

The Acts of the Apostles I

Introduction

- I. STATISTICS
 - A. Title: “The Acts of the Apostles”
 - B. Location:
 - i. It is the 44th book of the Bible
 - ii. It is the fifth book of the New Testament
 - iii. It is the second book written by Luke (Acts 1:1)
 - C. Act is a continuation of what Jesus began to do and teach; a continuation not in His earthly tabernacle but in and through the body of believers (Luke 24:49)
 - D. Size:
 - i. 28 Chapters
 - ii. 1,007 verses
 - iii. One of the largest New Testament books. Matthew also has 28 chapters.
 - iv. Seven Divisions: The twenty-eight chapters are divisible by seven
 - 1. Chapters 1-7 (Jerusalem)
 - 2. Chapters 8-14 (Asia Minor)
 - 3. Chapters 15-21 (Greece)
 - 4. Chapters 22-28 (Rome)

II. ITS EARTHLY AUTHOR

- A. The Man
 - i. Luke
 - 1. His Life
 - a. Called “the beloved physician” (Colossians 4:14)

Colossians 4:14 Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you.

- b. With Paul at different times (Acts 16:6-12; Acts 21:1-17; Philemon 24)
- c. With Paul to the end (2 Timothy 4:11)
- d. Was he a Jew or a Gentile?
 - i. There is some debate as to whether Luke was a Gentile or Jew.
 - ii. Luke a Gentile

1. Some Bible scholars point to Colossians 4:10-14 to show that Luke was a Gentile.

Colossians 4:10 Aristarchus my fellowprisoner saluteth you, and Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas, (touching whom ye received commandments: if he come unto you, receive him;) **11** And Jesus, which is called Justus, **who are of the circumcision**. These only are my fellowworkers unto the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort unto me. **12** Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. **13** For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and **them that are in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis**. **14 Luke**, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you.

2. These “Scholars” point to the fact that since Paul identifies those in verses 10-11 as being “of the circumcision” this proves that everyone listed after that statement is a Gentile.
3. The problem with this point of view is that no direct statement of that kind is made in the text and Luke is mentioned three verses later after the general phrase “them that are in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis” (v. 13). This would mean that all those in Laodicea and Hierapolis were Gentiles (or that Paul only greeted the Gentiles in these two cities). The proof is very weak.

iii. Luke a Jew

1. While it cannot be proved conclusively that he was not a Gentile, the name itself is found in Jewish circles. Romans 16:21 tells of a man by the name of Lucius (Lucius is another form of the name Luke) who was one of Paul’s kinsmen. Although this is more than likely not the same Luke, it is a man who was definitely a Jew—being related to the Jewish Paul.
2. A few other items that support the idea that Luke was a Jew. In the introduction to the Gospel of Luke, Luke introduces the information he is giving with the following

statement: *“Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word.”* (Luke 1:2) Here, Luke includes himself as one of the eyewitnesses which were from the beginning. Perhaps the beginning here refers to the early work of the apostles, but this still tends to identify Luke as a Jew. The earlier the time, the greater the chance that the person is a Jew. The door to the Gentiles was not fully opened until Acts 10. No matter what, Luke was an eyewitness that could trace his understanding of the gospel of Christ back to the beginning. He must have been a Jew.

3. Another item develops from the authors of scripture. Romans 3:2 mentions the chief advantage of the Jews as the fact *“that unto them were committed the oracles of God.”* That is, scripture came into this world by way of Jewish authors. This is certainly true of the Old Testament, and as a rule, it seems to apply to the New Testament. God used the Jews to deliver his words to this world. Unless of course, Luke was a Gentile. This would make no small exception. In fact, this would be a major departure from the pattern God had used. Luke was the human author of both Luke (24 chapters) and Acts (28 chapters). If Luke is a Gentile, then 1/5th to 1/4th of the New Testament was written by a Gentile. Yet God states that the oracles of God were committed to the Jews.

2. His Writings

- a. The former treatise (Luke 1:1-4)
 - i. The Gospel of Luke
 1. Treatise: a systematic discussion of provable facts

2. To Theophilus (beloved of God)
 3. Contains:
 - a. 24 chapters
 - b. 1,151 verses
 - c. 25,944 words
 - ii. A declaration (v. 1)
 1. From the beginning (v. 2)
 2. In order (v. 1, 3)
 - b. The Acts of the Apostles (Acts 1:1)
 - i. 28 chapters
 - ii. 1,007 verses
 - iii. 24,250 words
 - c. Total writings
 - i. Luke (24 chapters); Acts (28 chapters) = 52 chapters.
 - ii. Luke (1,151 verses); Acts (1,007 verses) = 2,158 verses.
 - iii. Luke (25,944 words); Acts (24,250 words) = 50,194 words.
- B. His Work
- i. A physician (Colossians 4:14)
 1. As a physician Luke would have been detailed
 2. It has been noted by some that because of this he was well equipped to give the gospel account in the book which bears his name.
 3. This would also make him an obvious choice to author the book of Acts.
 4. Luke would become a companion in the labours of Paul to preach the gospel.
 5. Luke being a physician, made him a perfect partner in the work of the ministry
 - a. Paul and Barnabas (later Paul and Silas) would welcome the care of a physician on the long journeys that they would endure
 - b. Luke's training as a physician made him a needed associate as he would have the knowledge skills to care for the group and those whose paths they crossed

- ii. A fellow labourer with Paul (Acts 16:6-12; Acts 21:1-3, 17; 2 Timothy 4:11)
 - 1. Labouring with Paul in Macedonia (Acts 16:10-12)
 - a. Preaching and teaching the gospel (Acts 16:10-14)
 - b. Praying with them (Acts 16:16)
 - 2. With Paul at Troas (Acts 20:5)
 - 3. With Paul when warned not to go to Jerusalem (Acts 21:4, 10-12)
 - 4. Personally besought Paul not to go up to Jerusalem (Acts 21:12)
 - 5. Sailed with Paul to Rome (Acts 27:2), Shipwrecked with Paul (Acts 27:18; Acts 28:2, 7, 13, and entered Rome with Paul (Acts 28:16) staying with him (2 Timothy 4:11).
- III. THEME (Acts 1:1-2)
 - A. The Continued Ministry of Christ
 - i. Continued deeds (John 14:12-14; 1 Corinthians 11:1-3)
 - 1. A continuation of keeping the commandments of God
 - 2. A continuation of following the things that have been taught
 - 3. A continuation of obeying the word of God
 - 4. A continuation of keeping the ordinances (1 Corinthians 11:1)
 - ii. Continued words (John 16:12-13; Galatians 1:11-12)
 - 1. The Holy Spirit would be sent to guide the apostles and disciples in writing the word of God
 - 2. Acts is a transitional book and as such the Lord would guide the changes that would take place
 - 3. There would be a continuation of words given as the Bible would still need to be completed
 - a. The New Testament had yet to be written in John 16.
 - b. There would still be years before John would be sent to the isle of Patmos.
 - 4. Paul would be given the gospel from Jesus Christ (Galatians 1:11-12)
 - B. The Acts of the Apostles
 - i. Peter
 - 1. Chapters 1-12 (mentioned 56 times)
 - 2. Chapters 13-28 (mentioned 1 time – Acts 15:7)
 - ii. Paul (also known as Saul)
 - 1. Chapters 1-12
 - a. Mentioned 16 times (all as Saul)
 - b. First mention (Acts 7:58)

2. Chapters 13-28 (mentioned 142 times)
 - a. Mentioned 10 times as Saul
 - b. Mentioned 132 times as Paul

IV. STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

- A. To the Jew First (Chapters 1-12)
 - i. In Jerusalem (Chapters 1-7) (Acts 3:26)
 - ii. Beyond Jerusalem (Chapters 8-12) (Acts 13:46)
- B. To the Greek Also (Chapters 13-28)
 - i. Paul's first missionary journey (Chapters 13-15)
 - ii. Paul's second missionary journey (Chapters 16-18)
 - iii. Paul's third missionary journey (Chapters 19-22)
 - iv. The road to Rome (Chapters 23-28)
- C. Key Phrases and Words – Understanding the Book
 - i. Key Phrase: *"The Promise of the Father"* – (Acts 1:4)
 - ii. Key Word: *"Witness"* – (Acts 1:8)

V. TRANSITION IN ACTS – (A Book of Movement)

- A. Judaism to Christianity (Acts 3:1; Acts 11:26; Acts 26:28)
- B. Law to Grace (Acts 5:34; Acts 7:53; Acts 15:5; Acts 15:24; Acts 15:11; Acts 20:24)
- C. Jew to Gentile (Acts 2:5; Acts 13:45-48; Acts 28:28)
- D. Gospel of the Kingdom to Gospel of Grace (Acts 1:6; Acts 28:30-31)
- E. Peter to Paul (Acts 2:14; Acts 15:1-10; Galatians 2:1-21)
- F. Signs and Wonders to the Word of God (Acts 2:22; Acts 2:43; Mark 16:20; 1 Corinthians 1:22)
- G. Temple to Local Church (Acts 2:46; Acts 13:1)
- H. Earthly Kingdom to Heavenly Kingdom (Acts 1:6; Acts 28:30-31; Romans 14:17)
- I. Jerusalem to Antioch (Acts 2:5; Acts 5:16; Acts 6:7; Acts 11:26; Acts 13:1)
- J. East to West (Acts 8:1; Acts 11:20; Acts 13:4, 14; Acts 15:36-41; Acts 16:6-9; Acts 17:10-23; Acts 18:1; Acts 18:22-23; Acts 19:1-2, 10, 21; Acts 23:11; Acts 28:13-16)

VI. HERESIES DERIVED FROM ACTS –(Clarity in the Book of Acts brings clarity to this age)

- A. Charismatic Doctrine (Acts 2:1-11)
- B. Baptismal Regeneration (Acts 2:38)
- C. Hyper-Dispensationalism
- D. Calvinism

- E. Communism—(Acts 2-4) Karl Marx summed up Communism with the phrase:
From each according to his ability, to each according to his need.

VII. GENERAL OUTLINE

A. TO THE JEW FIRST (Chapters 1-12)

i. In Jerusalem (Chapters 1-7)

1. The Continuation of Christ's Ministry (Chapter 1)
2. The Promise of the Father (Chapter 2)
3. The Healing of the Lame Man (Chapter 3)
4. The Appearance Before the Council (Chapter 4)
5. The Power of the Apostles (Chapter 5)
6. The Choosing of the Seven Men (Chapter 6)
7. The Rejection of Stephen's Message (Chapter 7)

ii. Beyond Jerusalem (Chapter 8-12)

1. The Scattering of the Disciples (Chapter 8)
2. The Salvation of Saul (Chapter 9)
3. The Salvation of Cornelius (Chapter 10)
4. The Open Door to the Gentiles (Chapter 11)
5. The Power of God in Persecution (Chapter 12)

B. TO THE GREEK ALSO (Chapters 13-28)

i. Paul's First Missionary Journey (Chapters 13-15)

1. The Sending of the First Missionaries (Chapter 13)
2. The Gospel Preached to the Pagans (Chapter 14)
3. The Council at Jerusalem (Chapter 15)

ii. Paul's Second Missionary Journey (Chapters 16-18)

1. The Gospel Taken to Europe (Chapter 16)
2. The Gospel Preached in Europe (Chapter 17)
3. The Completion of the Second Journey (Chapter 18)

iii. Paul's Third Missionary Journey (Chapters 19-22)

1. The Ministry of Paul in Ephesus (Chapter 19)
2. The Journey of Paul toward Jerusalem (Chapter 20)
3. The Bondage of Paul in Jerusalem (Chapter 21)
4. The Message of Paul to the Jews (Chapter 22)

iv. The Road to Rome (Chapters 23-28)

1. The Sending of Paul to Caesarea (Chapter 23)
2. The Trial of Paul Before Felix (Chapter 24)

3. The Appeal of Paul unto Caesar (Chapter 25)
4. The Hearing of Paul Before Agrippa (Chapter 26)
5. The Shipwreck on the Way to Rome (Chapter 27)
6. The Arrival of Paul in Rome (Chapter 28)