

Acts 1.1-14: Overlap and Expansion

We can follow how Luke interlocks his two books by overlap and extension. In book one, he ended with the ascension. In book two, Acts, he goes back to the resurrection, revisits some of the same events, and gives additional information about what occurred between the resurrection and the ascension. Whereas, book one narrows down from the resurrection to the ascension, book two expands out from the resurrection through the ascension and into the work of Jesus that He continues to accomplish from heaven. This overlap and expansion can be illustrated on a graph of angles that overlap in reverse directions over the two points of resurrection and ascension:

Place the graph in steps

1. Two dots: representing R and A (short time between, 40 days)
2. Angle lines over R coming together at A: End of Lk on R to A
3. Reverse angle lines together at R opening up over A and to the present: Acts

End of Luke and beginning of Acts interlock like two sides of a hinge (Johnson, Study, 2).

Door frame side of the hinge is what Jesus accomplished in His earthly ministry

The hinged door that swings open is what Jesus is accomplishing in His heavenly ministry.

Acts 1.1-2

Luke summarizes the first part of his narrative on the accomplishments of Jesus. He makes two central points: 1) he indicates that the narrative part one covered the work of Jesus up to His ascension (**In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach,² until the day when he was taken up**). The implication of “began” to do and teach is that part two continues the narrative regarding what Jesus continues to do and teach since the ascension. 2) The core and conclusion of His pre-ascension work focused on the apostles (**after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen**).

- a) The apostles were such by His sovereign selection (thus uniquely appointed)
- b) He gave them specific commands especially in the days before the ascension
- c) His ministry to the apostles, we are told explicitly, was by the Holy Spirit

From Luke 1.1-4, we know that the orderly narrative written to Theophilus has the pastoral purpose of giving assurance regarding the accomplished redemption that Jesus secured for sinners. Q: How does Johnson ground, and help us ground, the shift from Theophilus to us: “Theophilus represents readers who have not had direct contact with the apostolic eyewitnesses and need to hear their testimony through Luke’s careful account” (Johnson, *Let’s Study Acts*, 2)?

We know little to nil of T as an individual and what we know is that he has no first hand experience. He is a reader like us...together this shows that what he reads is as much for us as for him. T is every Christian who reads the Gospel and Acts because every Christian stands in his shoes. Thus, the Holy Spirit gave us this narrative from Luke to T.

Overlap and expansion between Luke and Acts

In Acts, Luke expands on the Lord’s resurrection appearances leading up to the ascension. At the end of his Gospel, we have record of the appearance of Jesus to the two men on the road (24.13-35) ending with their report to the eleven at Jerusalem: **Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread** (24.35). Then we have our Lord’s appearance to them all at Jerusalem while the two men were giving their report (24.36). During this time with them, Jesus showed them His hands and feet and ate broiled fish before them because of the difficulty they had believing what they were seeing (24.37-43). He also opened their minds (1) to understand the Scriptures (24.44-48) regarding His death,

resurrection, and (2) their role in carrying the message of forgiveness to all nations (48: **You are witnesses of these things**). Then, before leading them out to Bethany, He promised the coming of the promise of the Father for which they must wait (24.49, **And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high**). Finally, near Bethany, He lifted His hands and blessed them as He parted from them into heaven (24.50-51) and they returned to Jerusalem and to the temple blessing God (24.52-53).

What is the expansion in Acts 1.1-14 of the events from the resurrection to the ascension?

Luke 24.33-53

And they [the two men on the Emmaus road] **rose that same hour** [after seeing the risen Lord] **and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together,** ³⁴ **saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!"** ³⁵ **Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.**

³⁶ **As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, "Peace to you!"** ³⁷ **But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit.** ³⁸ **And he said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?"** ³⁹ **See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have."** ⁴⁰ **And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet.** ⁴¹ **And while they still disbelieved for joy and were marveling, he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?"** ⁴² **They gave him a piece of broiled fish,** ⁴³ **and he took it and ate before them.**

⁴⁴ **Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled."** ⁴⁵ **Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures,** ⁴⁶ **and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead,** ⁴⁷ **and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.** ⁴⁸ **You are witnesses of these things.** ⁴⁹ **And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."**

⁵⁰ **Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them.** ⁵¹ **While he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven.** ⁵² **And they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy,** ⁵³ **and were continually in the temple blessing God.**

Acts 1.1-14

In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, ² until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen.

³ He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. ⁴ And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, "you heard from me;" ⁵ for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

⁶ So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" ⁷ He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. ⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

⁹ And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. ¹⁰ And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, ¹¹ and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away. ¹³ And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James. ¹⁴ All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.

Note the ascension in Lk 24.50-52 and the return to Jerusalem briefly described

...lifting up his hands he blessed them. ⁵¹ While he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven. ⁵² And they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, ⁵³ and were continually in the temple blessing God.

Note ascension in Acts 1.9 and the return to Jerusalem slightly expanded

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Impression; image; picture; symbolic nature of the events as historical

His hands raised blessing them

Then Aaron lifted up his hands toward the people and blessed them, and he came down from offering the sin offering and the burnt offering and the peace offerings. (Leviticus 9:22 ESV)

This is the blessing with which Moses the man of God blessed the people of Israel before his death. (Deuteronomy 33:1 ESV)

Jesus in the clouds

"I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. ¹⁴ And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed. (Daniel 7:13-14 ESV)