message of the author.

The work of Dale Allison has already been referenced and proves useful for the present discussion. Although Allison does not examine the possibility of Mosaic parallels in most of the New Testament, Allison does promote the idea of Moses parallels in Matthew and throughout the Jewish-Christian literary tradition. Therefore, a parallel

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72. Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, vol. 2, 83.

73. Ibid., 83.

74. Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, vol. 1, 3-4.

between Stephen and Moses would not be a new literary phenomenon but would follow a well-established literary precedent.

Intertextual Parallels

Upon comparison with the Septuagint, no less than four distinct verbal phrases appear to suggest an intentional comparison between Stephen and Moses.[75] Although Acts 6-7 does not utilize direct quotes of the Septuagint to compare Stephen and Moses, the author of Acts seemingly creates intentional echoes of particular passages in the Septuagint within the Steven episode. Syntactical searches of various phrases in Acts 6-7 reveal similar verbal structures that link Stephen and Moses. These four phrases will be individually examined and shown to be probable parallels to Moses.

"Doing great wonders and signs." First, Acts 6:8 begins the passage that references Stephen exclusively. A verbal echo to Moses appears in this first verse. The phrase is translated "was doing great wonders and signs among the people" (ἐποίει τέρατα καὶ σημεῖα μεγάλα ἐν τῷ λαῷ).[76] The key words in this phrase are ἐποίει (from ποιέω) ("doing"), τέρατα ("wonders"), and σημεῖα ("signs"). These three words, or their various roots, occur in the same verse only ten times in the Bible; seven are found in the

75. A preliminary paper entitled, "A Verbal Analysis of Stephen in Acts 6-7 with Moses in the Septuagint" examines seventeen phrases used in Acts 6-7 as possibilities for a Mosaic comparison. Of those seventeen, these four reveal a strong probability of intentional verbal parallelism.

76. For this paper, the English Standard Version (ESV) will be used for New Testament English Scripture quotations, the UBS 4th for New Testament Greek quotations, and the version of the Septuagint to be used is: *Septuaginta : With Morphology*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1996, c1979. Septuagint translations into English will be the author's own translation unless otherwise noted.

Septuagint.[77] One of these times is in direct reference to Moses performing the signs and wonders. That reference is Exodus 11:10 "Now Moses and Aaron did all these wonders and signs there in the land of Egypt before Pharaoh" (Μωυσῆς δὲ καὶ Ααρων **ἐποίησαν** πάντα **τὰ σημεῖα καὶ τὰ τέρατα** ταῦτα ἐν γῇ Αἰγύπτῳ ἐναντίον Φαραω).[78] It is likely that the most comprehensive display of "signs and wonders" were the miracles mediated by Moses in Egypt and referenced in Exodus 11:10. Such an idea is furthered by the fact that four of the seven verses using these three words refer specifically to the Exodus miracles. Throughout the Septuagint, only God and Moses are recorded as doing "signs and wonders." Even though the words for "signs and wonders" are reversed in the Greek New Testament as compared to Exodus 11:10, the Old Testament seemingly connects the concept of "doing signs and wonders" to God's work through Moses.

Further, a less stringent search finding all verses where τέρατα ("wonders") is joined by καὶ ("and") and the word σημεῖα ("signs"), finds sixteen occurrences in the Septuagint. Eleven of these sixteen occurrences refer specifically to the wonders God used through Moses to effect the Exodus.[79] These additional eleven verses make clear

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77. See Appendix 1. Note also Additions to Esther 10:3 where it seems probable that the Exodus miracles are in view.

78. One of the other verses without ποιέω but where τέρατα καὶ τὰ σημεῖα ("signs and wonders") are present is Exodus 11:9 which immediately precedes the verse being discussed. The presence of this key phrase in the immediate context only increases the possibility of a specific reference to Moses as the foundation for these words.

79. See Appendix 2. Exodus 7:3; 11:9, 10; Deuteronomy 6:22; 7:19; 11:3; 28:46; 29:2; Psalm 77:43 (in Septuagint); 134:9 (in Septuagint); and Jeremiah 39:20. The exceptions are Isaiah 8:18 and 20:3 where Isaiah performs the action that is called a "sign and wonder" though it is at the command of God. Further, Daniel 4:2; 4:37; and 6:28 all refer to "signs and wonders" done by God without specific mention of the Exodus miracles.

that it is God who is performing the "signs and wonders." Throughout the Old Testament, the phrase "signs and wonders" consistently refers to the miracles effected by God through Moses to initiate the Exodus. A biblically literate audience, it seems, would connect the concept of "doing signs and wonders" with the Mosaic miracles in Exodus. Therefore, an author relaying that a person is "doing signs and wonders" intentionally invokes the background information of the phrase and, therefore, its connection with Moses.

In the New Testament, the simple phrase "signs and wonders" appears ten times.[80] By the time of the New Testament, authors used the phrase "sings and wonders" without any overt Mosaic overtones.[81] However, the biblically literate audience could still associate Moses with the phrase because of the Septuagint connection established above. If the only reason for making a Stephen-Moses connection is the presence of the phrase, "signs and wonders," then it seems that all eleven occurrences must follow as some kind of Mosaic parallel. Three reasons suggest that this particular occurrence of the phrase "signs and wonders" should be seen as part of a parallel and not the other references. First, only three times is the verb associated with the phrase "signs and wonders" a form of ποιέω.[82] Both Acts 6:8 and 7:40 function as potential parallels because of this particular phrase. In Acts 15:12, the other reference that includes all three search terms, God acts as the grammatical agent bringing about the "signs and wonders." No human

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80. See Appendix 2.

81. Matthew 24:24; Mark 13:22; John 4:48; Acts 2:43, 4:30, 5:12, 14:3, 15:12

82. Acts 6:8; 7:40; 15:12

agent could serve as a parallel. Second, these Stephen-Moses connections in Acts 6-7 serve as the only time in the New Testament that individual people perform them. All nine other occurrences of "signs and wonders" in the New Testament are accomplished by groups of people or the text states that God performs these "signs and wonders."[83] Only Acts 6-7 offer a particular person for the literary parallel to be feasible. Third, the Stephen-Moses parallel functions off of an accumulation of evidence. No singular proof may be enough to suggest certainty. This verbal echo combined with the other parallels provides probability. Even though "signs and wonders" appears throughout the New Testament, only in Acts 6-7 is the paralleled word "doing" (ποιέω) present, in these chapters specific people perform these actions, and Acts 6-7 enjoys the benefit of cumulative evidence that the other references lack.

Although the phrase is not a direct quote, the connection has its first verbal link. Both Stephen and Moses "performed/did" "signs" and "wonders." This verbal link connects the ποιέω, τέρατα, and σημεῖα from Stephen in Acts 7 to Moses in Exodus 11. In the first verse that references Stephen apart from the other six that were chosen to serve, a parallel emerges.

"Saw that his face was like the face of an angel." One of the most striking phrases used to describe Stephen is how the Sanhedrin saw him after their accusations, in Acts 6:15 they "saw that his face was like the face of an angel" (εἶδον τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ ὡσεὶ πρόσωπον ἀγγέλου). Somewhat automatically, it seems that the reference

83. Acts 14:3, though done *through* Paul and Barnabas, the grammar dictates that it is the Lord who actually accomplishes the "signs and wonders" as opposed to the human agents.

being implied is the Mosaic account in Exodus 34 where his face shone after coming down from Mount Sinai.[84] The similarities are that the outward countenance of a righteous man of God has been visibly changed. Tannehill, using his literary approach to discern meaning, plainly states, "His face was like the face of an angel as he spoke before the Sanhedrin - probably a parallel to Moses' shining face."[85] It again seems possible, even likely, that the author is making an intentional Mosaic connection.

The phrase ὡσεὶ πρόσωπον ἀγγέλου ("like the face of an angel") is only found here in Acts and even the shorter phrase πρόσωπον ἀγγέλου ("face of an angel") is found only here in the whole Bible. However, only four times in the Septuagint are the words εἶδον ("saw") and τὸ πρόσωπον ("the face") found in the same verse, but they are not adjacent as in Acts 6:15.[86] One of the references is indeed to Moses in Exodus 34:35: "And the people of Israel saw the face of Moses, that was shining" (καὶ **εἶδον** οἱ υἱοὶ Ισραηλ **τὸ πρόσωπον** Μωυσῆ ὅτι δεδόξασται). Further, in the Old Testament, only nine times is a face (τὸ πρόσωπον) the direct object of the verb see (εἶδον).[87] These nine occurrences suggest that the phrase is not unique enough to support the full weight of the proposal. However, both Stephen and Moses have their faces looked upon by the people who ultimately reject them.

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84. Marshall, *New Testament Use*, 556. Suggests an incidental connection.

85. Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, vol. 2, 83.

86. See Appendix 3.

87. See Appendix 4.

Although the words εἶδον ("saw") and πρόσωπον ("face") are fairly common, their ability to function as literary echoes derives from their *prima facie* reading response. As the author wrote to an audience at least familiar with the Old Testament, they would most likely be intimately familiar with one of the most significant theophanies in Scripture – that of Exodus 34.[88] As Moses comes down from the mountain, his face shines. Further, this connection finds additional support because the word βλέπω is not used. The author of Acts could have chosen this particular word that reflected the same root as Moses' account in the Old Testament. Although these details are not organically related to either the Stephen or Moses stories, both stories offer the additional detail regarding a radiant face. This shared detail is a unique element in these two stories and does not appear to be an incidental connection due to the obscurity. Such a verbal parallel contributes to the mounting examples to suggest the plausibility of an intentional Stephen-Moses parallel.

Upon reading the passage in Acts, the mind immediately references the similar Mosaic account, and verbal similarities appear. Although the link in Acts does include the added detail "like the face of an angel," it can be suggested that another verbal link is being created through the use of the verb εἶδον ("saw") and τὸ πρόσωπον ("the face") as the object of that particular verb.

"Stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears." The end of Stephen's speech climaxes with a harsh polemic against the Sanhedrin. The phrase that Stephen uses to describe the Sanhedrin is "You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears"

88. Beale, "The Descent," 73-85.

(Σκληροτράχηλοι καὶ ἀπερίτμητοι καρδίαις καὶ τοῖς ὠσίν Acts 7:51). Σκληροτράχηλοι ("stiff-necked") is a *hapax legomena* in the New Testament, but the word has rich Old Testament meaning. Not surprisingly, another echo of Moses can be seen. Five of the six uses of σκληροτράχηλος ("stiff-necked") can be tied directly to Moses either in Exodus 33 and 34 or Deuteronomy which is spoken by Moses to Israel.[89] This is significant. The earliest and most numerous uses of the phrase "stiff-necked" are directly related to Moses, and the phrase is directed toward unbelieving Israel just as in Acts 7. The link is plausibly established. The author records Stephen's use of an Old Testament word steeped in connotation reminiscent of Moses and unbelieving Israel for the purpose of confronting the unbelieving Sanhedrin. It can easily be supposed that the Sanhedrin understood the connection that Stephen was making with Moses due to their immediate response.

Furthermore, Deuteronomy 10:16 seems to be the primary passage that Stephen is drawing from in Acts 7.[90] Compare Deuteronomy 10:16 from the Septuagint with Acts 7:51:

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89. Exodus 33:3, 5; 34:9; Deuteronomy 9:6, 13; Proverbs 29:1

90. Marshall, *New Testament*, 568-569. Marshall does not suggest Deuteronomy 10:16 as the basis for the claim. He proposes that Stephen uses language that is contemporary among Jews of the time.

Deuteronomy 10:16 (Septuagint)

16 καὶ **περιτεμεῖσθε** τὴν **σκληροκαρδίαν** ὑμῶν καὶ τὸν **τράχηλον** ὑμῶν οὐ **σκληρυνεῖτε** ἔτι.

Deuteronomy 10:16 (Author's Own)
16 And **circumcise the foreskin of your heart** and be no longer **stiff-necked**

Acts 7:51 (NA27)

51 Σκληροτράχηλοι καὶ **ἀπερίτμητοι καρδίαις** καὶ τοῖς ὠσίν, ὑμεῖς ἀεὶ τῷ πνεύματι τῷ ἁγίῳ ἀντιπίπτετε ὡς οἱ πατέρες ὑμῶν καὶ ὑμεῖς.

Acts 7:51 (ESV)
51 You **stiff-necked** people, **uncircumcised in heart** and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you.

Deuteronomy 10:16 is the verse where Stephen's concept finds its genesis. Moses commanded believing Israel to circumcise their heart and not to be stiff-necked. Stephen's speech in Acts 7 had such magnificent force because of the clear connection with Moses in Deuteronomy 10. Stephen used the terms "stiff-necked", and "uncircumcised in heart." These words suggest a connection with Moses in Deuteronomy 10. In Deuteronomy 10, Moses tells Israel to quit being stubborn and to circumcise their hearts; Acts 7 reveals that the Sanhedrin is stubborn and does not have a circumcised heart. The exact form and order of the words differ but the cognates are present; a possible echo emerges. The author intentionally records Stephen referencing an Old Testament concept and this concept finds its roots in Deuteronomy with Moses and unbelieving Israel.

"Lord, do not hold this sin against them." The final recorded words of Stephen in Acts are "Lord, do not hold this sin against them" (Κύριε, μὴ στήσῃς αὐτοῖς ταύτην τὴν ἁμαρτίαν Acts 7:60). Again, there is no direct quote from the Septuagint, but another

Mosaic connection emerges. The author does not use the normal word for forgiveness (ἀφίημι). In this instance, he uses the peculiar word "hold" (στήσῃς from ἵστημί). This is the only time in the Bible that a form of ἵστημί is used for forgiveness.[91] This could be due to the fact that the author uses the word ἵστημί frequently in Acts as a bookend word and uses it to open the story in Acts 6:13 "and they set up (ἔστησάν from ἵστημί) false witnesses." Given the intercessory nature of the prayer, it seems at least possible that the author intended his readership to reference Moses' intercessory prayer in Numbers 14:11-19. God had told Moses that Israel would be destroyed for their sin and God would raise a new nation. Moses' response was to plea for forgiveness for the nation. The plea culminates in Numbers 14:19: "Please pardon the iniquity of this people, according to the greatness of your steadfast love" (ἄφες τὴν ἁμαρτίαν τῷ λαῷ τούτῳ ...). Here the Septuagint uses the common word for forgiveness: ἀφίημι. There are only two intercessory prayers for ἁμαρτία ("sin") in the Bible; one is Acts 7:60 and the other is Numbers 14:8.[92] The author again creates a thematic parallel from a righteous man of God asking for forgiveness for the sins of a large number of people who did not know their own sin. Although the word ἀφίημι ("forgive") is not present in the Acts account, the words both denote forgiveness and the object needing forgiveness is the ἁμαρτία ("sin") of rebellious Israel.

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91. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vols. 5-9 Edited by Gerhard Friedrich. Vol. 10 Compiled by Ronald Pitkin., ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey William Bromiley and Gerhard Friedrich, electronic ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-c1976), 7: 646-651.

92. There is the intercessory prayer of Christ on the cross, but the word ἁμαρτία is absent. In Luke 23:34, Christ says "Father, forgive them" (Πάτερ, ἄφες αὐτοῖς). Although this prayer can be used to show that the author is creating a thematic connection between Stephen and Christ, it suggests that an exegetical connection can be made to Moses.

These four verbal connections cannot be explained away as merely a literary coincidence distinct from the author's purpose. First, direct syntax searches show that similar wording and structure correspond well to the Moses comparisons. These connections are not merely forcing a preconceived notion, but result from grammatical analysis. Second, the four phrases that show parallelism are not obscure in the Stephen account. Each phrase figures prominently both within the book of Acts as well as the probable allusion in the Septuagint. These direct connections between four important phrases in Acts to an equal number in the Septuagint are too numerous to merely occur by chance. Third, these echoes do not need to be exact quotes. The author's knowledge of the Old Testament and literary ability provide for the distinct possibility of parallels apart from quotations. These connections are verbal allusions that use similar words, phrases, and structures to intentionally connect Stephen with Moses. Fourth, these verbal connections to Moses augment the author's purposes. This point will be explored more fully later, but since these several connections exist that associate two distinct texts and augment the author's purpose, it seems probable that the author of Acts intentionally creates this parallel.

A lengthy analogy offered by Allison serves to suggest how these verbal connections could be intended by the original author but so readily missed by contemporary readers:

> Our historically conditioned deafness to oblique allusions in the Bible can sometimes lead us to doubt their very existence. But a contemporary analogy may give us a pause, the more so as ancient 'readers' were in fact always 'listeners.' Those who habitually listen to music over the radio can often identify a popular song after hearing just the smallest portion of it. There are in fact contests - I have heard them - which require people to name a musical piece after

> hearing only a slight excerpt from it, one lasting no more than a second or two, and consisting of no more than two or three notes or cords. The uninitiated will discern only noise. But to those with the requisite musical knowledge (gained, be it noted, not through arduous study but through effortless listening), the briefest extract can conjure up a world: a song, an album, a musical group. Was it maybe not similar with those Jews who first heard the Gospel of Matthew [as is the case with this paper – the audience who first heard the book of Acts]? Are we not sometimes forced to pick up a concordance in order to perceive connections which were once immediately grasped by trained ears with unconscious sureness?[93]

These verbal echoes seem to be intentionally present to forge a literary connection between Stephen and Moses.

Inner-textual Parallels

The connections between Stephen and Moses run deeper than these four verbal connections. These two inner-textual parallels suggest that the author of Acts makes a connection between Stephen and Moses within the narrative itself. When considered in the light of the other intertextual connections, these parallels seem intentional.

Intertextual and inner-textual parallels. First, the phrase translated "doing great wonders and signs" in Acts 6:8 proves to function a dual-role as both an intertextual and inner-textual parallel. This phrase has been suggested to be rooted in Moses' miracles performed in Egypt. This connection shows the verbal link between the two distinct texts of the New Testament and the Septuagint. However, the author of Acts also uses this phrase within the Acts narrative to describe Moses. Again, the key words of the phrase are ἐποίει (from ποιέω) ("doing"), τέρατα ("wonders"), and σημεῖα ("signs"). These three words, or their various forms, appear in the same verse of the Greek Old Testament

93. Allison, *New Moses*, 18.

or the Greek New Testament ten times.[94] Three occurrences are in the New Testament, and all three of these occurrences are in the book of Acts. Further, two of the three occurrences are found in the Stephen episode. Stephen is described here in Acts 6:8 as a man doing great wonders and signs. Later, in Stephen's defense speech, Acts 7:36 reads, οὗτος ἐξήγαγεν αὐτοὺς **ποιήσας τέρατα καὶ σημεῖα** ἐν γῇ Αἰγύπτῳ καὶ ἐν Ἐρυθρᾷ Θαλάσσῃ καὶ ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ ἔτη τεσσεράκοντα." ("This man [Moses] led them out, **performing wonders and signs** in Egypt and at the Red Sea and in the wilderness for forty years"). The author of Acts uses the same phrase, though the exact verb form is different, to describe both Stephen and then Moses.

The author of Luke-Acts uses his literary ability to forge this inner-textual parallel. The narrative information of the Stephen episode straightforwardly states that Stephen was "doing great wonders and signs." However, for Moses, Stephen himself verbally affirms that Moses performed "wonders and signs" when recounting his theological history of Israel. Throughout Acts, the narrator presents completely trustworthy information. Further, Moses' wonders and signs are referenced throughout the Bible as the miracles done in the book of Exodus. These two statements within the book of Acts regarding both Stephen and Moses as doing wonders and signs suggest the feasibility of a literary parallel between Stephen and Moses.

Substantial space. Second, the intentional space devoted to selectively restate Moses' life suggests an intentional parallel. A vast portion of Stephen's speech deals with a retelling of Moses' story. Stephen reiterates a brief synopsis of Israel's entire

94. See Appendix 1

history from Abraham to Solomon. However, twenty-seven of the fifty-one verses deal directly with events that pertain to Moses and the book of Exodus.[95] Clearly, the author records Stephen's speech to augment his own particular purposes.[96] Perhaps Moses occupies such significance within Stephen's speech because the author explicitly emphasizes the implicit parallel that has been shown. The sheer quantity of verses that directly mention Moses within the Stephen episode suggests a more complex purpose than mere historical recitation; an intentional inner-textual Stephen-Moses parallel can legitimately be commended as a reason for Moses' prominence.

The form and content of the Stephen episode itself grounds these two arguments for a Stephen-Moses parallel. Within Acts 6-7 both Moses and Stephen are defined as men who do wonders and signs. Additionally, the sum of verses that reference Moses within the episode suggests a more satisfying answer than being a historical retelling. An intentional connection between Stephen and Moses explains the presence of the same phrase and Moses' attention in Stephen's speech.

Circumstantial Parallels

Generally, thematic parallels prove to offer the most opportunity for ingenuous connections divorced from authorial intent. However, authors can clearly create parallels of theme and circumstance without being forced to use the same words or phrases. One isolated parallel may easily be dismissed as contrived, but when other apparent intertextual and inner-textual parallels exist, circumstantial parallels seem more

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95. Acts 7:17-44 covers the time of Israel during the life of Moses.

96. Maddox, *Purpose*, 2; Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, vol. 1, 4; Rosner, "Acts," 67-68.

convincing. When a discourse is considered as a whole, circumstantial parallels serve important literary functions.

Intertextual and circumstantial parallels. Both Stephen's intercessory prayer for other's sins and his shining face function as both circumstantial and verbal connections. These connections link to certain Mosaic passages through their similar wording. Additionally, these are not just random passages to which they connect, but the very passages suggested by the similar circumstances. Moses' intercession for the sins of the people parallels Stephen's intercession for the sins of his accusers. Likewise, Stephen's face shining like an angel immediately hearkens the readers back to Exodus 34 with Moses' shining visage. Obviously the situations are not completely identical, but the main elements are similar enough to suggest an intentional circumstantial parallel in addition to a verbal parallel.[97]

Two circumstantial parallels. Two additional circumstantial parallel exists between Stephen and Moses. These parallels operate between the two distinct texts of Exodus and Acts without the benefit of similar vocabulary or phrasing. Both of these circumstantial parallels stem from the same verse in the Stephen episode. After Stephen's speech, the narrator records in Acts 7:55, "But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God." Although no direct verbal links exist in this situation between Stephen and Exodus 34, clear circumstantial connections emerge.

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97. "Doing great wonders and signs" has already been shown to function in a dual role as well – that of verbal parallel and an inner-textual parallel. "Uncircumcised in heart and ears," does not seem to serve a dual function, though the verbal link remains.

Only rarely in Scripture do men directly observe the "glory of God" with their physical eyes. The first circumstantial parallel examines Stephen's vision of seeing God's glory. One of the most crucial moments in the book of Exodus seems to be how God will react after the people sin by making the Golden Calf. In Exodus 34, God assures Moses of His favor by letting Moses see His back as the divine name is proclaimed. God will continue to keep His covenant with Israel because of His steadfast love. Moses, the faithful servant, beholds the glory of God as God demonstrates His continuing favor.

Stephen's situation seems analogous to the Moses event of Exodus 34. Stephen suffers as a faithful servant who beholds God's glory as God demonstrates His continued approval. Tannehill suggests that as a recipient of divine visions, he is being likened unto Moses, or maybe Abraham.[98] By this point in the Stephen episode, the author's intentions have been manifested. Stephen has been connected as a parallel to Moses. Just as Moses requests and sees God's glory, so does Stephen see a glimpse of the glory of God at his martyrdom. The circumstantial connection links the situation of Stephen to a similar Mosaic circumstance.

Second, a circumstantial parallel emerges from the second part of Acts 7:55 as well. The end of the verse reads, "[Stephen] gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing (ἑστῶτα from ἵστημί) at the right hand of God." Only in the Stephen

98. Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 2: 97.

episode is the resurrected Lord said to be "standing" at the right hand of God.[99] Debate persists as to the purpose of Jesus' standing in this passage.[100] A possible explanation surfaces by understanding the intentional parallels between Stephen and Moses. Christ's standing at the right hand of God provides a circumstantial parallel to God's standing with Moses in Exodus 33-34.

Exodus 33:7-11 recounts how Moses used to meet with God face to face outside of the camp. Various forms of the word ἵστημί are used four times in a span of three verses in Exodus 33:8-10. Two uses refer to the people of Israel as they would stand outside of their own tents waiting for Moses. The other two uses relate directly to the pillar of cloud that would meet with Moses. These verses use forms of ἵστημί to refer to God, in the form of a cloud, standing with Moses.

Exodus 33:8-10 (Author's translation)

8 Whenever Moses was going out to the tent, all the people would **stand** at his tent door, watching Moses until he had gone into the tent. **9** Just as Moses entered the tent, the pillar of cloud would descend and **stand** at the door of the tent, and [the LORD] would talk with Moses. **10** And when all the people saw the pillar of cloud **standing** at the door of the tent, all the people would **rise up** and worship, from his tent door.

Exodus 33:8-10 (Septuagint)

8 ἡνίκα δ ἂν εἰσεπορεύετο Μωυσῆς εἰς τὴν σκηνὴν ἔξω τῆς παρεμβολῆς, **εἱστήκει** πᾶς ὁ λαὸς σκοπεύοντες ἕκαστος παρὰ τὰς θύρας τῆς σκηνῆς αὐτοῦ καὶ κατενοοῦσαν ἀπιόντος Μωυσῆ ἕως τοῦ εἰσελθεῖν αὐτὸν εἰς τὴν σκηνήν. **9** ὡς δ ἂν εἰσῆλθεν Μωυσῆς εἰς τὴν σκηνήν, κατέβαινεν ὁ στῦλος τῆς νεφέλης καὶ **ἵστατο** ἐπὶ τὴν θύραν τῆς σκηνῆς, καὶ ἐλάλει Μωυσῇ, **10** καὶ ἑώρα πᾶς ὁ λαὸς τὸν στῦλον τῆς νεφέλης **ἑστῶτα** ἐπὶ τῆς θύρας τῆς σκηνῆς, καὶ **στάντες** πᾶς ὁ λαὸς προσεκύνησαν ἕκαστος ἀπὸ τῆς θύρας τῆς σκηνῆς αὐτοῦ.

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99. The following verses all specifically state that the resurrected Lord is "seated" at the right hand of God: Mark 16:19; Luke 22:69; Colossians 3:1; Hebrews 1:3; 10:12; 12:2

100. Witherington, *Acts*, 275; Bock, *Acts*, 311-312. Bock lists five common potential reasons to explain Jesus standing at the right hand of God.

Chapter 34 of Exodus furthers the standing motif. Exodus 34:5 states, "The Lord descended in the cloud and stood (παρέστη from παρίστημι), with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord." The word translated from the Septuagint as *stood* is from the root παρίστημι a derivative of ἵστημί. Although the words ἵστημί and παρίστημι are closely related, they are distinct words. These verses in Exodus offer a concentration of the theme that God is standing both as the pillar in the tent of meeting and with Moses on Mt. Sinai.

Recognizing the Stephen-Moses parallels in Acts 6-7 provides a tool to understand the purpose of Christ's standing rather than sitting. Perhaps the author of Acts records Christ as standing to provide another parallel to Moses. The circumstantial parallel of Acts 7:55 alluding to Exodus 34 has been proposed above; another Mosaic connection immediately following would not be missed. The author referencing the prominent standing motif in Exodus 33 and 34 in the Stephen narrative seems legitimate.

Even though the four forms of ἵστημί are present in Exodus 33, the same word as in Acts 7:55, it is better to put the connection as a circumstantial parallel rather than a verbal parallel since it is not the exact verbal form. This suggests a clear circumstantial parallel although it would be a mediocre verbal parallel. Jesus' standing can be explained as the author of Acts continuing the Stephen-Moses parallel with Exodus 34. Just as Moses saw the glory of God, Stephen sees God's glory. Likewise, as God stood with Moses in the Tent of Meeting and on Mt. Sinai, so does Stephen see God standing in the person of the risen Lord. Of Bock's five potential reasons that Jesus could be standing, this circumstantial parallel contradicts the first three by providing consideration that

Jesus' standing offers some intended significance. This connection between Stephen and Moses can provide additional information to remember when attempting to discern the reason for Christ's standing.

These connections between Stephen seeing the glory of God and Christ's standing connected to Moses' vision of God on Mt. Sinai and the pillar of cloud should be understood as a single unit. Two distinct parallels have been presented. However, both in the Acts narrative and in Exodus these two events are adjacent. The probability of a parallel is compounded since two Stephen events in a row reflect two Moses events in the same order.

Further, this specific unit offers a unique theological purpose. In Exodus 33-34, Moses saw the glory of God in the form of a pillar as it stood with him. In Acts 7, Stephen sees the full glory of God as it stands in the person of Jesus.[101] Reminiscent of John 1:14, the Son serves as the full exposition of the Father's glory. The parallel deepens. Stephen is afforded an opportunity Moses did not have. Stephen sees the glory of God standing in the person of Jesus Christ.

Re-examining Allison's six criteria. Allison's six criteria for establishing a confident probability of parallel will be re-examined. A Stephen-Moses parallel meets criteria one in that the Moses story occurred and is recorded prior to the book of Acts. Also, based on the author's use of the Old Testament, the traditional stories held significance for the author and could be used to establish a parallel. Third, the three types of parallels shown: intertextual, inner-textual, and circumstantial, unite a combination of

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101. Perhaps the καὶ in Acts 7:55 should be translated as epexegetical. "But he, … gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, *even* Jesus standing at the right hand of God."

different connections to support the notion of a parallel even with the lack of explicit citation. Fourth, a Stephen-Moses parallel enjoys prominence. Both characters are important in their respective narratives and the texts utilized are not obscure. Fifth, various authors throughout the Jewish-Christian literary tradition use Moses as a literary parallel. A precedent exists for Stephen to parallel Moses. Sixth, although any two texts written in the same language will share a certain vocabulary, the syntactical searches and circumstantial comparisons reveal that these parallels share atypical features that occur infrequently throughout Scripture. Allison's criteria have been appropriately met which suggests an acceptable probability of an intentional Stephen-Moses connection.

The author of Acts uses three different types of links to make the Stephen-Moses parallels. No less than four distinct phrases in Acts echo Old Testament passages regarding Moses. Also, within Acts 6-7, the author creates his own connections through direct wording and quantity of reference. Finally, the connection between Stephen and Moses finds support through circumstantial parallels where Stephen repeats Mosaic situations. These comparisons enjoy a level of objectivity because of the direct verbal connections as well as the literary and rhetorical feasibility. An intentional parallel between Stephen and Moses proves legitimately feasible.

Why did the Author Create Mosaic Parallels?

Since the probability of an intentional parallel has been established, two possible implications will be explored. This section seeks to provide an answer regarding the motivation of authorial intent in order to ascertain the finer nuances of the texts meaning. The first implication considers the author's motivation for creating the parallel within the

story itself apart from the larger narrative of the whole book. The second implication considers how the Stephen-Moses parallel impacts the themes of the whole book. These applications of the parallel are not exhaustive and only offer a guide as to how understanding the literary parallel affects textual meaning.

Purpose for the Immediate Context

First, a Stephen-Moses parallel offers a partial defense against Stephen's charges. Stephen faces three distinct accusations in Acts 6:9-14 that can all broadly be labeled blasphemy. The first two charges are found specifically in Acts 6:11, "Then they secretly instigated men who said, 'We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God.'" They accuse Stephen of blasphemy against God and against Moses. Acts 6:12-14 reveals a third charge, that of blaspheming the temple. Stephen's speech can be understood as a response to these accusations. Further, the intentional parallel between Stephen and Moses directly counters the accusation of blasphemy against Moses. Functioning as a partial defense stands as an implication resulting from the Stephen-Moses parallels in Acts 6-7. The author defends Stephen against the charge of blaspheming Moses by intentionally making the Stephen-Moses connection.

Also, a Stephen-Moses parallel as suggested could provide additional perspective regarding Stephen's defense of blaspheming the temple. This perspective results from further considering the suggested Stephen-Moses parallel between Christ's standing as the picture of God's glory and the pillar's standing as the manifestation of God's glory. Moses' meeting with God at Mt. Sinai and in the Tent of Meeting occurred previous to the temple. The Tent of Meeting has already been explicitly referenced in Stephen's

speech (Acts 7:44-45a). With the parallel, Moses ability to meet with God and see His glory occurred apart from the Jewish temple, Stephen's vision of the glorified Christ also occurred away from the temple. Seemingly, the author reinforces his point that the temple cannot contain God or worship of Him though the temple can function as a helpful tool.[102]

Purpose for the Book

Second, a Stephen-Moses parallel deepens the theme of Israel's rejection of God. David Pao, seeing the connections between Luke-Acts and Isaiah, notes how Acts 28 signifies a reversal of the Isaianic program.[103] Whereas in Isaiah 6 the book opens with a statement of Israel's hardness, Isaiah 40-55 depicts that this state will not continue forever and the people of Israel will be recipients of God's salvation. This later passage reverses the previous judgment. In Luke-Acts, the reverse trend can be seen. In Luke 3, the author quotes Isaiah 40:3-5, and Pao contends that this quotation defines the entire program of Luke-Acts.[104] However, in Acts 28 the author quotes Isaiah 6:9-10 which stands in stark contrast to the intended salvation of the Jews. Pao convincingly demonstrates how the author of Acts attempts to show how the intended mission to the Jews is characterized by their rejection.

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102. Polhill, *Acts*, 202-203 makes the same argument without using the Stephen-Moses parallel. This parallel serves to reinforce what the author already says.

103. Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic*, 105-109.

104. Ibid., 37-69.

The Stephen episode operates within the narrative of Acts as a crucial part of evincing this Jewish rejection of the gospel. Until Acts 6, Jewish reception of the gospel has been strong.[105] The martyrdom of Stephen represents a hinge on which the Jewish reaction shifts from one of acceptance by the masses to one of rejection by the masses. Stephen's own speech expressly reiterates the Jewish practice of rejecting God's message and messengers.[106] Israel overtly rejects Stephen who is a prophet of God. Their rejection is exacerbated because of the Stephen-Moses parallel. Stephen, through the three types of parallels, has been likened to a prophet similar to Moses. The people's rejection of Stephen also represents their implicit rejection of the parallel – Moses. The Jews of Stephen's day continue as their forefathers and persecute the great messengers of God. The author of Acts, because of the parallels between these two prophets, exacerbates Israel's sin of rejection at this crucial moment in the narrative. The quotation of Isaiah 6 in Acts 28 can be present because the Jewish rejection of the gospel throughout Luke-Acts has been ably demonstrated.

Conclusion

The story presented in Luke-Acts revolves around the person of Jesus Christ and His subsequent work on the earth through His people. This work provides the Gentiles with the free offer of the gospel while Israel continually rejects God's truths throughout

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105. Maddox, *Purpose*, 52. "The first five chapters of Acts describe a 'Jerusalem springtime' of the church. Great emphasis is laid on the success which attends the preaching of the Apostles. Opposition arises in ch. 4 and 5, but Luke [the author] gives us to understand that in this the Sanhedrin is in a weak position, since its attitude of hostility is not shared by the people at large (4:21; 5:13)."

106. Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, vol., 2, 86.

the book of Acts. The Stephen episode functions as a hinge in Acts. Stephen's death signals a stark change in Jewish attitude toward the proposed Messiah. Given Stephen's pivotal location in the narrative coupled with the themes being presented, the author creates an intentional parallel between Stephen and Moses in order to exacerbate Israel's guilt as they kill Stephen, a man who is likened unto Moses in character and activity. The Stephen episode, by functioning as a critical part of the narrative, simultaneously is interpreted by the whole of Acts and aids in the interpretation of the whole since it is one crucial part. Perhaps the re-examining of the themes in Luke-Acts in light of Stephen functioning as a dual-parallel might allow for a more profound understanding of Israel's extreme abandonment of the gospel as they kill Stephen who is pictured as a parallel of Christ and Moses.

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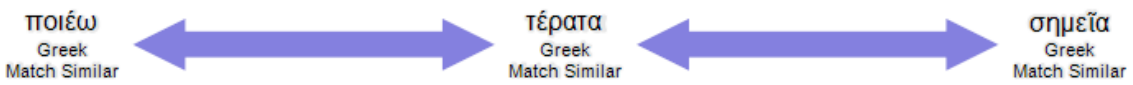
Appendix 1

Graphical depiction of the first search using Logos Digital Library Research systems:



Find all verses with these three root words in any order within the verse. The following verses were found in the Septuagint:

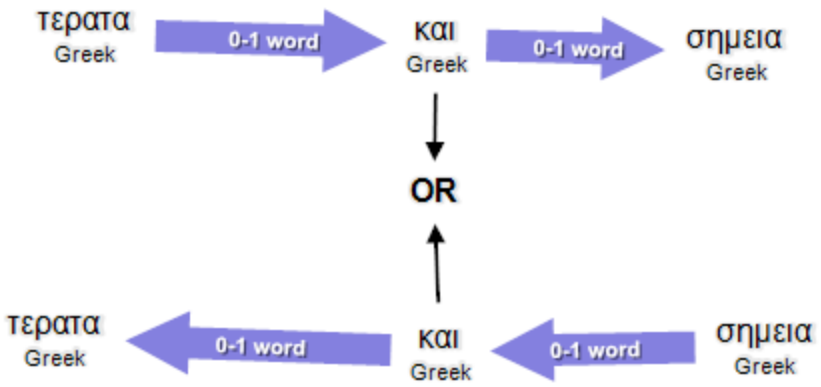
Exodus 11:10
Deuteronomy 7:19
Deuteronomy 11:3
Jeremiah 39:20
Daniel 4:2
Daniel 4:37
Daniel 6:28

Same search was utilized for the Greek New Testament. The following verses were found in the UBS 4th Edition:

Acts 6:8
Acts 7:36
Acts 15:12

Appendix 2

Graphical depiction of the second search using Logos Digital Library Research systems:

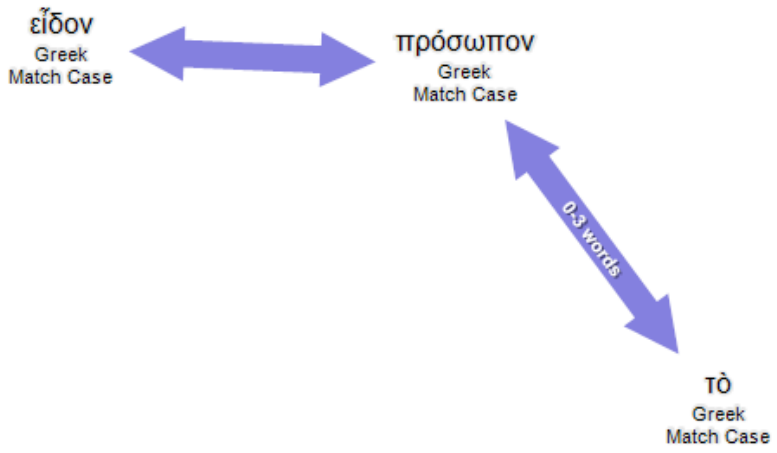


Find all uses of the words τέρατα καὶ σημεῖα within one word of each other regardless of whether τέρατα or σημεῖα appears first in the Septuagint (left) and New Testament (right).

Exodus 7:3	Matthew 24:24
Exodus 11:9	Mark 13:22
Exodus 11:10	John 4:48
Deuteronomy 6:22	Acts 2:43
Deuteronomy 7:19	Acts 4:30
Deuteronomy 11:3	Acts 5:12
Deuteronomy 28:46	Acts 6:8
Deuteronomy 29:2	Acts 7:36
Psalm 77:43	Acts 14:3
Psalm 134:9	Acts 15:12
Isaiah 8:18	
Isaiah 20:3	
Jeremiah 39:20	
Daniel 4:2	
Daniel 4:37	
Daniel 6:28	

Appendix 3

Graphical depiction of the third search using Logos Digital Library Research systems:

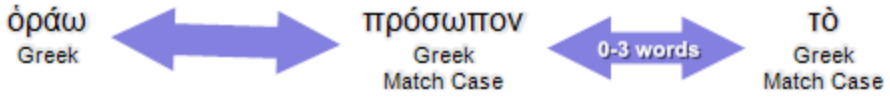


Find all verses in the Septuagint where the specific forms εἶδον and πρόσωπον are in the same verse. Further, πρόσωπον must be in the accusative case and within three words of the definite article τὸ.

Genesis 9:23
Genesis 33:10
Exodus 34:35
2 Samuel 14:32

Appendix 4

Graphical depiction of the fourth search using Logos Digital Library Research systems:



Find all verses in the Septuagint where any form of the word ὁράω is in the same verse with the word πρόσωπον in the accusative case within three words of a corresponding definite article.

Genesis 8:8
Genesis 8:13
Genesis 9:23
Genesis 31:2*
Genesis 31:5*
Genesis 32:21*
Genesis 33:10
Genesis 38:15
Genesis 43:3
Genesis 43:5
Genesis 44:23
Genesis 44:26
Genesis 46:30*
Exodus 10:28*
Exodus 33:20
Exodus 33:23
Exodus 34:35*
Numbers 24:1
2 Samuel 3:13
2 Samuel 14:24
2 Samuel 14:28
2 Samuel 14:32*
2 Kings 9:32
2 Kings 25:19*
2 Chronicles 32:2
Psalm 10:7*
Psalm 16:2
Psalm 83:10
Jeremiah 1:13
Jeremiah 13:26
Ezekiel 12:6
Ezekiel 12:12
Nahum 3:5

A * means that πρόσωπον is functioning as the direct object of the verb ὁράω.
The rest are false hits.