



THE LIFE OF TIMOTHY

NEILL GIBSON

1C

PURPOSE IN A PRIMARY SOURCE: ACTS

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PURPOSE IN A PRIMARY SOURCE: ACTS

- Acts is the heir to Daniel's prophecies
- Several threads of plot development in Acts
- Incomplete account – What do I mean? Why?
- Identity of Theophilus
- Purpose in Acts

ACTS IS THE HEIR TO DANIEL'S PROPHECIES

- Acts describes the expansion of God's empire-shattering kingdom across the Roman Empire.
- We see in action what God spoke of.
- cf. Isaiah 2 again – already / not yet
- Everything changed, and everything will change.



SEVERAL THREADS OF DEVELOPMENT IN THE BOOK OF ACTS

- Peter and Paul
- Jews, God-fearers, and Gentiles
- Acts 1:8
- Summary statements



PETER

- Foundational / Revelation
- To the Jew first, then Gentiles
- Lays hands on Samaritans
- Outpoured Holy Spirit
- Healed a lame man
- Raised a person from the dead
- Signs and wonders

PAUL

- Foundational / Revelation
- To synagogues, then Gentiles
- Lays hands on Ephesians
- Outpoured Holy Spirit
- Healed a lame man
- Raised a person from the dead
- Signs and wonders

PETER

- Deals with a sorcerer
- Witnessed before the Sanhedrin
- Seven addresses recorded
- Established local churches
- Imprisoned for witnessing
- Angel delivers from prison

PAUL

- Deals with a sorcerer
- Witnessed before the Sanhedrin
- Seven addresses recorded
- Established local churches
- Imprisoned for witnessing
- Angel of the Lord earthquake

PETER

- Arrested in the Temple
- Chains fell off
- A man of Heavenly visions
- Religious and political opposition
- Beaten for the Name of Jesus
- Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria
- Writer of 2 Epistles

PAUL

- Arrested in the Temple
- Chains loosed
- A man of Heavenly visions
- Religious and political opposition
- Beaten and stoned for the Lord
- Uttermost parts of the earth
- Writer of 14 Epistles

JEWES, GOD-FEARERS, AND GENTILES

- Both in Peter and Paul's ministries we see them reaching to the Jew first, then to the God-fearers, then to the Gentiles (in Paul's case, we see this repeatedly)

ACTS 1:8

- “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.” (Acts 1:8)
 - Acts 1-7 – reaches Jerusalem
 - 8-10 – Samaria and Judea
 - 11-28 – culminate in the remotest parts of the earth, eventually Rome

SUMMARY STATEMENTS

- **6:7** – The word of God kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith.
- **9:31** – So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria enjoyed peace, being built up; and going on in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it continued to increase.
- **12:24** – But the word of the Lord continued to grow and to be multiplied.

SUMMARY STATEMENTS

- 16:4 – Now while they were passing through the cities, they were delivering the decrees which had been decided upon by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem, for them to observe.
- 19:20 – So the word of the Lord was growing mightily and prevailing.
- 28:28-31 – (Ends us with Paul openly sharing under house arrest in Rome)

INCOMPLETE ACCOUNT

- Of necessity it couldn't tell everything (cf. John 21:25)
- Were there other reasons for the particular choice of which things were included in Acts?
 - Almost certainly
 - What were the points of emphasis / de-emphasis, and why?



LUKE WAS NOT TRYING TO:

- Give complete accounts of the lives of the Apostles
- Establish clear church organization or polity
- Give a complete picture of the spread of the Gospel in all directions
- Standardize the conversion experience

LUKE SEEMS INTENTIONALLY TO AVOID:

- Mention of Titus, a close companion of Paul's who was uncircumcised
- Mention of the "collection for the saints" which was a major occupation of Paul's ministry and travels
- Why are we even looking for this stuff?

LUKE SEEMS INTENTIONALLY TO EMPHASIZE:

- A positive view of government (also in his Gospel)
- The connectedness historically to Judaism and God's covenant promises, both with Scripture and experience
- A reluctance to cast off from the moorings of the synagogue and Temple until the issue is forced

THE IDENTITY OF 'THEOPHILUS'

- What possibilities do we have before us?
- "Lover of God" symbolic name?
- "The Audience of Acts" (Witherington)

PURPOSE IN ACTS

- Clearly shows the expansion from a primarily Jewish phenomenon in Jerusalem to a primarily Gentile church throughout the Roman world.
- Clearly shows the Holy Spirit's activity at every stage of the journey.
- "Accurate and orderly account of the origins of Christianity." (FF Bruce)



DOVETAILING THE EPISTLES WILL GIVE A MORE COMPLETE PICTURE

- When we merge the history of Acts with the data from Paul's Epistles, we get a much more thorough picture.
- 2 Corinthians 11:22-28 – We'll see this again a few times throughout the course.



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