

Lecture 2 – The Book of Acts

“...they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ.” Acts 5:42b

Key Terms

Summary statements, narrative text, relativizing details, emphasizing essentials, salvation history, salvation historical continuity

Objectives

- *Reproduce an outline of Acts.
- *Define in your own words the purpose of Acts.
- *Memorize Acts 1:8.
- *Explain how Acts displays real salvation and real history.
- *Support the view that Acts brings to conclusion the salvation purpose begun with Christ in the Gospel.

The Book of Acts

I. Introduction

- A. There are many interpretations of Acts
Therefore: Step back and reflect on methodology
- B. Acts has been used as a manual in many ways. Examples:
 1. Snake handling
 2. Structured church governments
 3. The work of the Holy Spirit
 4. Communities (communal groups)
- C. Important to find out: what is God’s purpose with the book of Acts as part of God’s work?
Rather than being preoccupied with what we want to hear, we have to observe what its own intent and purpose is.
- D. To find out the purpose of Acts, it is important to look at the literary structure of Acts.
 1. In ancient literature, the form serves the content.

II. Outline of Acts

A. Introduction	1:1-26
B. Witness to Jerusalem [1:8]	2:1-8:4
Summary # 1	2:42-47 (growth statement)
Summary # 2	4:32-37 (growth statement)
Summary # 3	5:12-16 (growth statement)
Summary # 4	5:42 (growth statement)
Summary # 5	6:7 (growth statement)
C. Witness to Samaria and Judea [9:31]	8:5-9:31
Growth statement	8:25
Growth statement	8:40
Summary # 6	9:31 (growth statement)
D. Witness to Phoenicia, Cyprus & Antiochia [11:19]	9:32-12:25
Summary # 7	12:24 (growth statement)
E. Witness to Phrygia & Galatia [16:6]	13:1-15:35
Summary # 8	15:35 (growth statement)
F. Witness to Macedonia & Asia [cf. 16:9]	15:36-19:21
Summary # 9	16:5 (growth statement)
Summary # 10	19:20 (growth statement)
G. Witness to Rome via Macedonia, Achaia & Jerusalem	19:22-28:31
Summary # 11	28:31 (growth statement)

III. Keys to Understanding the Purpose of Acts

A. The literary structure of the book

1. Summary statements
2. The repetition of these summary statements allows insight into the purpose of the account. It gives a description of the internal and external growth of the covenant community.

B. Acts is a narrative text

1. Narrative text:
 - a. indirect
 - b. involves you in circumstances of story
 - c. gives you possibility to become involved
2. Discourse text:
 - a. direct
 - b. uninvolved
3. Style of the Gospels and Acts: 'Let me tell you the story of Christ.' You are slowly urged to take sides.
4. Challenge of Acts: how does it impact?
 - a. Narrative _____ of details
 - b. Narrative _____ of central issues
5. The purpose of Acts is to show:

Q. Why can we not take Luke's own stated purpose (Luke 1:1-4) as the sole purpose statement of Acts?

A. The proposed purpose statement is a more focused statement of Acts, subordinate to Luke 1:1-4.

IV. General Theological Characteristics of Acts

The book of Acts brings to conclusion the salvation purpose begun with Christ in the Gospel.

A. Salvation history

1. Luke understood, did not invent this principle.
2. Salvation - in - history
3. Salvation historical continuity
4. Luke is very concerned to place events in generally known history.
5. God's truth is not suspended in mid-air.
6. History and theology indivisible
 - a. Example: Incarnation of Christ
 - b. Hope for us: If God intervened in history then, so:

Real salvation and real history!

7. How the book of Acts functions as an historical document:

- a. Research by C. Hemer
 - 1) Luke uses regional, technical terminology in narratives.
 - 2) Historical particularities are accurate

8. Luke always comes back to the point: God is performing here.

B. Theological statement in Acts 1:8

1. Statement fits into the _____
2. Geographical spread of the message
3. Deep concern of God that this witness will go out and that it will capture hearts of men and women.

C. Inclusion of the Gentiles

1. Major theme in Luke and in Acts

2. Is. 42 and 49: Light to the Gentiles
3. Acts 10 and 11: Peter's vision

God's purposes are inclusive in the sense of:
