

The Book of Acts

Luke to Theophilus Volume 2

Survey

I. Title

Luke-Acts is a single narrative in two parts. The entire narrative can have the title: Luke's narration of the gospel of the accomplishments of Jesus from the beginning in Israel to the present among the nations (Lk 1.1 through Acts 28.31). The books then have the following subtitles:

Vol 1. Luke's narration of the gospel of the accomplishments of Jesus from the beginning in Israel to the resurrection-ascension. Acts 1.1: "in the first book, I dealt with all the Jesus began to do and teach until He ascended."

Vol 2. Luke's narration of the gospel of the accomplishments of Jesus from the resurrection-ascension to the present among the nations. Acts 1.1, the implication in paraphrase: "in the second book, I continue to deal with (I continue my narrative of) all that Jesus is doing and teaching from the ascension to the present among the nations."

Q: How can we justifiably say that there are only 65 books, not 66, in the canon?

[Lk-Acts = one]

Q: Do you think we should replace the traditional titles with the subtitles and rename Luke and Acts for all Bibles?

[No, it is too impractical, too much work for little gain; there are bigger fish to fry]

Q: What then is the value of these thought experiments?

[Tradition is helpful as a base for memory to build on but being locked into it is harmful if we cannot get past its limits. For example, we do not want to miss the unity of Luke-Acts and the main idea of what Jesus is *continuing to do and teach on the record here in Acts.*]

II. Theme of Book 2 per Luke 24.45-53, Acts 1.8, and Acts 28.28-31

A. Acts 1.8 (**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**) From this text, how can we build on the subtitle and state the theme?

[Accomplishments of Jesus since the resurrection through appointed, commissioned and *Holy Spirit empowered* witnesses]

B. Luke 24.45-53

With the help of Luke 24.45-53, what perspective can we gain on the theme of Luke-Acts from the difference of Volume 1 (Luke) in its movement *toward* Jerusalem from Volume 2 (Acts) with its movement *away from* Jerusalem? **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 ... parted from ...into heaven.** [Vol 1: Securing the forgiveness of sins for the nations & Vol 2: applying forgiveness of sins to the nations; proclaiming through apostolic preaching and preaching today, so, Mat 10 and Timothy, give to faithful men to take to others, but the Matt text uses prophetic perspective to merge all preaching in the time between because the apostles will preach until the Son of Man comes]

Simple focus Q: Securing and applying, grounding and proclaiming, what? [Grounding and proclaiming, securing and applying *the good news of the accomplishments of Jesus*]

C. Q: what can we add to the theme from Acts 28.28-31 (**Therefore [based on the OT and the response of the Jews at Rome] let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles;**

they will listen." 29 30 He [Paul] lived there two whole years at his own expense, and welcomed all who came to him, 31 proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance)? Warfield strongly emphasizes the abruptness of the ending of Acts that leaves the reader hanging and waiting for more narrative. He thinks this suggests the author's purpose of a third book. What indicates abruptness and what can we learn from it in conjunction with **to the end of the earth** from Acts 1.9?

[Indication of abruptness: everything moves toward Paul's trial at Rome, but once there, the narrator gives us nothing of it.

What we can learn: we get focus on the thrust of Acts, especially on the author's present and our present, or the time between (the bodily appearing). Therefore, instead of throwing us out in thought to more narrative, it throws us out in thought to an undefined and unrestricted "present" in the eye-view of the author. This makes us aware of the true meaning the idea in literature of an omnipresent narrator, which is the omnipresent Holy Spirit and giver of the Luke-Acts narrative. The Holy Spirit sends us in thought to the accomplishments of Jesus that continue among the nations beyond Paul's time at Rome and beyond Luke's eye-witnessing of it. The Spirit leaves us with a sense of the sure progress of the work of Jesus to the end of the earth (Acts 1.8) and to the end of the age (Mat 28.20).]