Pronominal Antecedence in Discourse

As Applied to New Testament Studies

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Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to present the results of a study about pronouns and their antecedents and to apply those results to Biblical texts and compare the way that New Testament scholars have treated pronominal antecedence. For purposes of brevity, this paper primarily is limited to personal pronouns, with a few demonstrative pronouns treated also. No particular linguistic model, such as transfomational grammar, government and binding, or games-theoretical semantics, is adhered to, although information has come from articles and books using all these models and more. In this paper, no distinction is being made between the words pronoun and pronominal, other than to treat the former as a noun and the latter as its adjective.

underline words cited as words

The research represented in this paper is primarily on English pronouns, although the New Testament was originally written in Koiné Greek. This is necessitated in part by the fact that, with the exception of relative and demonstrative pronouns, not much work has been done on the antecedence of pronouns in Koiné Greek. In fact, not much work has been done in this area on any language except English (Berent 50). A couple of articles have appeared on Modern Greek (Kazazis; Iatridon), but it would be hasty to apply their results to Koiné.

And yet there are enough similarities between English and Koiné Greek to at least allow research to begin in English in order to establish categories. Both languages share similar types of pronouns: personal, indefinite,

relative, demonstrative, etc. Both have three genders, although English only shows that gender for third person singular personal pronouns (he, she, and it). Both use a case system, although Greek has pronouns in four cases while English only uses three. While Greek has the indefinite object in the dative case to distinguish it from the direct object in the accusative case, English uses the objective case for both types of objects, with reliance on word order to distinguish them.

But there are also differences between the two languages. Greek has pronominal endings on each of its finite verbs which can take the place of a subject word in a sentence. When free-standing pronouns are used in the nominative case, they thus become emphatic due to the double use of pronouns and pronominal endings. These are translated into English as simply free-standing pronouns and will be treated as such in the final section of this paper, but the reader needs to keep this difference in mind. It perhaps helps to account for a seemingly more extensive use of pronouns in Koiné Greek than in Modern English.

Some terms need to be defined before going further. Perhaps Hirst gives some of the best definitions:

> ANAPHORA is the device of making a discourse an ABBREVIATED reference to some entity (or entities) in the expectation that the perceiver of the discourse will be able to disabbreviate the reference and thereby determine the identity of the entity. The reference is called an ANAPHOR, and the entity to which it refers is its REFERENT or ANTECEDENT. A reference and its referent are said to be COREFERENTIAL (4).

He later states, "Strictly speaking, a reference which textually precedes its referent is called a CATAPHOR. Cataphors and anaphors are together called

ENDOPHORS" (5). In the literature, the reader will occasionally see cataphors referred to as "backward anaphors," while anaphors are called "forward anaphors." This is a most unhappy choice since "backward anaphors" refer to antecedents in the textual foreground, while "forward anaphors" refer to antecedents in the textual background. Needless to say, this paper will avoid such confusing terminology.

Although the terms referent and antecedent are often used interchangably, as Hirsh has indicated above, in this paper the term antecedent will be used because of the conviction that the true referent of a pronoun is a mental construct rather than the antecedent. This is seen in Evans' definition of coreference as a situation in which "the pronoun refers to whatever the antecedent refers to" (346). Brown and Yule have made a good case that the reference is not to the antecedent but to a semantic conception which may have changed since the antecedent was mentioned (201-204). In example (1) below the antecedent and first pronoun refer to whole apples, while the second pronoun refers to cored apples.

(1) Take two whole apples. Wash and core them. Then place them in a pan. This concept will prove especially useful in the consideration of bound pronouns.

The Nature of Pronouns

Evans has said that there are four types of pronouns (337). The first are pronouns which refer "to an object (or objects) present in the shared perceptual environment, or rendered salient in some other way" (337). Such pronouns are sometimes referred to as exophors, or pragmatic anaphoras (Hirsh 7), or deictic pronouns (Blass, Debrunner, and Funk 151). The second type of pronouns are those "which are intended to be understood as being coreferential with a referring expression occurring elsewhere in the sentence" (Evans 337)

or recent discourse. The term "recent discourse" is added in the conviction that pronouns should be studied from a discourse level and not from a sentence level. This should become obvious to the reader in the examples given below and it will prove of the utmost importance in looking at Koiné Greek. This is the type of pronoun usually thought of when one thinks of pronouns and is the type primarily dealt with in this paper.

The third type of pronouns are those "which have quantifier expressions as antecedents" (Evans 337). These are often referred to as bound variables. These are illustrated by (2) and (3) below, taken from Reinhart (116) and Evans (337), respectively:

(2) Every man who owns a donkey beats <u>it</u>.

(3) Every man loves <u>his</u> mother.

(4) Every man who owns a donkey beats a donkey.

(5) Every man loves every man's mother.

(6) Every man who owns a donkey beats the donkey which he owns.

(7) Every man loves every man's own mother.

Example (2) does not mean the same as (4), but the same as (6). Example (3) does not mean the same as (5), but the same as (7). Simple replacement of the pronoun with the antecedent does not give a true picture with bound pronouns.

Evans suggests that there is a fourth type of pronoun, which he calls an "E-type pronoun" (337-338). This is a pronoun which has a quantifier expression as an antecedent, but which is not bound by that quantifier. Webber (1-16) has provided a couple of good examples illustrating the difference between types three and four, found below as examples (8) and (9):

(8) Several linguists smoke, although <u>they</u> know it causes cancer.

(9) Few linguists smoke. <u>They</u> know it causes cancer.

"They" in example (8) is a bound pronoun, referring to "several linguists."

But "they" in example (9) is an "E-type," referring to all linguists, not just the few who smoke.

Dr. Robert Reddick has, in the class for which this paper is prepared, pointed out that there is still another type of pronoun: that which has no antecedent in the text. This is illustrated by example (10) below:

(10) He who laughs last laughs best.

Here "he" is the antecedent of "who", but "he" has only a conceptual antecedent, not one in the text.

This paper will focus on the type-two pronouns which have antecedents in the text. Hirst points out that those antecedents can be nouns or noun phrases, sets of people or objects, products of previously described actions, or associational implications (5-7). While English handbooks of writing usually discourage the last two, they do exist and are understood by people. One type of associational implication especially discouraged is reference to a noun implied by an adjective in the text. Crews gives an example of a writer who spoke of "French generals" and then used "she" to refer to "France" (190). Such references are not always clear, but people do use them. But he is wrong to object to the sentence in example (11), which does not have an adjectival antecedent as he says it does.

(11) The sherry bottle was empty, but we were tired of drinking it anyway.

He takes sherry as the antecedent, and questions the use "drink the bottle" (190). But by metonymy English says "drink the bottle, glass, cup, etc." and is referring to the contents of the container. Here bottle is the antecedent but it is a metaphor for sherry. Hirst (47) even gives an example where bottle is used in both a metaphorical and literal sense, found in example (12) below:

(12) Ross drank the bottle and threw it away.

It also needs to be noted that the antecedent can be that which is the discourse topic or theme or which is in focus at the minute. Hirst gives several examples, which are too lengthy to quote, showing that the antecedent can occur several sentences previous to the pronoun if it is the focus (57-58). This will prove important when we turn to narrative passages in the New Testament.

Determination of Antecedence

Karmiloff-Smith lists four rules which linguists have devised to try to explain how a person determines what the antecedent of a pronoun is (232-233). None of the four are sufficient of themselves nor even taken together. They seem to represent tendencies rather than rules for understanding. She labels them a) parallel function strategy, b) conservation of semantic role, c) minimum distance principle, and d) use of non-ambiguous gender distinctions. The first says that a pronoun in the second conjunct of a complex sentence is interpreted as being co-referential with the noun phrase that has the parallel grammatical function in the first conjunct. This means that if the pronoun is a subject, it tends to have as an antecedent a noun phrase which is a subject, and if it is an object, it tends to have an antecedent which is an object. The second is similar, but replaces the semantic roles of agent and patient for the syntactical ones of subject and object. The third is that a pronoun often has as an antecedent the last-mentioned noun or noun phrase. Even though this was suggested by Chomsky in 1969, we will see that it is violated so often as to be unuseful. The fourth states that a pronoun will have as an antecedent a noun or noun phrase of the same gender as the pronoun.

This fourth principle has been expanded by Horvath and Rochemont, among others, to include number and person: "Any discourse-prior argument may serve as antecedent for a pronoun if they both agree in features: person, number,

gender" (762). That the adjective "any" is too strong will soon become apparent, for antecedents are semantically restricted by co-occurence possibilities. It also needs to be modified in several ways as regards number and person. A collective singular noun can serve as antecedent for either a singular or plural pronoun, depending on whether it is the unit as a whole or its constituent parts which are in focus (Leggett, Mead, and Charvat 86). The third person plural personal pronoun (they and their) can refer to an indefinite singular antecedent (Webster's 2370, 2374), although such usage is discouraged by writers' handbooks (Leggett, Mead, and Charvat 93). Person is not conserved across quotation marks, and Hintikka and Kulas (127) give example (13) as proof that person can vary from pronoun to antecedent even in non-quotations:

(13) If I were you, I wouldn't marry me.

Here "I" in the second clause refers to "you" in the first, while "me" in the second refers to "I" in the first. Gender is much more consistent, although in areas where English is spoken as a second language and the primary language does not show gender, such as the Navajo Reservation, one will sometimes hear "her" used in reference to a man and "him" to a woman. But with these exceptions, gender, number, and person are usually the same for a pronoun and its antecedent.

One concept which has not been greatly discussed in determining the antecedent of a pronoun is that of what may be called "polarity." Webber uses the term to describe "the reverse polarity determiner 'not many'" which she says "acts like 'few' . . ., the opposite of 'many'" (2-16). The concept is related to the idea of negation as used by Lamb (45), who analyzes "little" on the semantic stratum as being "not big." In speaking of polarity, however, the reference is not merely to negation. It is more like the left and right

hand columns in Roget's <u>Thesaurus</u>. The concept is vague at this point, but a look at some additional data will make it more apparent.

The methodology for the next several paragraphs will be to take various sentences with more than one potential antecedent and modify the sentence in various ways so as to change the antecedent from one word to another. An analysis of each change will lead to conclusions about the various factors which go into determining antecedence. In an effort to show that antecedence is affected on a discourse level, rather than a sentence level, some of the sentences will be embedded in varying contexts to change the antecedent.

The first sentence to examine is the ambiguous example (14) taken from Leggett, Mead, and Charvat (89) and its rewritings (15) and (16) which have clear antecedents:

(14) Jack told Carl that <u>he</u> was ungrateful.

(15) Jack confessed to Carl that <u>he</u> was ungrateful.

(16) Jack accusingly said to Carl that <u>he</u> was ungrateful.

In sentence (14) the pronoun "he" may refer to either Jack or Carl. But by changing the verb as in (15), "he" clearly refers to Jack. This seems to be because the verb "confessed" attaches a negative polarity to the agent, in this case Jack, and "ungrateful" has a negative polarity which agrees with the agent. On the other hand, by changing the verb as in (16), "he" clearly refers to Carl. This is because the verb "accuse" attaches a negative polarity to the patient, in this case Carl, and "ungrateful" thus agrees with the patient. Thus antecedence is determined by semantic agreement of polarity between characteristics.

Cowan has shown that words which describe psychological processes (like "bore," "amaze," and "astound" on the one hand, and "fear" and "love" on the other) are associated with pronouns that are the subject or object (more

correctly agent or patient) of the verb depending on the viewpoint of a presumed thinker (110). Consider examples (17) through (20) below:

(17) Bill told Harry that John bored him.

(18) Bill told Harry that he bored John.

(19) Bill told Harry that he liked John.

(20) Bill told John that Harry liked him.

Sentences (18) and (20) are ambiguous, but (17) and (19) are not. In (17) "him" is the patient of a verb "bored" that describes action where the thinker is viewed as a patient. In the same way, in (19) "he" is the agent of a verb "liked" that describes action where the thinker is viewed as an agent. The verb "told" implies a thinker as agent, and thus Bill become the antecedent in (17) and (19). Thus antecedence is determined by agreement of psychological processes.

Hirst (45) gives two examples which show a similar agreement using semantic concepts. They are found as (20) and (21) below:

(20) Ross asked Daryel to hold his books for a minute.

(21) Ross asked Daryel to hold his breath for a minute.

In example (21) the pronoun "his" refers to Daryel since it is not possible for Daryel to hold Ross' breath. In example (20) "his" most naturally refers to Ross since the request "Hold my books for a minute" is very common and the use of the infinitive phrase here is a type of indirect quotation. It is possible, however, to conceive of contexts in which Ross would ask Daryel to hold his own books. Here antecedence is determined by idioms and common expressions.

An example which comes from a discussion in the class for which this paper is written is the sentence in example (22). The context of the sentence is a discussion of the 1988 World Series of baseball.

(22) The Dodgers beat the A's because they were the better team.

Here the pronoun "they" clearly refers to the Dodgers. The verb "beat" attaches a positive polarity to the agent and a negative polarity to the patient. Since "better" has a positive polarity, it is associated with the agent of "beat", which in this case is the Dodgers. In examples (23) through (29) found below, various parts of example (22) have been changed to explore how the antecedent changes.

(23) The Dodgers beat the A's even though they were the better team.

(24) The Dodgers beat the A's because they were the worse team.

(25) The Dodgers were beaten by the A's because they were the better team.

(26) The Dodgers lost to the A's because they were the better team.

(27) The Dodgers lost to the A's because they were the worse team.

(28) The Dodgers lost to the A's even though they were the worse team.

(29) The A's lost to the Dodgers because they were the better team.

None of these constructions are ambiguous. Examples (27) and (29) refer to the Dodgers and the rest refer to the A's. In example (23) the contrast "even though" causes the positive polarity of "better" to be associated with the negative polarity of the patient of "beat". In example (24) the negative polarity of "worse" is associated with the negative polarity of the patient of "beat." Example (25) shows that the passive does not change the polarity direction toward the agent and patient. In this example, however, the A's are the agent, and so the positive polarity of "better" associates the pronoun with the A's. In examples (26) through (29) the verb "lost" attaches a negative polarity to the agent and a positive polarity to the beneficiary. Thus in (26) the positive polarity of "better" associates it with the beneficiary, in this case the A's. In the same way in (27) the negative polarity of "worse" associates it with the agent, in this case the Dodgers.

Example (28) is like (27) except that the contrastive "even though" reverses the association so that the negative polarity of "worse" goes with positive polarity of the beneficiary, making the pronoun refer to the beneficiary, in this case the A's. Sentence (28) has so many words of negative polarity ("lost," "even though," and "worse") that it is difficult to understand without contemplation. Example (29) is exactly like (26) except that the beneficiary in this sentence is the Dodgers. In all of these examples there is an implied staging "The better team always wins." If we should make that explicit but modify it as in example (30) we again change the referent.

(30) The better team always loses. The Dodgers beat the A's because <u>they</u> were the better team.

Now "they" clearly refers to the A's. The implicit world view has been altered for the context and thus the polarity relationships of "beat" and "lost" have been reversed. Thus antecedence is determined by polarity associations of words, explicit and implicit staging of world view, and causal or contrastive relationships between propositions.

Contextual determination of antecedence will be studied using example (31) taken from Horvath and Rochemont (760) and found below:

(31) Because we all expected Mary's teacher to choose Jane, we were surprised to find out that Mary's teacher chose <u>her</u>.

In this sentence the pronoun "her" clearly refers to Mary. There are three possible referents to "her": the teacher, Jane, and Mary. But "her" cannot refer to the teacher because a pronoun object which has the same referent as the subject must have the suffix "-self" in the third person. Also "her" cannot refer to Jane because of the contrast between "expected" and "surprised". Thus Mary must be the referent because she is the only other referent in sight. But add another referent from the context and the referent

is not necessarily Mary. Examples (32) though (36) add five different contexts to the sentence in example (31).

(32) Sally was Mary's best friend. Because we all expected Mary's teacher to choose Jane, we were surprised to find out that Mary's teacher chose her.

The pronoun "her" is now ambiguous. It can refer to either Sally or Mary. But for the preceding sentence to have much sense in its location, we would expect Sally to be the referent of "her".

(33) Sally was chosen as honor student in Mary's class. Because we all expected Mary's teacher to choose Jane, we were surprised to find out that Mary's teacher chose her.

Here "her" clearly refers to Sally. She is the patient of the verb "choose" in both sentences.

(34) Mary congratulated Sally. Because we all expected Mary's teacher to choose Jane, we were surprised to find out that Mary's teacher chose her.

Here "her" clearly refers to Sally. "Congratulated" and "chose" are associated semantically. Thus she is the patient of both verbs.

(35) Sally congratulated Mary. Because we all expected Mary's teacher to choose Jane, we were surprised to find out that Mary's teacher chose her.

Here "her" clearly refers to Mary. The relationship is exactly the same as example (34) except that Mary is the patient of both verbs.

(36) Sally was the quiet girl in Mary's class. She was not nearly as outgoing as Jane. She did make good grades, but no one imagined her as the outstanding student. Because we all expected Mary's teacher to choose Jane, we were surprised to find out that Mary's teacher chose her.

Here "her" clearly refers to Sally. The topic, which is Sally, is carried by a series of pronouns, although the head noun "Sally" is almost so far away that the sentence in question needs a restatement of the noun. Thus

antecedence is determined by semantic association of words, semantic contrast of words, and topic of the paragraph.

By way of summary, it can be said that a referent is understood by:

1) agreement in person, number, and gender;

2) semantic agreement between words;

3) semantic agreement of the polarity of words;

4) semantic contrast between words;

5) relationship between propositions;

6) implicit or explicit staging of world view; and

7) paragraph topic or focus.

It would be worthwhile seeing which of these can override which of the others.

No doubt there are other factors also. But these are enough to see that the relationship between a pronoun and its antecedent is determined on a discourse level and by both syntactic and semantic features.

Application to New Testament Studies

Before looking at several examples from the New Testament, it is necessary to note five features of Greek antecedents which have been discussed by grammarians of Koiné Greek. In section 282 of their grammar, Blass, Debrunner, and Funk (147) list four situations in which third person pronouns in Greek do not refer to a noun of the same gender and number. First, if a place is named, the inhabitants may subsequently be referred to by the third person plural pronoun. Second, a concrete pronoun may refer to an abstract noun. Third, as in English, a plural pronoun may refer to a singular collective noun. And fourth, when a neuter diminutive noun is used to refer to a person, that person may subsequently be referred to by either a masculine or feminine pronoun, as appropriate. This is a case of the natural ~~physical~~ gender replacing the grammatical. This same situation sometimes occurs when a masculine pronoun is used to refer to the Greek word for spirit, which is

neuter. A fifth feature is that noted by Turner (40). He notes that the third person pronoun in Greek "can refer to a general conception . . . which has been no more than implied," that it can occur with "no expressed antecedent," and that it can have "but a general reference." We will see some of these features as we examine several selections from the New Testament.

The plan in this section is to look at five selections which contain pronouns: three from narrative genré, one from epistolary, and one from apocalyptic. Each will be quoted from the Revised Standard Version, the pronouns in it will be examined, and comments from Biblical scholars which have a bearing on the antecedents of the pronouns will be introduced.

The first passage is taken from Luke 9:51-55. It reads as follows:

> (37) When the days drew near for him to be received up, he set his
> face to go to Jerusalem. And he sent messengers ahead of him, who
> went and entered a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him;
> but the[y] would not receive him, because his face was set toward
> Jerusalem. And when his disciples James and John saw it, they said,
> "Lord, do you want us to bid fire come down from heaven and consume
> them?" But he turned and rebuked them. And they went on to another
> village.

The quotation has been modified at the point of the brackets to reflect the reading of the Greek. The Revised Standard Version has expanded "they" to "the people." The passage shows some interesting features as far as pronouns are concerned. All of the singular pronouns in the passage refer to Jesus, but He is not mentioned by name in the whole pericopé. He is mentioned by name in verse 50, just previous to this passage. The last three lines contain three plural pronouns in reference to three different antecedents. "Them" is used as the patient of "consume" to refer to the Samaritans, with whom the

apostles were displeased. There is a slight ambiguity with regard to the patient of "rebuke." It could refer to the Samaritans, meaning the apostles wanted to destroy them but Jesus merely rebuked them. But most commentators have taken this "them" to refer to the apostles. For example, Morris writes, "That is not the way His followers behave" (Luke, 179). There is a textual variant at this place which clearly refers the them to the two apostles; it reads, "and he said, 'You do not know what manner of spirit you are of; for the Son of man came not to destroy men's lives but to save them.'" If original, it would make the reference only to James and John; if not, it means that an early scribe took the "them" to refer to them. The final "they" in the passage refers not merely to these apostles, or to Jesus and these two, but to Jesus and His whole company. This is known only from a total reading of the text in which Jesus traveled with a company of followers about him. In Luke 10:1, a few verses later, it becomes obvious that there were at least seventy others traveling with Jesus. But the antecedent is not in the text. Rather it is in the reader's mind as he reconstructs the picture of Jesus traveling with His followers.

The next passage is taken from Revelation 20:4b-5. It reads:
(38) They came to life, and reigned with Christ a thousand years. The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection.

The pronoun in question in this passage is "this" in the last paragraph. Does it refer to the resurrection clearly mentioned at the beginning, or to the resurrection only implied at the end of the thousand years. Since there are two resurrections in view, the adjective "first" would seem to limit the reference to the former. And it has been understood in this way by almost all commentators. Morris writes, "Grammatically, this is the first resurrection

could refer to this raising at the end of the 1,000 years. But the sense appears to require that it be taken to denote the raising of the martyrs to life in glory with Christ" (Revelation, 238). And Barclay agrees: "In the first resurrection only those who have died and suffered for the faith are to be raised from the dead, according to this picture." After "This is the first resurrection," Bruce notes, "That is, the resurrection of those who came to life again in verse 4" (1708). The reference is not to the closest possible antecedent, but to the most logical.

The third passage is taken from Ephesians 2:8. It reads:

(39) For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God . . . .

The pronoun in question in this passage is "this." The second part literally reads "and this not from you, God's gift." The verbs and the "it" are supplied for purposes of having a smooth translation. Some have taken "this" to refer to "faith"; "faith," however, is a feminine noun, while "this" in the passage at hand is neuter. It seems therefore to be referring to the whole process of salvation. With this commentators generally agree. For example, Foulkes writes:

> Sometimes this has been taken to mean that the faith is not of man, but God's gift. If we take it in this way, we would need to regard the second part of verse 8 as a parenthesis--verse 9 must refer to the salvation and not to faith. It seems better, however, especially in the light of the parallelism between verse 8 and 9 (not of yourselves . . . 'not of works') to take all the qualifying clauses as in contrast to salvation by grace (75).

Again, Harpur has, "this is neuter, not referring to either grace or faith, which are feminine, but to the scheme of salvation itself, and therefore

translated **this is not your own doing**." The reference here is not to a particular antecedent, but to a process described in the first part of verse 8.

The fourth passage is taken from Acts 5:17-22. It reads as follows:

(40) But the high priest rose up and all who were with him, . . . they arrested the apostles and put them in the common prison. But at night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out . . . . And when they heard this they entered the temple at daybreak and taught. Now the high priest came and those who were with him and called together the council and all the senate of Israel, and sent to the prison to have <u>them</u> brought. But when the officers came, <u>they</u> did not find <u>them</u> in the prison, and <u>they</u> returned and reported, ...

This passage has been included not because it has a difficult use of antecedence, but to illustrate a point. That point is that antecedence occurs, not because of adherence to a simple set of rules, but by constructing a mental picture that is semantically coherent. The four pronouns marked in the last two sentences (verses 21 and 22) have such obvious references that no commentator consulted discussed them. The two uses of "they" refer to the officers, as is made obvious through being the agent of the sequential verbs "came," "find," "return." The two uses of "them" refer to the apostles, because they were the ones who had been in prison. This reference is clear, even though the last mention of the apostles was in verse 18. This distance causes the Today's English Version to replace "them" with "the apostles" in both places, but because of the mention of the prison, the reference is obvious. Since the council members and officers are both mentioned after the apostles but before the pronouns referring to the apostles, this shows that a

pronoun in the book of Acts does not have to refer to the last-mentioned noun phrase, as has sometimes been claimed.

The last passage is taken from Acts 1:15b, 26-2:1. It reads as follows: (41) . . . the company of persons was in all about a hundred and twenty . . . . And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias; and he was enrolled with the eleven apostles. When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place.

The pronoun "they" in Acts 2:1 does not have a clear reference and has been the subject of discussion in Biblical studies. The two possible referents usually suggested are the hundred and twenty disciples found in Acts 1:15 and the twelve apostles mentioned in Acts 1:26. In favor of the hundred and twenty is the use of the word "all" and the phrase translated "in one place" which elsewhere is used of the assembled church (see Acts 2:47; I Cor. 11:20). In favor of the apostles is the fact that they have been in focus in the previous section and are specified as being in focus in Acts 2:14. In addition, they were the ones to whom the experience had been promised in Acts 1:3-5. The ambiguity is genuine and has most often been resolved as a result of the commentator's theology.

In favor of "they" referring to the twelve apostles, Wallace has written:

> It is elementary that the antecedent of the pronoun they in the first verse of the second chapter of Acts is the eleven apostles (increased to twelve) mentioned in the preceding last verse of the first chapter: "And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles. And when the day of Pentecost was fully come they were all of one accord in one place . . . and they were filled with the Holy Spirit." Grammatically connecting these two verses, without a break in the

context, makes the <u>apostles</u> (the eleven and Matthias) the antecedent

of the pronoun <u>they</u> in Acts 2:1, and <u>them</u> in verse 3, and <u>they</u> again

in verse 5--adding to these, verse 14, that "Peter stood up with the

eleven" (60)

McGarvey makes a similar point when he says:

> The persons thus assembled together and filled with the Holy Spirit
> were not, as many have supposed, the one hundred and twenty
> disciples mentioned in a parenthesis in the previous chapter, but
> the twelve apostles. This is made certain by the grammatical
> connection between the first verse of this chapter and the last of
> the preceding (21).

Others have been just as sure that the hundred and twenty are referred to

here. For example, Marshall writes, "The whole company of 120 people is

doubtless meant, and not just the reconstituted twelve apostles" (68). And

Johnson says, "Not only the apostles, but the hundred and twenty disciples"

(419). In commenting on the Today's English Version, Newman and Nida write,

"<u>All</u> <u>the</u> <u>believers</u> represents the Greek word <u>all</u> which may refer either to all

the Christians or merely to all the apostles. Most translations choose to

make this ambiguous, whereas the TEV has made it explicit, that is, the total

Christian community" (33). A variation on the hundred and twenty which seems

to be implied by the Today's English Version is brought out by Knowling:

"i.e., the hundred-and-twenty as well as the Apostles (Chrysostom, Jerome),

and the expression may also have included other disciples who were present in

Jerusalem at the Feast (so Hilgenfeld, Wendt, Holtmann)" (72). With this

latter idea Alford agrees when he says: "Not the Apostles only, nor the

hundred and twenty mentioned ch. i.15; but <u>all</u> <u>the</u> <u>believers</u> <u>in</u> <u>Christ</u>, then

congregated at the time of the feast in Jerusalem" (655). Although such a

reference would come from one's picture of what what going on that day, and not specifically from the text, such is not impossible, as we saw with the reference to Jesus and his disciples in Luke 9:55.

The reference is truly ambiguous. It seems better not to try to remove the ambiguity by translation nor even by theology. Rather a good translation would reflect the ambiguity and a good theology would allow it. The ambiguity in this case is not so serious as it could be. The question is whether the apostles or more than the apostles were filled with the Spirit that morning. It is not in question that the text says the apostles underwent this experience. One can still refer to it as the time the Holy Spirit came on the apostles, without having to say whether or not He came on others at the same time.

In conclusion, in the examples given, pronouns had as their antecedents nouns, noun phrases, processes, implications drawn from the processes, and entities mentally contructed from the general picture drawn by the text. Where they had antecedents in the text, the pronouns showed agreement with their antecedents in person, number, and gender. A pronoun did not necessarily refer to the last-mentioned noun or noun phrase, but rather some distance might intervene between the pronoun and its antecedent. Antecedence was often determined by agreement with the semantic picture which had been constructed in the narrative. In a few places the antecedent of the pronoun was ambiguous, where more than one construction could fit into that picture. In cases such as this, it seems best to leave the construction ambiguous. There is much more to be learned about the antecedence of pronouns in the New Testament, but that is beyond the scope of this study. At least a beginning has been made.

Good point

Well done.

A

I appreciate your contributions to the class, and I'm glad you were in it.

RJR

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