

Living Expectantly

Acts - Intro & Background

Acts 4:12-14 There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to people by which we must be saved.”**13** When they observed the boldness of Peter and John and realized that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed and recognized that they had been with Jesus. **14** And since they saw the man who had been healed standing with them, they had nothing to say in opposition.

What did the text mean to its first audience?

Ancient historians viewed history as an opportunity to teach moral, apologetic and political values in how they reported history.

Modern historians view history as event from the past or the record of those events. Distance is valued and needed in order to be objective.

This definition of recording history would be too narrow for the historians of antiquity.

Genre - Ancient historical monograph

Monograph - a biographical study of one.

Ancient recorded history reads more like a newspaper.

Author: Luke, a second generation believer, he was not an eyewitness to the life and ministry of Jesus.

Colossians 4:14 Luke, the dearly loved physician, and Demas send you greetings.

Philemon 23-24 Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends you greetings, and so do **24** Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, my coworkers.

He was either a Gentile or a Hellenistic Jew.

Date: Anywhere from 62AD to 80's AD

Theophilus (most honorable) - high social status, recent convert who still has questions. He was a patron of Luke (financial backer).

Audience - Urban Mediterranean culture during the Empire

- Consisted of mixed but predominantly Gentile congregations. Well educated.
- Region is Aegean and specifically Roman colonies with strong Pauline churches like Corinth and Philippi. Greek speakers.
- There was a deep understanding of the larger Roman Empire and the attitudes toward the Christian movement. They are most likely attracted to Judaism and know the Septuagint. They are put off by pagan religion.

Luke / Acts - Historiographical work

Luke 1:1-4 Acts 1:1-2

Longest and second longest composition in NT.

1st Volume - 4BC-30AD

2nd Volume - 30-62AD

- Last 23% of Luke deals with Jesus' trial, death, resurrection, and ascension.
- Last 24% of Acts deals with Paul's arrest, trial, and arrival in Rome.

What is started in Luke

Carries on in Acts

Luke 21:12-13 But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and persecute you. They will hand you over to the synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors because of my name. **13** This will give you an opportunity to bear witness.

Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

Luke 24:48 You are witnesses of these things.

Acts 5:18-21 So they arrested the apostles and put them in the public jail. **19** But an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the jail during the night, brought them out, and said, **20** “Go and stand in the temple, and tell the people all about this life.” **21** Hearing this, they entered the temple at daybreak and began to teach.

Samaritans

Luke 9:52 He sent messengers ahead of himself, and on the way they entered a village of the Samaritans to make preparations for him.

Acts 8:4-8 So those who were scattered went on their way preaching the word. **5** Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Messiah to them. **6** The crowds were all paying attention to what Philip said, as they listened and saw the signs he was performing. **7** For unclean spirits, crying out with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed, and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed. **8** So there was great joy in that city.

Judaism

Luke 13:6-9 And he told this parable: “A man had a fig tree that was planted in his vineyard. He came looking for fruit on it and found none. **7** He told the vineyard worker, ‘Listen, for three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree and haven’t found any. Cut it down! Why should it even waste the soil?’ **8** “But he replied to him, ‘Sir, leave it this year also, until I dig around it and fertilize it. **9** Perhaps it will produce fruit next year, but if not, you can cut it down.’”

Acts 18:4 He reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath and tried to persuade both Jews and Greeks.

Women

Luke 8:1-3 Afterward he was traveling from one town and village to another, preaching and telling the good news of the kingdom of God. The Twelve were with him, **2** and also some women who had been healed of evil spirits and sicknesses: Mary, called Magdalene (seven demons had come out of her); **3** Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod’s steward; Susanna; and many others who were supporting them from their possessions.

Acts 16 & 18

Timothy’s Mom, Brothers and Sisters of Lystra and Iconium, Lydia in Philippi, Young girl freed from an evil spirit

John the Baptist

Luke 3:15 Now the people were waiting expectantly, and all of them were questioning in their hearts whether John might be the Messiah.

Acts 13:25 Now as John was completing his mission, he said, ‘Who do you think I am? I am not the one. But one is coming after me, and I am not worthy to untie the sandals on his feet.’

Luke uses his two volumes to display that the message of Jesus changed things.

- God’s divine saving activity among humans. Luke is driven in his writing to show legitimacy and confirmation of the freedom that comes with faith.
- Acts is the model for the church’s continuing mission (the message is for both Jew and Gentile). “From the center of the world for the Jewish people to the center of the world for Gentiles. From heritage to mission.”
~ Craig Keener

Acts is the continuous narrative about the growth and development of a historical phenomenon - early Christianity.

- God and his salvation plan are the engine.
- The key character is the Holy Spirit.

- We will come face to face with the mighty deeds of God performed on the stage of history by and through Jesus and his followers.

Why Acts?

Why now?

Renewal -> Gospel -> Practice

Becoming people who are led, living, and walking by the power of the Holy Spirit.

How do I daily practice incarnate love?

In a culture and society that actively rejects truth, how do I relate?

- Learning the art of being an apprentice of Jesus. An apprentice is one who is courageous and bold in their witness of the Savior who changes lives.
- Embracing and actively loving one another (brothers and sisters) in Christ. Is our love toward one another visible and tangible to those who are observing our lives?

God's heart is displayed more fully when the diversity of his people are communing together. (To the ends of the earth).