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THE HISTORICAL JESUS AND THE SPEECH OF GAMALIEL (ACTS 5.35–9)[1]

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As a supplement to the careful analysis of early Christian texts, anyone studying the historical Jesus of Nazareth is inevitably drawn to make comparisons between him and other figures from the ancient world in general, and first-century Palestine in particular. Just what type of figure was he? For example, in his book, *Jesus the Jew*, Geza Vermes emphasizes Jesus' compatibility with the category of Jewish charismatic figures like Honi the Circle-drawer (perhaps a Galilean) and Hanina Ben-Dosa (definitely a Galilean).[2] Morton Smith compares the actions and words of Jesus to the magical papyri and finds remarkable similarities to ancient magicians, thus the title of his book, *Jesus the Magician*.[3] Smith, like Celsus 1800 years earlier, delights in showing how Jesus was just one of the many fakers and charlatans practising the magical arts in the first-century Mediterranean world. More recently, Burton Mack has argued that Jesus was a cynic sage like those found in Diogenes Laertius' *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*.[4] In Mack's reconstruction, Jesus' thought was not eschatological, nor did Jesus intend to found a movement or movements devoted to himself; rather, he preached the flaunting of social conventions and criticized his culture in general terms, like other cynic philosophers. The application of apocalyptic eschatology to Jesus' teaching was a later development among some (but not all) of the groups

[1] This study is a substantially revised version of a paper delivered at the New England Regional Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, Amherst, MA, March 30, 1990. I wish to thank Professor Jon D. Levenson of Harvard University and Professor Arthur Droge of the University of Chicago for their comments on the paper.

[2] Geza Vermes, *Jesus the Jew* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981) 58–82. See also *idem*, *Jesus and the World of Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983).

[3] Morton Smith, *Jesus the Magician* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978).

[4] Burton Mack, *A Myth of Innocence: Mark and Christian Origins* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988) 53–77 and 179–207. See also Ron Cameron, '"What Have You Come Out to See?", Characterizations of John and Jesus in the Gospels', *The Apocryphal Jesus and Christian Origins* (ed. Ron Cameron; Semeia 49; Atlanta: Scholars, 1990) 35–69. For an

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of Jesus', *CBQ* 47 (1985) 435–63.

[6] P. W. Barnett, 'The Jewish Sign Prophets – A.D. 40–70 – Their
Origins', *NTS* 27 (1981) 679–97; E. P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (Philade
1985) 138.

[7] Ibid. 138, 40, 237, 40, and 303.

devoted to Jesus' memory in the decades following his death. For all these scholars, finding the proper generic category for Jesus is part of the process of examining the early Christian evidence. Of course, the category is chosen on the basis of evidence, but, in addition, the category chosen often helps determine what evidence is highlighted, what evidence is dismissed, and how the evidence is construed.

One of the most common categories for comparison with Jesus is the series of politico-religious Jewish figures from Palestine described by Josephus and categorized into three groups (bandits, prophets, and messiahs) by Richard A. Horsley and John S. Hanson.[5] Persons such as Judas the Galilean (6 CE, Josephus, *J.W.* 2.8.1 §118 and *Ant.* 18.1.1 §4–10, 23), John the Baptist (*Ant.* 18.5.2 §116–19), an unnamed Samaritan (at the end of Pilate's reign, *Ant.* 18.4.1 §85–7), Theudas (ca. 45 CE, *Ant.* 20.5.1 §97–8), other unnamed prophets (*J.W.* 2.13.4 §258–60 and *Ant.* 20.8.6 §167–8), the 'Egyptian' (during Felix's reign, 52–60 CE, *J.W.* 2.13.5 §261–3; *Ant.* 20.8.6 §168–72), and Jesus ben Ananias (62–69 CE, *J.W.* 6.5.3 §300–9) are often compared with each other and with Jesus of Nazareth in various ways. P. W. Barnett, followed by E. P. Sanders, uses the term 'sign-prophet' to designate some of these figures, most notably the Samaritan, Theudas, the Egyptian, and the unnamed prophets, because they all claimed to be the locus of a miraculous sign of God's activity breaking into human history.[6] As Sanders describes it, Jesus, the Samaritan, Theudas, and the Egyptian each believed that they would help usher in a dramatic change in the fortunes of Israel (as each understood this concept) by means of a particular miraculous sign or signs from God. Some of them may have claimed to be a prophet or even a messiah-like figure; at the very least they all saw themselves playing a role in the rapidly dawning events of the end of time. In each case, including that of Jesus, expectations were not realized, and their movements were put down by the Romans as they executed either the leader himself and/or his followers.[7] Barnett goes even further when he claims that the actions of later sign-prophets were, in

[5] Richard A. Horsley, with John S. Hanson, *Bandits, Prophets, and Messiahs: Popular Movements at the Time of Jesus* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1985). See also Richard A. Horsley, '"Like One of the Prophets of Old": Two Types of Popular Prophets at the Time of Jesus', *CBQ* 47 (1985) 435–63.

[6] P. W. Barnett, 'The Jewish Sign Prophets – A.D. 40–70 – Their Intentions and Origins', *NTS* 27 (1981) 679–97; E. P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985) 138.

[7] Ibid., 138–40, 237–40, and 303.

part, based on the earlier prophetic/eschatological actions of Jesus.[8] In the speech of Gamaliel, Acts 5.35–9, Luke explicitly compared Jesus with two characters also found in Josephus: the 'sign-prophet' Theudas and the political revolutionary Judas the Galilean. This essay will explore the significance of that speech for Luke's apologetic and for present-day categorizations of Jesus. Why did Luke introduce Judas and Theudas into his account of the history of earliest Christianity, and does the fact that he did so tell us anything about that history itself?

1. THE SPEECH OF GAMALIEL IN LUKE'S APOLOGETIC

> And [Gamaliel] said to them, 'Israelite men, take care in what you are going to do with these people [who are followers of Jesus]. For before these days Theudas arose, saying that he was somebody, and about 400 men joined themselves to him. He was slain, and all those who had been persuaded by him were scattered and came to nothing. After him, Judas the Galilean arose, in the days of the census, and he caused a people[9] to revolt along with him (ἀπέστησεν λαὸν ὀπίσω αὐτοῦ). That one perished (or: was a failure, ἀπώλετο), and all[10] those who had been persuaded by him were scattered. So now in this case I say to you, keep away from these people [who follow Jesus], and leave them alone. Because if this plan or this undertaking is a human enterprise, it will be destroyed, but if it is from God, you cannot destroy them. You might even be found opposing God!

The question of the historicity of Gamaliel's speech has been the centre of attention since the beginnings of modern Biblical criticism, and this is usually the first (and sometimes only) question asked about the speech in standard commentaries.[11] It is well known that Luke's chronology on Theudas is at least 40 years off, unless we posit two Theudases.[12] Further, the Gamaliel giving this address could not have known about the Theudas in Josephus, since, according to Josephus, Theudas' activities took place 10–15 years after this speech was supposedly delivered. In addition, no

[8] Barnett, 'Sign-Prophets', 690–3.

[9] Some MSS read 'a great people'.

[10] Some MSS omit 'all'.

[11] A good example is Ernst Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1971) 256–8.

[12] A. C. Clark suggested that the names of Judas and Theudas have been misplaced and should be interchanged (*The Acts of the Apostles* [Oxford, 1933] 33). Such a resolution of the difficulty is possible; the change would not affect the conclusions of this study. See Matthew Black, 'Judas of Galilee and Josephus's "Fourth Philosophy"', *Josephus-Studien* (Festschrift für O. Michel; ed. O. Betz, K. Haacker, and M. Hengel; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck &

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[14] Gerd Lüdemann, *Early Christianity according to the Traditions in Act*
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[15] Various attempts have been made to affirm the historicity of at least e
Gamaliel speech, but they generally rely on too much historical specul
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Christian source could possibly have remembered the speech, since Luke tells us the Christians were put out of the room! It is obvious that Luke has heard of these figures and knows something about them; indeed, his depiction of them accords well with what Josephus says about them. He is simply confused about the chronology, and only on that of Theudas. His connection of Judas the Galilean with the census corresponds to Josephus' account (*J.W.* 2.8.1 §118; *Ant.* 18.1.1 §4–10, 23). Luke also demonstrates his knowledge of the 'Egyptian' in roughly the correct chronological place (*J.W.* 2.13.5 §261–3 and *Ant.* 20.8.6 §168–72) when he reports in Acts 21.38 that a Roman soldier mistook Paul for that character.[13] I follow the assessment of Gerd Lüdemann that the speech of Gamaliel most likely is a creation of Luke.[14] Even if Luke was relying on some historical source or traditions,[15] the speech can still give us clues about Luke's own understanding of the history of the Jesus movement.

In exploring the significance of Luke's account of these figures, one thing is immediately clear. For Luke the Christian apologist, Jesus was not just another sign-prophet or political revolutionary. He was superior to Theudas and Judas the Galilean because, unlike their movements, his movement continued to thrive after the removal of its leader. We see this clearly in the way in which Luke portrays the disciples of his three subjects. The disciples of Theudas were, as Luke says 'dispersed and came to nothing' (διελύθησαν καὶ ἐγένοντο εἰς οὐδέν). Likewise those of Judas the Galilean were 'scattered' (διεσκορπίσθησαν). In the case of Theudas, the leader was killed; Luke uses the verb ἀναιρέω which can mean 'condemned to death' (Acts 26.10), thus making Luke's account cohere with Josephus' account of the beheading of Theudas. In the case of Judas, Luke uses the middle voice of ἀπόλλυμι, which can mean that Judas died or that he was a failure. In Josephus' reports there is no mention of the death of Judas the Galilean, and, contrary to Luke's assertion of utter failure, the kinsmen of Judas *did* carry on

[13] In Acts, Luke portrays the Egyptian as a leader of *sicarii*; in Josephus' accounts there is no clear indication that the Egyptian and his followers were armed, although *J.W.* 2.13.5 §262 does say that they hoped to overpower a Roman garrison.

[14] Gerd Lüdemann, *Early Christianity according to the Traditions in Acts: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989) 68–73.

[15] Various attempts have been made to affirm the historicity of at least elements of the Gamaliel speech, but they generally rely on too much historical speculation without evidence. See, for example, Jürgen Roloff, *Die Apostelgeschichte* (NTD 5; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1981), 100–1; Joseph Ward Swain, 'Gamaliel's Speech and Caligula's Statue', *HTR* 37 (1944) 341–9. My focus is on the function of the speech for Luke and what it tells us about Luke's understanding of the history of Christianity.

his legacy to some extent.[16] Luke has included the details of Judas' failure and/or death in order to make the progress of the three movements precisely parallel. In each case the leader was removed from the scene (Theudas, Judas the Galilean, and now Jesus). In the first two cases the disciples were scattered, but not so in the case of Jesus' followers. They were never scattered, according to Luke.

In this regard, Luke's account of Jesus' arrest stands out in high relief when contrasted to the traditions he inherited from Mark. Whereas Mark 14.50 states that after Jesus' arrest all the disciples 'forsook him and fled' (the phrase is repeated by Matthew), Luke omits this. Then Luke adds something remarkable in 23.49. In Mark, only the women followers of Jesus were looking on 'from afar' as Jesus was crucified (Mark 15.40). By contrast, Luke 23.49 relates the following: 'And all those who had known him (πάντες οἱ γνωστοὶ αὐτῷ) and the women who had followed him from Galilee stood at a distance and saw all these things'. In other words, Jesus' disciples in Luke never deserted their leader as they had done in Mark. This depiction enables Luke to contrast the behaviour of Jesus' disciples with those of Judas the Galilean and Theudas in Acts 5. The demise of their leader did not mean the dissolution of the Christian movement. Thus, Luke can further assert, through his character Gamaliel, that 'if this work is from God, you cannot destroy it'. Obviously for Luke, Christianity is from God, and the proof is in the fact that, not only was it not destroyed, but it is thriving! Similar argumentation was used later by Origen in his *Contra Celsum*, where he clearly took his cues from Luke's apologetic.[17] Thus, according to Luke and Origen, Jesus was the true agent of God. Judas and Theudas mistakenly thought they were the chosen instruments of God, but God has shown them to be false.

[16] In Josephus' account, the death of the *sons* of Judas the Galilean is reported immediately following the account of Theudas (*Ant.* 20.5.1 §97–102). This has led to the suggestion that Luke was familiar with Josephus' account, and that he confused Judas the Galilean with his sons. Such confusion would explain Luke's erroneous placing of Theudas before Judas. In my opinion, this scenario requires too many mistakes on Luke's part in dealing with the text of Josephus, and if Luke were familiar with Josephus' account directly, he might not have been so quick to deny any continuing legacy to Judas' movement. It is more likely that Luke knows of these characters from some other source.

[17] *C. Cels.* 1.57; 6.11; cf. 1.29. The last passage describes the lowliness of Jesus' birth, and contrasts that with the enormous influence he has had over the whole world. Related is Origen's argument in 1.62 and 3.68, where he claims that thousands of common people live more noble lives than the philosophers because of Christianity's success. See Joseph Wilson Trigg, *Origen: The Bible and Philosophy in the Third Century Church* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1983) 227–8. Sheer numerical success is not the key for Origen; rather, he focuses on the ability of Christianity to elevate the common masses to chastity and right living in a way that philosophy had never done.

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[18] Hans Conzelmann, *The Theology of Saint Luke* (New York: Harper, 19
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[19] Fred O. Francis, 'Eschatology and History in Luke–Acts', *JAAR* 37 (196
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330–47; Richard H. Hiers, 'The Problem of the Delay of the Parousia in Luke–A
(1973–4) 145–55; Joseph Fitzmyer, *The Gospel according to Luke I–IX* (Anch
Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1981) 233–5. For a survey of the *status questionis*,
Carroll, *Response to the End of History: Eschatology and Situation in Luke–A*
92. Atlanta: Scholars, 1988).

Luke's apologetic in the speech of Gamaliel is related to another feature in his writings: his awareness of the delay of the eschaton since Jesus' time and since Mark was written. There is debate over whether Luke has pushed the end of time into the indefinite future or whether he expected the end soon, within his own lifetime. The former position is that of Hans Conzelmann,[18] while the latter is that taken by many revisers of Conzelmann like Fred O. Francis, S. G. Wilson, Richard H. Hiers, Joseph Fitzmyer, and others.[19] Luke 19.11, 24.13–35, and Acts 1.6–8 all show a concern on Luke's part to distance Jesus himself from the misguided eschatological expectations so prevalent among the thick-witted disciples and crowds, but these passages do not necessarily rule out the idea that Luke himself expected the end soon. Luke must at least account for the fact that history has continued up to his own time, regardless of his timetable for the ultimate end. The fact that Luke allowed his Jesus to utter Luke 21.32 (taken from Mark 13.30) indicates that Luke may have thought the 'predictions' of Jesus would take place in his (Luke's) own day, while a few of the original Christian generation were still alive. It seems most likely that Luke wishes to prepare his readers for the sudden return of Jesus at any moment, while recognizing that delay was possible (Luke 18.6–8; 21.34–6).

In Luke 19.11, Jesus tells the parable about a nobleman going away to a far country because 'they supposed that the kingdom of God was to appear immediately (παραχρῆμα)'. In contrast to Matthew's version of the parable (Matt 25.14–30), Luke 19.12 contains the word μακράν, and if Luke has added this word to the parable, we can conclude that he wanted to emphasize the long distance and therefore long time that the nobleman would be away. Thus, we gain insight into Luke's own understanding of the parable. The parable and its setting in Luke attribute to Jesus himself a consciousness that the literal, tangible 'Kingdom of God' may have been inaugurated with Jesus' first advent, but would not achieve

[18] Hans Conzelmann, *The Theology of Saint Luke* (New York: Harper, 1961; 2nd ed., Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982).

[19] Fred O. Francis, 'Eschatology and History in Luke–Acts', *JAAR* 37 (1969) 49–63. He argues that Luke's concern is to show that the eschaton began with Jesus' first coming and will culminate soon in Luke's own day. Luke 21.32 is a key verse for this argument. I agree, as long as it is further explained that one of Luke's principal aims is to dissociate Jesus from mistaken expectations. S. G. Wilson, 'Lukan Eschatology', *NTS* 15 (1968–9) 330–47; Richard H. Hiers, 'The Problem of the Delay of the Parousia in Luke–Acts', *NTS* 20 (1973–4) 145–55; Joseph Fitzmyer, *The Gospel according to Luke I–IX* (Anchor Bible 28; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1981) 233–5. For a survey of the *status questionis*, see John T. Carroll, *Response to the End of History: Eschatology and Situation in Luke–Acts* (SBLDS 92; Atlanta: Scholars, 1988), especially chapter one.

culmination until Jesus' return during Luke's own time, perhaps even later.

Luke 24.13–35 is the famous conversation on the Road to Emmaus which appears only in the third gospel. In 24.21 the disciples express their frustration over Jesus' failure because they 'had hoped that he would be the one to redeem Israel'. Luke's risen Jesus then rebukes them and shows from the scriptures how it was necessary first that the Christ should suffer these things and only then enter into his glory (Luke 24.25–7). Interestingly, the verses from scripture for such a claim are not given by Luke, perhaps because he, like modern scholars, had difficulty in identifying just which passages those might be. The closest he comes is the Ethiopian eunuch's reading of Isaiah 53 in Acts 8.32–3. The phenomenon in Luke is similar to the Rabbis' assertion that the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead is contained in the Torah. Read literally, of course, the doctrine is not there. But if one begins with an axiom like 'resurrection of the dead' or 'crucified and risen Messiah', then the new doctrine can easily be found on every page of the authoritative sacred text.[20]

In Acts 1.6–8, the issue comes up yet again. The risen Jesus has once again to dampen excited hopes for an imminent political restoration of Israel. It is hard to say exactly what Luke had in mind when he made his characters (the disciples) hope for the 'restoration of the Kingdom to Israel', but the songs of Zechariah, Mary, and Simeon in Luke 1 and 2 may give some expression to Luke's understanding of the content of that hope.[21] Luke's risen Jesus never denies the propriety of such apocalyptic hope; he only chastises the disciples for failing to understand God's timetable. As Luke's Peter says in Acts 2.23, Jesus was crucified 'according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God'.

In all of these cases, Luke the apologetic historian goes to great lengths to show that, while there was eschatological expectation brewing within the early Jesus movement, and while such expec-

[20] For a description of the various biblical passages used apologetically to explain Jesus' passion, see Barnabas Lindars, *New Testament Apologetic: The Doctrinal Significance of the Old Testament Quotations* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961) 75–110. For more on the phenomenon of the closed canon which can be made to address a wide variety of new issues, see Jonathan Z. Smith, 'Sacred Persistence: Toward a Redescription of Canon', chap. in *idem, Imagining Religion: From Babylonia to Jonestown* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1982) 36–53.

[21] For a summary of the traditional elements of Jewish restoration eschatology, see Sanders, *Jesus*, 61–119. For more on Jewish restoration in Luke, see Arthur W. Wainwright, 'Luke and the Restoration of the Kingdom to Israel', *ExpTim* 89 (1977) 76–9; and Robert C. Tannehill, 'Israel in Luke–Acts: A Tragic Story', *JBL* 104 (1985) 69–85.

tation (in the form of Jesus' second coming) is still va
church of his own day, any possibility that Jesus himsel
taken about the time of the end must be explicitly rule
prominence of this agenda for Luke compels us to raise
tion, why would Luke have been concerned to refute suc
Each of the gospels deals with the reinterpretation of escl
expectations in its own way, but none is so clear as L
where the disciples express mistaken opinions about th
the risen Jesus corrects them. This may indicate tha
was current in Luke's own day that Jesus had indeed n
expected some form of Jewish restoration in his ow
or with his own career, as Judas the Galilean, Theuda
Egyptian had done. The speech of Gamaliel would the
Luke's scheme to show that Jesus was similar to the othe
in outward appearance, but unlike them, his mission wa
true agent of God and he was not mistaken about God's i
timetable.[22]

2. THE SPEECH OF GAMALIEL AND PRESENT-DAY CATEGORIZATIONS OF JESUS

As stated above, a number of scholars have used Judas th
and Theudas, as well as the unnamed Samaritan, the
John the Baptist, and other Jewish figures from firs
Palestine in order to draw analogies to various aspects of t
of Jesus.[23] Some have recognized that Luke also saw a c
between Jesus and these figures, but seldom is the quest
regarding the value of Luke's categorization for the stu

[22] Josephus' attitude is similar to that of Luke in that he paints Theudas, the E
other sign-prophets as 'charlatans' by using the word γόης to describe them; this
connects them in Josephus' mind to such notorious deceivers as the failed
Pharaoh's court (*Ant.* 2.13.3 §286; cf. *Ag. Ap.* 2.14 §145), John of Gischala (*J.W*
Justus of Tiberias (*Vita* 9 §40), and Castor (*J.W.* 5.7.4 §317); see Barnett, 'Sig
681; also Otto Betz, 'Das Problem des Wunders bei Flavius Josephus im Ve
Wunderproblem bei den Rabbinen und im Johannesevangelium', *Josephus-St*
schrift für O. Michel; ed. O. Betz, K. Haacker, and M. Hengel; Göttingen: Var
Ruprecht, 1974) 25–34.

[23] In addition to Barnett and Sanders, see S. G. F. Brandon, *Jesus and th*
Study of the Political Factor in Early Christianity (New York: Scribners, 19
Hengel, *The Charismatic Leader and His Followers* (New York: Crossroad,
Theissen, *Sociology of Early Palestinian Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fort
David Hill, 'Jesus and Josephus's Messianic Prophets', *Text and Interpretation*
the New Testament Presented to M. Black (Cambridge: Cambridge University,
54; Paula Fredriksen, *From Jesus to Christ* (New Haven: Yale

tation (in the form of Jesus' second coming) is still valid for the church of his own day, any possibility that Jesus himself was mistaken about the time of the end must be explicitly ruled out. The prominence of this agenda for Luke compels us to raise the question, why would Luke have been concerned to refute such an idea? Each of the gospels deals with the reinterpretation of eschatological expectations in its own way, but none is so clear as Luke–Acts, where the disciples express mistaken opinions about the end and the risen Jesus corrects them. This may indicate that the idea was current in Luke's own day that Jesus had indeed mistakenly expected some form of Jewish restoration in his own lifetime or with his own career, as Judas the Galilean, Theudas, and the Egyptian had done. The speech of Gamaliel would then serve in Luke's scheme to show that Jesus was similar to the other prophets in outward appearance, but unlike them, his mission was to be the true agent of God and he was not mistaken about God's inscrutable timetable.[22]

2. THE SPEECH OF GAMALIEL AND PRESENT-DAY CATEGORIZATIONS OF JESUS

As stated above, a number of scholars have used Judas the Galilean and Theudas, as well as the unnamed Samaritan, the Egyptian, John the Baptist, and other Jewish figures from first century Palestine in order to draw analogies to various aspects of the career of Jesus.[23] Some have recognized that Luke also saw a connection between Jesus and these figures, but seldom is the question asked regarding the value of Luke's categorization for the study of the

[22] Josephus' attitude is similar to that of Luke in that he paints Theudas, the Egyptian, and other sign-prophets as 'charlatans' by using the word γόης to describe them; this terminology connects them in Josephus' mind to such notorious deceivers as the failed magicians of Pharaoh's court (*Ant.* 2.13.3 §286; cf. *Ag. Ap.* 2.14 §145), John of Gischala (*J.W.* 4.2.1 §85), Justus of Tiberias (*Vita* 9 §40), and Castor (*J.W.* 5.7.4 §317); see Barnett, 'Sign-Prophets', 681; also Otto Betz, 'Das Problem des Wunders bei Flavius Josephus im Vergleich zum Wunderproblem bei den Rabbinen und im Johannesevangelium', *Josephus-Studien* (Festschrift für O. Michel; ed. O. Betz, K. Haacker, and M. Hengel; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1974) 25–34.

[23] In addition to Barnett and Sanders, see S. G. F. Brandon, *Jesus and the Zealots: A Study of the Political Factor in Early Christianity* (New York: Scribners, 1967); Martin Hengel, *The Charismatic Leader and His Followers* (New York: Crossroad, 1981); Gerd Theissen, *Sociology of Early Palestinian Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978); David Hill, 'Jesus and Josephus's Messianic Prophets', *Text and Interpretation: Studies in the New Testament Presented to M. Black* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1979) 143–54; Paula Fredriksen, *From Jesus to Christ* (New Haven: Yale University, 1988).

historical Jesus.[24] Luke's information about Jesus is not direct, but has at least been processed through Mark and other sources, presumably including Q. His implicit categorization of Jesus with Judas the Galilean and Theudas, however, was not suggested to him by his source Mark, although Mark 13.21–2 par. may be an indirect allusion to Theudas, the Egyptian and other 'false' prophets. Still, Mark presents Jesus as an eschatological figure in some sense (Mark 1.15; chapter 13), and it is possible that Luke takes his cues from that depiction, and not from any independent knowledge he has about the historical Jesus. Given this problem, Jesus could have been virtually any type of figure (even a cynic philosopher), and the attribution to him of apocalyptic thinking or other 'sign-prophet' characteristics could have been a later stage in the development of Christianity.[25] Knowledge by Christians, non-Christians or even anti-Christians of the activities of Theudas, Judas and others could have influenced the stories they told about Jesus. Thus, the question becomes: is the implicit (albeit apologetically rejected) categorization of Jesus in the speech of Gamaliel of any value at all in a study of the historical Jesus? In what follows I will argue that a case can be made for an answer in the affirmative.

Concerning Luke's reliance upon Mark, we must remember that Mark's depiction of Jesus is already highly apologetic in its attempt to show the necessity for the Messiah's suffering and death (Mark 8.27–33). Mark does not depict Jesus as the confident yet deluded revolutionary or sign-prophet, which depiction underlies Luke's apologetic use of Judas and Theudas. Thus, in the speech of Gamaliel Luke is not responding to some categorization of Jesus he picked up from Mark, but rather he is responding to the same issue of Christian history that Mark was, just in a different way. Both Mark and Luke attempt to show that the events which happened (Jesus' crucifixion and the beginning of a new religious movement) were part of God's plan all along.[26]

Concerning the possible modelling of the Jesus story after the pattern of Judas, Theudas, or the Egyptian, we can be fairly certain that no Christian (including Luke) would want to initiate such a

[24] See, for example, Robert M. Grant, *Jesus After the Gospels: The Christ of the Second Century* (Louisville: John Knox/Westminster, 1990) 26; Theissen, *Sociology*, 60–1; Horsley, '"Like One of the Prophets of Old"', 444.

[25] As noted above in n. 4, Burton Mack and Ron Cameron are two major proponents of this view.

[26] Cf. 1 Cor 1.23: 'Christ crucified' is a stumbling block no matter how you slice it; see Lindars, *New Testament Apologetic*, passim.

process. From both Josephus and Luke we learn that tl
ments did not achieve their goals, and we also know
Christians of a later time warned about false prophetic r
(Mark 13.21–3 par.). It seems highly unlikely that any
source would want to paint the Christian hero in te
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Gamaliel in Luke's writings is significant; it is likely tl
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Luke is often discounted as a historical source, and this
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process. From both Josephus and Luke we learn that these movements did not achieve their goals, and we also know that many Christians of a later time warned about false prophetic movements (Mark 13.21–3 par.). It seems highly unlikely that any Christian source would want to paint the Christian hero in terms reminiscent of failed revolutionaries or prophets. Such a characterization would certainly have a place in anti-Christian polemic, but it is unlikely that it would be invented out of whole cloth, with no basis in the historical memory of the people to whom the polemic would be directed. Thus, the very presence of the speech of Gamaliel in Luke's writings is significant; it is likely that we are dealing with a categorization of Jesus not invented by Luke. Luke is reinterpreting that categorization apologetically. The question still remains: can this ancient categorization inform the twentieth-century historian?

Luke is often discounted as a historical source, and this suspicion is valid on many details, such as the dating of Theudas' career. In addition, Luke's apologetic interests are fairly transparent: witness his elevation of Jesus over the other prophets. On some broad issues, however, we must give Luke a bit of credit. He does know about many of the major issues in early Christian history which can be checked from Paul's letters. He recognizes the debate over circumcision in the early church, even though his apologetic interests cause him to re-write some of the details of the conflict. He knows the major issues at stake at the Apostolic Conference. He knows that Paul originally persecuted the church, even though his details of where and how that persecution took place differ from and go beyond Paul's own account. He knows about Apollos as a Christian missionary in Corinth (Acts 18.27, 19.1), although he does not report any conflict with Paul, again perhaps out of apologetic concerns. He even knows about the connection between Judas the Galilean and the census of 6 CE. Given these correct insights of Luke, we should consider seriously the notion that Luke's comparison of Jesus with Theudas and Judas the Galilean may constitute evidence that there indeed *were* strong generic similarities. No doubt each figure was unique, but in looking for a heuristic category for Jesus, we should take seriously the fact that Luke apologetically rejected a categorization of Jesus with these two politico-religious, probably eschatologically focused individuals, and not with Honi the Circle Drawer or with cynic philosophers. It may also be that Josephus had made a similar category connection between Jesus and other figures; unfortunately we shall never know because whatever Josephus originally said about Jesus has been

obscured by layers of Christian tradition in the extant manuscripts of Josephus' text.[27]

To make the case stronger, we must delve into the specifics of just how Jesus might have been seen to be similar to Judas the Galilean and Theudas. Why would Luke or Luke's source mention these three in the same breath? Why do present-day scholars do so? Before beginning this inquiry, something must be said about Josephus as a source of information on Judas and Theudas. As we saw above, our two sources (Luke and Josephus) agree in broad outline on a number of features in the lives of these men. But, like Luke, Josephus has apologetic interests in recounting the history of first-century Palestine. Principally, he has an interest in dissociating himself from the excesses of the Jewish revolt; e.g. his constant assertions that, in spite of the fact that he was a revolutionary general in Galilee, all along he knew that the revolt was futile. In this regard, an early revolutionary upstart like Judas or a deluded γόης like Theudas can serve as convenient foils to indicate to his Roman and Greek audience where the real causes of the revolt lay.[28] Accounting for Josephus' negative evaluation of these figures, we can still identify points of contact that might have led Luke and/or his sources to categorize Jesus with Judas and Theudas.

Beginning with Jesus and Judas, we see that both were non-Judeans who found themselves involved to some extent in the religious and political affairs of Judea.[29] Another similarity between them is found in the fact that each of their movements continued for some time as a family operation. James, Jesus' brother, took over leadership of Jesus' followers in Jerusalem soon after Jesus'

[27] See, however, the Slavonic additions to Josephus, which are thought by some scholars to retain vestiges of Josephus' original remarks about Jesus. There Jesus is depicted as a 'wonder-worker' who, much like the Egyptian, is associated with the Mount of Olives and is at the centre of a movement of revolutionary fervour. An English translation of this text by H. St. J. Thackeray may be found in the third volume of the Loeb Classical Library edition of Josephus' works (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1961) 648–50. See also Brandon, *Jesus and the Zealots*, 359–68. For a bibliographical survey of the *status questionis*, see Louis H. Feldman, 'A Selective Critical Bibliography of Josephus', *Josephus, the Bible, and History* (ed. Louis H. Feldman and Gohei Hata; Detroit: Wayne State University, 1989) 334–40 and 429–35.

[28] Good descriptions of Josephus' *Tendenz* in this regard may be found in Tessa Rajak, *Josephus: The Historian and His Society* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984) 166–73; Shaye J. D. Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee and Rome: His Vita and Development as a Historian* (Leiden: Brill, 1979) 232–42; and Matthew Black, 'Judas of Galilee', 45–54. On p. 48, Black speaks of Josephus' 'deliberate policy, not only of denigration of the Jewish rebels *ad maiorem gloriam Romae* but also of drawing over their heroes a curtain of silent contempt'.

[29] Judas is a 'Galilean' in all of the Josephus passages except for *Ant.* 18.1.1 §4, where he is a 'man of Gaulanitis from a city named Gamala'.

death (*Ant.* 20.9.1 §200; Acts 15.13; Gal 1.19), while Ju
other kinsmen seem to have carried on Judas' legacy
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Another connecting point is the potential role of vio
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conflict.[32] Our confidence in the historicity of this part
account is heightened when we realize that Josephus
had an interest in portraying Judas in violent terms.
describes him as a skilled speaker who anticipated the
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the violence which might be perpetrated on him and h
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18.1.1 §6–10), but Judas himself is portrayed in far
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[30] Symeon, son of Jesus' uncle Clopas, was appointed 'bishop' of the Je
after the martyrdom of James. Interestingly, in Luke's story, one of the di
who most fervently hoped for the 'redemption of Israel' was Cleopas, on the R
(Luke 24.18, cf. John 19.25). See the study by Richard Bauckham, *Jude and Jesus in the Early Church* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1990).

[31] *Contra* Brandon, *Jesus and the Zealots*, 146–220.

[32] *Bandits, Prophets, and Messiahs*, 196. See especially *Ant.* 18.1.6 §23: '[
Judas] think little of submitting to death in unusual ways and of allowing
taken against their relatives and friends so that they may avoid calling an
"master".'

[33] *J.W.* 2.17.8 §433–4; *J.W.* 7.8.1 §253. Judas was not the founder of a 'zeal
sense of a continuous revolutionary movement leading to the

death (*Ant.* 20.9.1 §200; Acts 15.13; Gal 1.19), while Judas' sons and other kinsmen seem to have carried on Judas' legacy (*J.W.* 2.17.8 §433–4; 7.8.1 §253; *Ant.* 20.5.1 §97–102). Eusebius reports the testimony of Hegesippus about the grand-nephews of Jesus (grandsons of Jesus' brother Jude) who, during the reign of Domitian, were brought before the emperor to face a political charge connected to their being 'descendants of David' (*H.E.* 3.20, cf. 3.32). Eusebius summarizes Hegesippus' account of how they did admit to being of the Davidic family, but they were set free when they explained that great-uncle Jesus' kingdom was a heavenly one, not an earthly one. According to Hegesippus, being a relative of Jesus was an important criterion for leadership in the Jerusalem church (*H.E.* 4.22).[30] Unlike Judas' descendants, there is no evidence that Jesus' kinsmen played a role in the Jewish revolt of 66–70,[31] but the story from Hegesippus does show that the role of Jesus and his family could still be seen in concrete eschatological politico-religious terms as late as the 90s CE – possibly when Luke himself was writing.

Another connecting point is the potential role of violence in the movements of Jesus and Judas. As Horsley and Hanson correctly note, Josephus never explicitly states that Judas advocated a violent conflict.[32] Our confidence in the historicity of this part of Josephus' account is heightened when we realize that Josephus would have had an interest in portraying Judas in violent terms. Rather, he describes him as a skilled speaker who anticipated the help of God in a quest for independence, and he did not shrink from *accepting* the violence which might be perpetrated on him and his followers (*Ant.* 18.1.1 §5). Josephus blames Judas for sparking the revolutionary sentiment which ultimately led to a violent revolt (*Ant.* 18.1.1 §6–10), but Judas himself is portrayed in far less overtly violent terms than, for example, his son Menahem or his kinsman Eleazar.[33] In line with this view, Luke does not contrast Judas'

[30] Symeon, son of Jesus' uncle Clopas, was appointed 'bishop' of the Jerusalem church after the martyrdom of James. Interestingly, in Luke's story, one of the disciples of Jesus who most fervently hoped for the 'redemption of Israel' was Cleopas, on the Road to Emmaus (Luke 24.18, cf. John 19.25). See the study by Richard Bauckham, *Jude and the Relatives of Jesus in the Early Church* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1990).

[31] *Contra* Brandon, *Jesus and the Zealots*, 146–220.

[32] *Bandits, Prophets, and Messiahs*, 196. See especially *Ant.* 18.1.6 §23: '[The followers of Judas] think little of submitting to death in unusual ways and of allowing vengeance to be taken against their relatives and friends so that they may avoid calling any human being "master".'

[33] *J.W.* 2.17.8 §433–4; *J.W.* 7.8.1 §253. Judas was not the founder of a 'zealot' party in the sense of a continuous revolutionary movement leading to the Jewish revolt of 66 CE. This

violence with Jesus' lack of violence, but rather he focuses on Jesus' ultimate 'success' and Judas' failure. For Luke's Jesus, two swords are enough; there is to be no violence (Luke 22.35–8 and 47–53).

Of course, a number of unique features emerge from Josephus' accounts of Judas, features which have no parallel in the surviving accounts of Jesus. Judas had a concrete political agenda at a specific moment of transition in the Judean government (6 CE). As far as we can tell, Judas performed no miracles, and he did not engage in symbolic prophetic actions. His reliance on the 'divine realm' may have carried with it an urgent eschatological tone, but then again it may only have reflected the age-old biblical ideal that the God of Israel helps his servants on earth through the occasionally miraculous but usually non-miraculous processes of human history.[34] In addition, we have no evidence of Judas as a teacher other than his notion that Jews are to have no human masters. Josephus does, however, use the word σοφιστής to describe Judas; elsewhere he uses this term to designate the leaders of popular political movements, with both positive and negative connotations. He uses it in a positive sense for Judas, son of Sepphoraeus, and Matthias, son of Margalus, the two persuasive, law abiding, 'highly esteemed' martyrs who, just before the death of Herod the Great, instigated the tearing down of the golden eagle at the Temple gate (*J.W.* 1.33.2–4 §648–56; 2.1.3 §10; *Ant.* 17.6.2 §152). Josephus can also use the term derisively, as in the case of Judas the Galilean's own son Menahem (*J.W.* 2.17.9 §445).[35] Thus, while Josephus does not approve of the ultimate consequences of Judas' zeal for independence (*Ant.* 18.1.1 §6–10), his use of σοφιστής and other elements of his account do indicate the probability that Judas was an effective speaker and leader, and he had a powerful influence over many people, like the earlier Judas, Matthias, and the later Menahem.

Luke also included Theudas in the speech of Gamaliel, and it will be useful to provide a translation of the one passage in Josephus where he is mentioned:

fact has been ably demonstrated by Morton Smith, 'Zealots and Sicarii: Their Origins and Relations', *HTR* 64 (1971) 1–19; cf. Horsley and Hanson, *Bandits, Prophets, and Messiahs*, xi–xxviii.

[34] Horsley and Hanson think that Josephus' account of Judas' aims can be easily 'translated' into the 'apocalyptic idiom' (*Bandits, Prophets, and Messiahs*, 194).

[35] For another usage of σοφιστής in a pejorative sense, see *Ag.Ap.* 2.33 §236. It is quite likely that this usage reflects Josephus' polemical source material; see Seth Schwartz, *Josephus and Judean Politics* (Columbia Studies in the Classical Tradition 18; Leiden: Brill, 1990) 23.

When Fadus was governing Judea, a certain sorcerer (γόης) n
das persuaded the majority of the mob to follow him out t
river, taking their possessions with them. He said he was a
he said that at his command the river would be parted and
them easy passage. Saying these things, he deceived many.
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many prisoners. Theudas himself was captured; they cut off
they brought it to Jerusalem. These are the things which ha
Cuspius Fadus was governing the Jews. The successor to
Tiberius Alexander . . . and Alexander ordered the crucifixi
and Simon, the sons of Judas the Galilean. This was the Jud
explained above, caused the people to revolt against the R
Quirinius was taking the census of Judea. (*Ant.* 20.5.1 §97–10

Theudas fits the definition of 'sign-prophet' used by B
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may also have been in Theudas' mind.[38] Josephus doe
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with them might indicate they were trying to be exa
replication of the Joshua story. Joshua and his follow
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symbolic action should probably be understood as a precu
anticipated dramatic action of God in reclaiming Pale
the Romans, in the same way that God had delivered th
inhabitants of the land into the hands of Joshua and his f
Under Joshua there had been a combination of humar
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[36] As stated above, the fact that Judas' sons are mentioned here has given
the explanation for why Luke's chronology is confused in Acts 5.35–9. See abo

[37] See above, n. 6.

[38] Horsley gives a possible alternative understanding: Theudas and his cr
the *western* shore and hoped to gain passage *eastward*, into the wilderness for t
purifying themselves there ('"Like One of the Prophets of Old"', 457). The par
Joshua account, the Romans' violent response, and the fact that the Jordan
fords (cf. 1 Macc 9.34, 48) indicate the greater likelihood that Theudas' aim
Palestine with a symbolic miracle, not to leave it miraculously.

[39] Barnett, 'Sign Prophets', 687–8.

When Fadus was governing Judea, a certain sorcerer (γόης) named Theudas persuaded the majority of the mob to follow him out to the Jordan river, taking their possessions with them. He said he was a prophet, and he said that at his command the river would be parted and would allow them easy passage. Saying these things, he deceived many. Fadus, however, did not permit them to be successful, but he sent a squadron of cavalry against them, which, falling upon them, killed many and took many prisoners. Theudas himself was captured; they cut off his head and they brought it to Jerusalem. These are the things which happened when Cuspius Fadus was governing the Jews. The successor to Fadus was Tiberius Alexander . . . and Alexander ordered the crucifixion of James and Simon, the sons of Judas the Galilean. This was the Judas who, as I explained above, caused the people to revolt against the Romans when Quirinius was taking the census of Judea. (*Ant.* 20.5.1 §97–102)[36]

Theudas fits the definition of 'sign-prophet' used by Barnett and Sanders, whereas Judas does not.[37] It appears that Theudas was consciously reenacting Joshua's conquest of the land with its parting of the Jordan River (Josh 3.7–4.24); Moses' parting of the sea may also have been in Theudas' mind.[38] Josephus does not state that Theudas and his followers were armed (unlike the Samaritan, *Ant.* 18.4.1 §86), but the fact that the people took their possessions with them might indicate they were trying to be exact in their replication of the Joshua story. Joshua and his followers would have had all their possessions with them as they were poised to enter for the first time and to conquer the promised land. Theudas' symbolic action should probably be understood as a precursor to the anticipated dramatic action of God in reclaiming Palestine from the Romans, in the same way that God had delivered the original inhabitants of the land into the hands of Joshua and his followers.[39] Under Joshua there had been a combination of human and miraculous warfare, and one may assume that Theudas (mistakenly) anticipated a similar scenario. Fadus assessed the political implications of the episode very well, and he acted quickly to quell the 'uprising', not caring whether it was purely symbolic or a real armed threat.

[36] As stated above, the fact that Judas' sons are mentioned here has given some scholars the explanation for why Luke's chronology is confused in Acts 5.35–9. See above, n. 16.

[37] See above, n. 6.

[38] Horsley gives a possible alternative understanding: Theudas and his crowd stood on the *western* shore and hoped to gain passage *eastward*, into the wilderness for the purpose of purifying themselves there ('"Like One of the Prophets of Old"', 457). The parallel with the Joshua account, the Romans' violent response, and the fact that the Jordan has crossable fords (cf. 1 Macc 9.34, 48) indicate the greater likelihood that Theudas' aim was to enter Palestine with a symbolic miracle, not to leave it miraculously.

[39] Barnett, 'Sign Prophets', 687–8.

Where Jesus may be most closely associated with activities like those of Theudas is in the reported events of the last week of his life, with the entry into Jerusalem and the Temple cleansing. In the view of Sanders, the Temple episode was a historical incident and was meant by Jesus as a 'sign' performed with the (mistaken) expectation of dramatic, miraculous intervention into history by God.[40] It is also possible that, like Theudas' reenactment of the Joshua story, Jesus was consciously informed by a scenario of events from an ancient text: namely, Zechariah 9–14, with its prophecies of a kingly figure riding into Jerusalem on an ass (Zech 9.9), an apocalyptic cataclysm on the Mount of Olives (Zech 14.1–4) and the removal of 'merchants' (MT, LXX: 'Canaanites') from the Temple of Yahweh 'on that day' (Zech 14.21).[41]

As we noted above, many twentieth-century scholars find the analogous cases of Judas and Theudas useful as they imaginatively construct a historical description of Jesus and his movement based on the evidence from early Christian literature. Other scholars, however, with good reason, object to such an implicit classification. The career of Judas the Galilean was some twenty years before the career of Jesus, during the time of specific turmoil after the removal of Archelaus and the institution of direct Roman rule in Palestine. Thus, he might not be a suitable candidate for comparison with Jesus, whose activities took place in the relatively tranquil late 20s.[42] Likewise, Theudas' career seems to have been sparked by the death of Herod Agrippa I in 44 CE and the reimposition of direct Roman rule; again there is no comparable political event to

[40] Sanders, *Jesus*, 61–76. Craig A. Evans has effectively called into question Sanders' view that the Temple episode was not originally a 'cleansing'. I agree with Evans that Jesus' action against the Temple was motivated at least in part by a criticism of Temple corruption; this view is not incompatible with Sanders' understanding of the episode as an eschatological sign. (Evans, 'Jesus' Action in the Temple: Cleansing or Portent of Destruction?', *CBQ* 51 [1989] 237–70).

[41] Sanders inexplicably rejects the idea that Jesus might have been influenced in his actions by Zech 14.21 (*Jesus*, 367, n. 46). Horsley notes that the 'acting out' of typological patterns from Biblical texts is characteristic of Theudas, the Egyptian, and the Samaritan ('"Like One of the Prophets of Old"', 461). See also the discussion in Robert M. Grant, 'The Coming of the Kingdom', *JBL* 67 (1948) 279–303. In yet another example of biblical texts informing a first-century prophet, Jesus ben Ananias evidently saw himself as a new Jeremiah, quoting a common Jeremiah refrain as part of his prophecy of doom against the Temple (Jer 7.34, 16.9; *J.W.* 6.5.3 §300–9). There might be much to be gained from a fresh investigation of Zechariah 9–14/Malachi, the use of those texts by John the Baptist and Jesus, by Christian myth-makers at the pre-gospel stage, and by the gospel writers.

[42] Sean Freyne describes Galilee under Herod Antipas as particularly peaceful (*Galilee: From Alexander the Great to Hadrian, 323 BCE to 135 CE. A Study of Second Temple Judaism* [Wilmington, DE and South Bend, IN: Michael Glazier and Notre Dame, 1980] 68–71).

explain Jesus' activities.[43] Another objection is that in the Theudas (as well as the Samaritan and the Egyptian), the went after the followers as well as the leader, which does n to have been the case with Jesus.[44] Yet another possible ob arises from Horsley's claim that Jesus had only a few d while Theudas had a massive following.[45]

Several factors, however, serve to answer these objection one must be careful about the significance of the time-pe various figures. True, the careers of Judas the Galilean an das were sparked by specific political events, and the same r be true of John the Baptist, Jesus, and the Samaritan. Th three were active during Pilate's reign in Judea and Sama that of Herod Antipas in Galilee and Perea; there is nothing about the particular political situation which would spar activities. It is still possible, however, that their intention have been every bit as political and religious as those of Ju Galilean and Theudas. In a detail not found in the gospels, J reports that Herod Antipas feared a political uprising migh from John the Baptist's preaching (*Ant.* 18.5.2 §118). Even t pel account carries with it strong political implications, with condemnation of Herod's marriage (Mark 6.17–18).[46] Th aritan obviously harboured some sort of religious/political h his nation during Pilate's reign, even though no specific p crisis in Samaria may be identified.[47] The point of all this politico-religious movements could arise at any time in Palestine; a specific explanatory crisis is not always necessar

Second, the argument that the Romans only crucified Je not his followers is significant, but the traditions do contain

[43] Burton Mack in particular raises these objections (*Myth of Innocence*, 50–2 his article, 'All the Extra Jesuses: Christian Origins in Light of the Extra-Cano pels', *The Apocryphal Jesus and Christian Origins* (ed. Ron Cameron; Semeia 4 Scholars, 1990) 169–76.

[44] Arguing this point is Sean Freyne, *Galilee, Jesus, and the Gospels: Approaches and Historical Investigations* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988) 220. Thi is also discussed by Sanders, *Jesus*, 303–4.

[45] Horsley, '"Like One of the Prophets of Old"', 454.

[46] See Walter Wink, *John the Baptist in the Gospels* (Cambridge University, 1 10; J. D. M. Derrett, 'Herod's Oath and the Baptist's Head', *BZ* 9 (1965) 49–59 ar Ernst Bammel, 'The Baptist in Early Christian Tradition', *NTS* 18 (1971) 95–12 Murphy-O'Connor, 'John the Baptist and Jesus: History and Hypotheses', *NTS* 359–74.

[47] It is possible that the Samaritan's activities presuppose Samaritan expectat *Taheb*, an eschatological redeemer figure like Moses; see J. MacDonald, *The T the Samaritans* (London: SCM, 1964) 362–5; J. Bowman, *The Samaritan Probl* burgh: Pickwick, 1975) 29–31 and Horsley, '"Like One of the Prophets of Old"', 45

explain Jesus' activities.[43] Another objection is that in the case of Theudas (as well as the Samaritan and the Egyptian), the Romans went after the followers as well as the leader, which does not seem to have been the case with Jesus.[44] Yet another possible objection arises from Horsley's claim that Jesus had only a few disciples while Theudas had a massive following.[45]

Several factors, however, serve to answer these objections. First, one must be careful about the significance of the time-periods of various figures. True, the careers of Judas the Galilean and Theudas were sparked by specific political events, and the same may not be true of John the Baptist, Jesus, and the Samaritan. The latter three were active during Pilate's reign in Judea and Samaria and that of Herod Antipas in Galilee and Perea; there is nothing known about the particular political situation which would spark their activities. It is still possible, however, that their intentions could have been every bit as political and religious as those of Judas the Galilean and Theudas. In a detail not found in the gospels, Josephus reports that Herod Antipas feared a political uprising might result from John the Baptist's preaching (*Ant.* 18.5.2 §118). Even the gospel account carries with it strong political implications, with John's condemnation of Herod's marriage (Mark 6.17–18).[46] The Samaritan obviously harboured some sort of religious/political hopes for his nation during Pilate's reign, even though no specific political crisis in Samaria may be identified.[47] The point of all this is that politico-religious movements could arise at any time in pre-70 Palestine; a specific explanatory crisis is not always necessary.

Second, the argument that the Romans only crucified Jesus and not his followers is significant, but the traditions do contain echoes

[43] Burton Mack in particular raises these objections (*Myth of Innocence*, 50–2). See also his article, 'All the Extra Jesuses: Christian Origins in Light of the Extra-Canonical Gospels', *The Apocryphal Jesus and Christian Origins* (ed. Ron Cameron; Semeia 49; Atlanta: Scholars, 1990) 169–76.

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[47] It is possible that the Samaritan's activities presuppose Samaritan expectation of the *Taheb*, an eschatological redeemer figure like Moses; see J. MacDonald, *The Theology of the Samaritans* (London: SCM, 1964) 362–5; J. Bowman, *The Samaritan Problem* (Pittsburgh: Pickwick, 1975) 29–31 and Horsley, '"Like One of the Prophets of Old"', 459.

of early fears. According to the *Gospel of Peter* 7.26, the disciples hid themselves from the Jewish authorities because there was a suspicion that they wanted to 'burn the Temple'. Mark 14.50 and Matt 26.56 presuppose that most of the disciples fled (apparently to Galilee) at Jesus' arrest, presumably out of fear (cf. John 20.19). Furthermore, in surviving accounts of John the Baptist from the gospels and Josephus, we see that Herod did not go after John's followers, even though he perceived John as a potential political threat. Pilate only executed the 'principal leaders and those who were most influential' among the followers of the Samaritan (*Ant.* 18.4.1 §87). From the point of view of some governing authorities in first-century Palestine, preemptively killing the leader(s) of a trouble-making group was sufficient to quell the disturbance and stir up fear among the followers (cf. *Ant.* 20.1.1 §4–5, where Fadus put an end to brigandage by making an example of a few).

Finally, we cannot base much on the relative size of the Theudas and Jesus movements. The Jesus of the gospels is reported to have attracted large crowds at certain points of his ministry (e.g., initial healings, preaching events, the feeding miracles, the entry into Jerusalem). Just because the movement continued as a relatively small one after Jesus' death does not rule out the possibility that large numbers had been interested and affected during his lifetime. The frustration of eschatological hopes could account for the falling away of all but the small number of 'true believers'.

3. CONCLUSIONS

In the speech of Gamaliel, Acts 5.35–9, Luke strenuously rejected the notion that Jesus should be considered on the same level as Judas the Galilean and Theudas, but in doing so he showed that in outward appearances at least, one could make a generic connection among the three. It is unlikely that Luke would want to introduce Judas and Theudas in such an apologetic fashion if there were no danger that historical reminiscence and/or anti-Christian propaganda might reduce Jesus to the status of just another failed revolutionary or prophet. Historical reminiscence may possibly be seen in Hegesippus' account of the treatment of Jesus' grandnephews: in or around Luke's time, Jesus and his kinsmen were still thought to have had concrete eschatological politico-religious aims. Anti-Christian propaganda based on this understanding of Jesus may be seen through Luke's own apologetic preoccupation with saving Jesus from mistaken eschatological expectations. There probably was a real criticism of Jesus on that very score

during the time at which Luke was writing. In my vie apologetic use of Judas the Galilean and Theudas incr likelihood of an originally eschatological Jesus (some takenly expecting dramatic events with his own career) been de-politicized and de-eschatologized by later Chri dition, including Mark and Luke.[48] There is every reas pose that this same eschatological Jesus was responsible f some of the Jewish wisdom and prophetic traditions re in the Q sayings, much as Judas the Galilean was a politi utionary (perhaps expecting God's imminent miraculous history), an eloquent speaker, and a theologian, all at time.[49] We should not presume that these first-century c were unidimensional. None of the three figures forms parallel to any of the others (i.e., every individual is unique speech of Gamaliel may help us to be more confident whe Jesus in the Jewish eschatological politico-religious realm the Galilean and Theudas.

In his implicit categorization of Jesus, Luke has anti number of contemporary scholars by some 1900 years.[ticular, those like E. P. Sanders and Paula Fredriksen, wh highlight the apocalyptic eschatology of Jesus and his m may want to add this analysis of Luke to their arsen scholars, like Burton Mack or Marcus Borg,[51] who wis the imminent eschatological focus of Jesus and some of hi followers, may want to look more closely at the speech of and its implications.

[48] Jesus in Mark and Luke is still a teacher on eschatological subjects in tha the future end of the age to his disciples (Mark 13 and Luke 21). In both gosp Jesus is aware that quite some time will pass (at least until the gospels are w all those things take place.

[49] For the connections between Q and the prophetic traditions, see M. Sato, *phetie* (WUNT 2. Reihe; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1988). I scholarship on Q claims that in the earliest stages of its composition it sapiential sayings and that the prophetic/eschatological sayings were added lat S. Kloppenborg, *The Formation of Q: Trajectories in Ancient Wisdom Collec* delphia: Fortress, 1987) 244–5. Kloppenborg is careful to point out, however, th history is not convertible with literary history' (245). In other words, just beca of Jesus is deemed to be a secondary addition to the Q-collection does not antiquity or even its authenticity.

[50] For example, Luke's apologetic is similar to that of Martin Hengel, C *Leader*, 57 and 65–9. Hengel, too, claims that Jesus was superior to Judas and his self-understanding of his mission and his relationship to God. Sande refutes this kind of scholarly apology for Jesus (*Jesus and Judaism*, 240).

[51] Marcus Borg, 'A Temperate Case for a Non-Eschatological Jesus', *Foun Facets Forum* 2/3 (September, 1986) 81–102; see also *idem*, *Jesus: A New Vi Culture, and the Life of Discipleship* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987).

during the time at which Luke was writing. In my view, Luke's apologetic use of Judas the Galilean and Theudas increases the likelihood of an originally eschatological Jesus (somehow mistakenly expecting dramatic events with his own career) who has been de-politicized and de-eschatologized by later Christian tradition, including Mark and Luke.[48] There is every reason to suppose that this same eschatological Jesus was responsible for at least some of the Jewish wisdom and prophetic traditions represented in the Q sayings, much as Judas the Galilean was a political revolutionary (perhaps expecting God's imminent miraculous action in history), an eloquent speaker, and a theologian, all at the same time.[49] We should not presume that these first-century characters were unidimensional. None of the three figures forms a precise parallel to any of the others (i.e., every individual is unique), but the speech of Gamaliel may help us to be more confident when locating Jesus in the Jewish eschatological politico-religious realm of Judas the Galilean and Theudas.

In his implicit categorization of Jesus, Luke has anticipated a number of contemporary scholars by some 1900 years.[50] In particular, those like E. P. Sanders and Paula Fredriksen, who wish to highlight the apocalyptic eschatology of Jesus and his movement, may want to add this analysis of Luke to their arsenal. Other scholars, like Burton Mack or Marcus Borg,[51] who wish to deny the imminent eschatological focus of Jesus and some of his earliest followers, may want to look more closely at the speech of Gamaliel and its implications.

[48] Jesus in Mark and Luke is still a teacher on eschatological subjects in that he foretells the future end of the age to his disciples (Mark 13 and Luke 21). In both gospels, however, Jesus is aware that quite some time will pass (at least until the gospels are written) before all those things take place.

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[50] For example, Luke's apologetic is similar to that of Martin Hengel, *Charismatic Leader*, 57 and 65–9. Hengel, too, claims that Jesus was superior to Judas and Theudas in his self-understanding of his mission and his relationship to God. Sanders explicitly refutes this kind of scholarly apology for Jesus (*Jesus and Judaism*, 240).

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