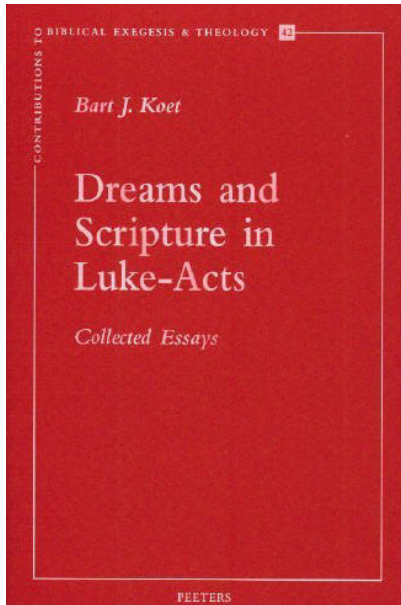


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**Koet, Bart J.**

***Dreams and Scripture in Luke-Acts: Collected Essays***

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This is a valuable collection of studies, all first published between 1992 and 2005. In a previous book of essays based on his dissertation (see 173 n. 3: *Five Studies on the Interpretation of Scripture in Luke-Acts* [SNTA 14; Leuven, 1989]), Koet established the proposal upon which this collection builds: “in Luke-Acts the issue is not the rejection of Israel, but rather the salvation of the Gentiles” (3, 72, 106, 141, 171, 184, 193, 208). In these essays he again attends closely to the “critical *hermeneutical* role” Israel’s scriptures play “in shaping the entirety of Luke’s narrative” (3), but he also introduces the interpretation of dreams as “another way of gaining knowledge in Greek, Roman and Jewish circles.” In Jewish circles, both dreams and scripture “were seen as ways of learning God’s will. The terminologies used for both interpretation of Scripture and interpretation of dreams are remarkably similar” (2). Koet also suggests his studies are offered “as contributions to a chart to be” (5) of Luke’s interpretive background. Knowing that such a chart will never be complete, he presents these essays as exploring “the connections between interpretation of Scripture and the phenomenon of dreams” (5).

The essays devote the preponderance of their attention to Luke as a Second Temple interpreter of Israel’s scriptures. In several essays Koet deals briefly, but not extensively, with “dream theories of the Hellenistic world” (7, 12, 31, 157–64), but he is generally

more interested in “biblical orientated traditions” where “scripture could be used as a criterion for evaluating a dream as trustworthy,” that is, “really from God” (31). Aware of the need to “see the relation between the more Greco-Roman elements of Luke’s Hellenism and the more Jewish ones” (4), Koet’s studies substantially enrich the intra-Jewish dimensions of Luke’s scriptural hermeneutics while also alerting the reader to their intercultural environment. Paul’s testimony in Acts 26:26 to the Roman procurator Festus and King Agrippa about the character of the Jesus movement could also describe Luke’s public interpretations of Israel’s scriptures: “These things were not done in a corner.”

The volume includes nine essays, grouped in three sections. The four essays in section 1, “Studies in Luke-Acts,” deal with “themes related to interpretation of Scripture in Luke-Acts in general,” contributing “insights into the way in which the author designed Luke-Acts as a unity” (5).

1. “Why Does Jesus Not Dream? Divine Communication in Luke-Acts.” This essay responds to the suggestion that “in the New Testament dreaming was far less important than in the OT” (11; e.g., Oepke *TWNT*; see also 28). Koet first documents the extensive use of dream-visions in Acts and compares these divine communications with contemporary Jewish sources where scriptural accounts are formative. In the dreams, Luke scores the same point as in the scriptural interpretations: “in all of these visions, *the same message* is revealed: the Gentile mission is a divine command (16). In the Gospel, Luke’s emphasis on Jesus’ prayers and his role as a Mosaic prophet mean that, like Moses, Jesus does not need dreams because he speaks face to face with God.

2. “Trustworthy Dreams? About Dreams and References to Scripture in 2 Maccabees 14–15, Josephus’ *Antiquitates Judaicae* 11,302–347 and in the New Testament.” “It is the thesis of this article that in Jewish circles of the Second Temple Period, dreams could also be used as propaganda, but especially those dreams were trustworthy which were related in one way or another to Scripture” (25). Sweeping through a broad range of dream stories in varied sources, Koet does not contribute precision to the term “propaganda,” but he identifies a credible pattern of crediting dreams as trustworthy when legitimated by a subsequent divine communication or the confirmation of scripture.

3. “Isaiah in Luke-Acts.” This essay is a many-faceted gem, illuminating sequentially “all explicit quotations from Isaiah and allusions to Isaiah texts, which are quoted elsewhere in Acts” (54). The task is vast in scope and bold in its arguments. Koet’s observation that “the Isaiah, which is used by Luke, is an interpreted Isaiah” opens windows to the ways “possible meanings of Isaiah were mediated by other Jewish writings of the last four centuries BCE” (75). This promising insight is made almost in passing in this essay (but

see ch. 6). The focus of the study is on how the Isaianic themes are enacted by Jesus and explicated in Acts. The conclusion again scores Koet's point: "Luke finds in Isaiah an authority for his defence of the Gentile mission" (78).

4. "Purity and Impurity of the Body in Luke-Acts." Koet observes that much New Testament scholarship is ignorant of the importance and complexity of purity regulations in Second Temple Jewish sources, including the New Testament. Responding with both appreciation and criticism to the work of Jerome Neyrey, Koet argues that "Luke depicts Jesus and other important figures of Luke-Acts as law-abiding and conscious of purity regulations (86). His rich list of examples from beyond and within the New Testament makes the essay worth reading, even by those who will see he underestimated the contribution of Neyrey's social-anthropological analysis. More significantly, Koet again draws the reader inside the scriptural faith and practice of Luke's social world.

Two essays in section 2, "Studies in Luke 2," are focused on Luke's use of biblical passages in the prophetic portrayals of Simeon and Anna.

5. "Simeons Worte (Lk 2,29–32.34c–35) und Israels Geschick." Robert Tannehill (*The Narrative Unity of Luke Acts* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986]) is Koet's conversation partner in this excellent essay. "Das Ziel dieses Artikels soll aufzuzeigen, dass Tannehills Zweifel an einer letztendlich heilvollen Zukunft Israels nicht fundiert sind" (101). This argument is crucial to Koet's larger proposal. The inner coherence of Simeon's oracles is programmatic for Luke's narrative, not to foreshadow the ultimate tragedy of Israel, but to announce the prophetic fulfillment of Israel's calling in the apostolic Gentile mission.

6. "Holy Place and Hannah's Prayer: A comparison of *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* 50–51 and Luke 2,22–39 a propos 1 Sam 1–2." This essay is an exploratory investigation of the extent to which "material peculiar to Luke preserves a strand of Judaism which can be found in Jewish literature, originating in the second half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE" (123). Focused on Pseudo-Philo's use of the Hannah and Samuel stories, Koet argues that Luke's account of Elizabeth "uses themes of the Hannah-tradition not only from the Bible but even from the Anna traditions such as those in LAB as a background to Luke 2,22–39" (135). Without endorsing all of Koet's specific comparisons, his essay shows how fruitful it can be to view Luke's interpretation of the scriptures among, and not over against, Jewish scriptural interpreters of Luke's era.

Section 3, "Acts 16 and Acts 18," includes three essays on the interpretation of dreams and scripture in these two chapters of Acts.

7. "Im Schatten des Aeneas: Paulus in Troas (Apg 16,8–10)." This essay probably should have been a monograph. Its objectives are monumental (148), yet in Koet's consistent fashion, disparate insights are aligned to contribute to his thesis: "dass Ost und West durch den Schritt von Paulus verbunden werden in die legitime, neue Phase in seiner Mission" (149). Koet argues for the strategic literary and theological significance of these few verses. He expounds the symbolic identity of Troas and explores the cultural context of the location for the value of dreams and visions, fulfilled and unfulfilled, all the way back to Homer. These few verses are a window into the larger world where "Die Leser von Lukas waren wesentlich auch durch die hellenistisch roemischen Kultur gepraeagt" (166). The similarities to dreams and visions that legitimated Greek and Roman rulers suggest to Koet that Luke is invoking another dimension of divine approval. "Lukas hat hier hellenisiert, aber zugleich implizit die roemische Praetension kritisiert. Nicht Augustus, sondern Jesus ist der Herr (siehe Lk 2,1f). Er hat die Legitimation der Heidenmission in ein hellenistische Gewand gekleidet und damit fuer seine hellenistischen Leser uebersetzt" (171).

8. "As Close to the Synagogue as Can Be: Paul in Corinth (Acts 18,1–8)." This essay focuses on Paul's harsh pronouncement of warning (18:6) on those who rejected his preaching in the synagogue in Corinth. Enacting the script of the watchman in Ezekiel, Paul is "using words and gestures resembling those of the prophets" to stress "his authority as a teacher and the fact that he has fulfilled his duties" (184). He is not rejecting Israel but fulfilling Israel's call to be a light to the Gentiles. His contacts with Jewish audiences remain close (next door!), and he does not regard his opposition as "referring to the whole of Israel" (187). Luke's confidence in Paul's continuing engagement in Israel's calling is confirmed by the Lord's claim in a vision to Paul to "many people (*laos*) in this city" (including Gentiles: 18:10) and Gallio's interpretation of the intra-Jewish character of the dispute.

9. "Why Did Paul Shave His Hair (Acts 18,18)? Nazirite and Temple in the Book of Acts." After sorting through a variety of historical details about Nazirite vows, Koet argues that Luke's description of Paul is intended to answer the accusations in Acts 18 that Paul is not adequately law-abiding. "Concerning the Law, he himself, however, fulfils more than the maximum, as is clear for 18,18. This implies that for Luke the mission among the Gentiles is in faithfulness towards the Law" (208).