

The Book of Acts

Luke to Theophilus Volume 2

Survey

I. Title: the whole: accomplishments of Jesus; pt 1: up to the resurrection & pt 2 after it

II. Theme: how can we add forgiveness (Lk 24) to Luke 1 and 2?

III. Outline: Jerusalem (1-7); Judea-Samaria (8-12) & uttermost parts of the earth (13-28)

With Paul at Rome, does Acts get us to the uttermost parts of the earth? Lesson?

IV. Biblical Theology: study of? What BT models apply here to the Bible & Christ's work?

A. Jesus *fulfills* in exaltation (Acts) what He *promised* in humiliation (Luke)

B. Spirit empowered apostles give redemptive revelation as the foundation for the church

Jesus promised that they would be His witnesses to testify and write = the NT foundation

Q: from this, what major implication and reading cue for Acts do we obtain?

[The major implication is the "oneness" of the foundation inscripturated; the NT added to the OT is the exclusive, final, and sufficient revelation of God's saving purposes for the life of the church; we are to read Acts to see some of how the foundation was laid in place]

V. Genre

That it is *historical narrative* is true but calling it history in narrated form is inadequate. Why do we need to add theological: historical-theological-narrative? Why is the following statement true but inadequate: "The book is a narrative that revolves about Jerusalem, Antioch, and Rome, as the opening, middle and end in the unfolding development of the church; the narrative progresses in ever-widening circles, giving us the history of the establishment of three centers of the early church"? Why say it is true and why say it is inadequate per Acts 1.1?

[Missing is the point of view of the book, namely, based on the fact that Luke treats what Jesus began to do and teach until He was taken up, Acts treats what *Jesus continued* to do and teach after His ascension.]

This leads us to some quotes from Warfield beginning with how he sees Luke's volume 2 as the "Acts of the apostles" only instrumentally:

"the Apostles were conceived as the instruments through which Jesus prosecuted His work of establishing His Church in the world. It was specifically the Acts of the Risen Christ...At every step in the progress of the history, moreover, explicit stress is laid upon its Divine direction, so that not only is there continual reference to the intervention of God, but the whole course of the history is represented as determined by Divine leading...the whole history is conceived from a supernatural point of view, and developed as a distinctly supernatural product. To the author of this book Christianity was not established...by Divinely-aided men; it was established by the Lord Jesus Himself, ordering all things according to His will and using men as instruments in the developing of His plans" (Warfield, *Acts*, x-xi).

Therefore, Warfield may have the best description, identifying the genre of Acts as "sacred history":

It is no ordinary history that it offers us. In the strictest sense of the word it is sacred history. It is even obviously written less in the interests of pure history than in those of religious edification...The book takes its standpoint not from earth but from heaven. It essays to inform us not how the Church spread from Jerusalem to Antioch, and from Antioch to Rome, but how the risen Jesus has established His Church in the world and is fulfilling His promise to be with His followers to the end of time (xxvi).

The written narrative of the accomplishments of Jesus from the resurrection to the present is revelation like that of the Apocalypse: "As truly as the Apocalypse itself this Book [Acts] draws aside the veil that we may see in the events of earth who are the real actors, to what end all is tending. This is revelation" (xxvii).

Therefore, there is great promise to the reader of this Book that fits so perfectly between the Gospels and the Epistles:

He who reads it with the heart and understanding also will be led by it to know God better, will be more fully taught by it His power and purpose to save the world, and will be made to feel more profoundly that Jesus Christ is God over all, blessed for ever. As he reads and ponders, it will be no fault of the Book's if he does not set his seal to it as a book that speaks of God and leads to God, and that doubtless also came from God (xxvii).