

INTRODUCTION

Introducing Acts

Before we begin our commentary on the *Acts*, it is essential that we attempt to ascertain the kind of literature with which we are dealing. In modern times scholars have questioned the reliability of *Acts* as a historical document. They argue that the aim of the author was to express inspired insights into the meaning of Jesus and into the significance of the Christian life as lived in the various communities of the first century, and that he chose to do so *in the form of* a history. They acknowledge that *Acts* was successful in engaging interest, with its dramatic scenes and equally dramatic speeches, but they claim that it cannot be taken as a reliable source for historical details.

Before we assume to go along with this judgment we need to be aware of the fact that not all scholars agree with it. Let us look first at the early tradition. We have a number of documents from the closing years of the second century which agree in recognising *Acts* as the second part of a composite work which includes one of the Gospels. They identify the author as Luke, a companion of Paul who is mentioned in three of Paul's letters. In his letter to Philemon, Paul sends greetings from Luke who is named as among his 'fellow workers' (1:24). He sends greetings from 'Luke, the beloved physician' in his letter to the Colossians (4:14). In his Second Letter to Timothy he states: 'Only Luke is with me' (4:11).

In the Muratorian Canon (c.180AD) we read:

Luke was a physician. After the ascension of Christ, when Paul had taken him along with him as one devoted to letters, he wrote it the Gospel under his own name from hearsay. For he himself had not seen the Lord in person ... He began his account with the birth of John.

Writing at about the same time, Irenaeus quotes the texts in which Paul mentions Luke, and identifies Luke as the author of both the Gospel and *Acts* (see *Against the Heresies* 3.1.1 and 3.14.1-4). His is the earliest text in which we find our book called '*The Acts of the Apostles*' (AH 3.13.3). Clement of Alexandria, writing c.200AD, speaks of Luke as the author of the Gospel (*Stromata* 1.21) and of *Acts* (*Stromata* 5.12). We also have the following from an early prologue:

Luke was a Syrian of Antioch, by profession a physician, the disciple of the apostles, and later a follower of Paul, until his martyrdom. He served the Lord without distraction, without a wife and without children. He died at the age of eighty-four in Boeotia, full of the Holy Spirit. Though gospels were already in existence, the Gospel according to Matthew composed in Judea, and the Gospel according to Mark in Italy, Luke was prompted by the Holy Spirit and composed this gospel entirely in the regions about Achaia [Greece] ... Later the same Luke wrote the *Acts of the Apostles*.

– *Prologue to the Gospel*, c.200AD

After 200AD, the attribution of the Gospel and *Acts* to Luke is common. Three examples should suffice. Tertullian, writing in the first decade of the third century, states that it was Paul who inspired Luke to write. He even speaks of Luke's Gospel as 'the Gospel of his teacher, Paul' (*Against Marcion* 4.5.3). Eusebius in his *History of the Church* (3.4), composed c.340AD attributes both books to Luke, as does Jerome in *The Lives of Illustrious Men*, composed in Bethlehem in 492AD. He writes:

Luke, a physician of Antioch, as his writings indicate, was not unskilled in the Greek language. An adherent of the apostle Paul, and companion of all his journeying, he wrote a Gospel, concerning which the same Paul says, 'We send with him a brother whose praise in the gospel is among all the churches' (2Corinthians 8:18), and to the Colossians, 'Luke the beloved physician salutes you' (Colossians 4:14), and to Timothy, 'Luke only is with me' (2Timothy 4:11). He also wrote another excellent volume to which he prefixed the title Acts of the Apostles, a history which extends to the second year of Paul's sojourn at Rome, that is to the fourth year of Nero, from which we learn that the book was composed in that same city.

– The Lives of Illustrious Men, 7

In spite of the amount of writing devoted to the subject, no convincing reasons have been advanced to persuade us to set aside this early and uniform tradition which identifies the author of the Acts as a close companion who was in a position to know Paul well. Furthermore, as we will now demonstrate, Luke explicitly states that he is interested precisely in history. In introducing his two-part work, Luke writes:

- ¹ Since many have undertaken to set down an orderly account
of the events that have been fulfilled among us,
² just as they were handed on to us
by those who from the beginning
were eyewitnesses and servants of the word,
³ I too decided, after investigating everything carefully
from the very first (or 'from above'), to write an orderly account for you,
most excellent Theophilus,
⁴ so that you may know the truth
concerning the things about which you have been instructed.

– Luke 1:1-4

It is clear from this that Luke presents his work as that of an historian. He is interested in 'events', in 'eyewitnesses', and in 'investigating everything carefully'. He is interested in the significance of events, and, as with historians then and now, it is events and their significance that guide his selection and arrangement of his material. His aim is to reassure Theophilus, and through him others who will read his text, that what they have been taught is solidly based on what actually happened. As a historian, his intention is to do this precisely by chronicling events accurately. The more we come to know about the times which Luke is chronicling, the more impressive as history does his writing become.

It is true that some of Luke's sources may not have shared his interest in writing as a historian. The existence of a Western text which is much longer than the Alexandrian text which we will be following shows that what Luke wrote was not simply copied and handed down, but that it was edited, updated, and adapted, which means that the text as we will be presenting it here may well have been through an editorial process of some kind. The complex history of the text, however, while encouraging caution, does not support scepticism about the reliability of *Acts* as history.

Introducing Acts

Today we have strict expectations of the style and method which we judge appropriate for historians. We do not expect poetry or drama from them, nor contrived rhetorical flourishes intended to impress. While we expect historians to be imaginative in the way they arrange their material, they should present the ‘facts’ without adornment. The prevalence of propaganda as well as the insidious nature of prejudice and unsuspected assumptions alert us to be wary of what is actually put forward as history, but we do have strict criteria which we expect historians to follow.

We need to recognise that this was true also of the ancient world. The Greek historian Polybius (died c.122BC) in *The Histories* sums up what was expected of a historian in his day. He asserts that it is best if a historian writes about matters which he has personally witnessed. However, he acknowledges that this is not always possible:

Since many events occur at the same time in different places, and one man cannot be in several places at one time, nor is it possible for a single person to have seen with his own eyes every place in the world and all the peculiar features of different places, the only thing left for a historian is to inquire of as many people as possible, to believe those worthy of belief, and to be an adequate critic of the reports that reach him.

– The Histories 12.4c

Polybius is critical of a contemporary historian, Timaeus, who ‘diligently pursued the reading of books, but was very remiss in his interrogation of living witnesses ... Personal inquiry is the most important part of history’ (12.27). He is not impressed by those who ‘after spending a long time in libraries and becoming deeply learned in memoirs and records, persuade themselves that they are adequately qualified for the task’ (12.25e). Flavius Josephus, writing in the first century AD, for all his tendency to exaggeration, insists that it is the duty of an historian to have an accurate knowledge of the facts ‘either through having been in close touch with the events or by inquiry from those who knew them’ (*Against Apion* 1.10.53). The focus is on immediate contact with the facts rather than on critical study of written material.

Historians then, as now, were quite aware of the propensity of people to put on record only what they wanted people to read and to select with this in mind. Careful historians judged it easier to assess critically an oral statement face to face than to assess a written document. Hence Luke’s insistence on ‘eyewitnesses’. Luke does not claim in his Prologue to be himself an eyewitness – after all, he was not an eyewitness of Jesus’ public ministry, death or resurrection, nor was he an eyewitness of the events in the early Jerusalem community. However, there are sections in the Acts where he introduces the word ‘we’, and since as early as the second century this has been understood as an indication that Luke himself was with Paul and witnessed the events which he chronicles (Irenaeus AH 3.14.1). If this is the case, Luke journeyed with Paul from Troas to Philippi (see Acts 16:10-17), from Philippi to Jerusalem (see Acts 20:5-15; 21:1-18), and from Caesarea to Rome (see Acts 27:1-28:16). The time which he spent in Palestine and in Rome would have given him ample opportunity to do the careful investigations of which he speaks. It would be naive to assume that Luke got every detail exactly right, but there is no justification for dismissing what Luke has to say about the events that he records.

One feature of the Acts requires special attention. Luke has five speeches by Peter, one by Stephen and six by Paul. Together these twelve speeches make up twenty-two percent of the whole work. If we add the rest of the material that is in direct speech, we find that it comes to over fifty percent of the content. Everyone agrees that the speeches as presented are composed by the author. The question is whether he was free simply to create them as a means of expressing his understanding of the significance of the occasion, or whether, as an historian, he was expected to base his composition of speeches on careful investigation of what was actually said on the occasion.

To discover what was expected by ancient historians, we turn first to Lucian of Samosata (died 180AD). In his *'How to write history'*, he agrees with modern historians in stating that 'the sole task of the historian is to tell things just as they happened' (n.39). However, a little later (n.58) he gives greater latitude than would modern historians when it comes to the composing of speeches. He writes:

If someone has to be brought in to give a speech, above all let the language suit the person and the subject ... It is then that you can exercise your rhetoric and show your eloquence.

– Lucian, *How to write history*, 58

Thucydides (died c.400BC) allows historians to compose speeches, but only after careful investigation and only with the aim of giving 'the general sense of what was actually said' (*Histories* 1.22.1). Polybius has this to say:

If writers, after indicating to us the situation and the motives and inclinations of the people involved, report in the next place what was actually said, and then make clear to us the reasons why the speaker either succeeded or failed, we shall arrive at some true notions of the actual facts.

– *The Histories* 12.25i

No doubt Luke use the speeches to emphasise those insights that he is particularly interested in conveying to his readers. However, since there is ample evidence, especially in the material concerning Paul, that Luke has, indeed, 'investigated everything carefully', we should begin with the presumption that Luke was careful in questioning Paul as well as others who were present as to what Paul said on the various occasions that Luke chronicles. There are good grounds for accepting the verdict of those scholars who claim that Luke was a good historian, and that, as a close companion of Paul, he was in an especially good position to write about his journeys and teaching (see Chapter 8 of *'The Book of Acts in the setting of hellenistic history'* by Colin Hemer [Eisenbrauns, 1990]).

We should also keep in mind Luke's aim, which was to communicate to his contemporaries his insight into the significance of the various occasions as witnessing to *God's design* as Luke had come to perceive it through the events that actually happened in the early years of the church's life. When Luke says that he has 'investigated everything carefully', he adds, in Greek, 'anōthen'. This can mean 'from the very first'. It can also mean 'from above'. Both are true. If we translate 'from above', Luke is telling us that he has ascertained the facts and that he wishes to present them in such a way as to invite us to see God's design in what has happened in history.

Introducing Acts

When he has Paul declare to the elders of Ephesus: ‘I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God’ (20:27), Luke is speaking for himself as well. The fact that Acts was treasured by the Christian community gives us confidence that Luke’s fellow Christians judged that he did express valid insights into the action of the Spirit of the risen Jesus in the early history of Christianity, into the life of the early Christian communities, and into the witness to Jesus given especially by Peter, Stephen and Paul.

Luke is writing to record the facts. He is also a believer and he wishes to share with his readers what he has come to believe. The focus which he puts on events, the way he arranges his material, and especially the way in which he composes the speeches given by the chief characters in his narrative, are all intended to encourage faith in the reader. However, it is important to repeat that Luke is a historian. He is interested in what really happened, and his rhetorical and dramatic account has only one object in mind: to indicate the significance, as he sees it, of what really happened in the early Christian communities.

Luke’s achievement as a historian is impressive. This does not mean that he got everything exactly right. In introducing the narrative of Jesus’ birth, for example, Luke states:

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria.

– Luke 2:1-2

The only registration in Judea during the time of Augustus of which we have evidence was, indeed, ‘taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria’. It was, however, in 6/7AD, some ten years after Jesus’ birth. From Luke’s perspective, the two events belonged roughly to the same period. By linking them, he was able to place Jesus on the world stage from the beginning as the real Peacemaker and Saviour. By way of contrast, Luke was quite accurate in the details which give the historical context for the ministry of both John the Baptist and Jesus (see Luke 3:1-2).

It is likely that Luke made another mistake in Acts in a speech given by Gamaliel:

For some time ago Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody, and a number of men, about four hundred, joined him; but he was killed, and all who followed him were dispersed and disappeared. After him Judas the Galilean rose up at the time of the census and got people to follow him; he also perished, and all who followed him were scattered.

– Acts 5:36-37

Judas the Galilean did, indeed, ‘rise up at the time of the census’, but, if Flavius Josephus is correct, the revolt led by Theudas happened some ten years *after* the time when Gamaliel would have given this speech.

While we have to be open to Luke’s not always having accurate information, his achievement remains impressive.

In keeping with biblical tradition, Luke looks at history at two levels. There is the level of human cause and effect, which, as we have noted, Luke does his best to record as accurately as his sources and investigation allowed. There is also the mysterious level of divine will, and, as a historian seeking to discover and communicate the significance of events, it is this divine level which he seeks to underline. Alone among the authors of the New Testament he speaks of 'God's purpose' (see Luke 7:30; Acts 2:23; 4:28; 13:36; 20:27). It is with this divine design in mind that he frequently speaks of what 'must' happen (fifteen times in his Gospel and twenty-four times in Acts). There is no question here of denying human freedom or responsibility. Luke, however, looks beyond human cause and effect and sees a design in history that reveals the presence and action of God's Holy Spirit, in Israel, in Jesus, and in the community of Jesus' disciples. It is this which he wishes to highlight, and it is to this that we should attend as we read his narrative.

He sees Jesus as the flowering of the action of the Spirit of God in the history of Israel. It is Jesus who reveals the action of the Holy Spirit in all its purity and clarity, and he reveals it as a constant and faithful action of love, drawing all people to the salvation that consists in enjoying the communion of love with God which was experienced by Jesus. Once Jesus' time on earth was ended, the same Spirit that inspired Jesus continues to inspire his followers. Jesus continues his healing, liberating and saving ministry through them. At the announcement of Jesus' conception we are told: 'Of his kingdom there will be no end' (Luke 1:33). In Acts, Luke will demonstrate the powerful growth of the reign of God's love 'to the ends of the earth' (Acts 1:8), beginning in Jerusalem and ending in Rome.

It is not for us 'to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority' (Acts 1:7). God's loving action in history is free and unpredictable. In the Gospel, Luke keeps our attention focused on Jesus. In the Acts, Jesus is no longer walking our streets. Instead, we are asked to listen for his word as it is proclaimed by those commissioned by him, and to open our minds and our hearts to the action of God's Holy Spirit.

We are all called to experience the intimacy of divine love which we have seen in Jesus and which we have seen Jesus sharing with his contemporaries. Now, in the present moment of our history, in whatever city or countryside we inhabit, we, too, are called to share in Jesus' experience of God and to be instruments of God's loving inspiration, whatever our circumstances and however hopeful or bleak the horizon.

We are to be 'merciful, just as our Father is merciful' (Luke 6:36). This is not a matter of imitation from the outside, as it were. The risen and glorified Jesus pours out his own Spirit upon us so that we can share in his compassionate love and so be witnesses of God's saving purpose. Through his own personal experience and in his own lifetime, Luke knew that 'the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles' (Acts 10:45), and he insists again and again that no one is an outsider to the outpouring of God's saving grace. It is the privilege and the mission of those who follow Jesus and who live his life to carry the good news of God's loving design to the ends of the earth, forming a community of love which embraces every culture and every people.

Introducing Acts

For Luke, as for Paul his mentor, there is a mysterious consistency in God's loving design. A careful reading of Acts shows that far from Israel being rejected, or being no longer relevant, it is the Christian community which carries on the mission entrusted to Israel by God. In the Christian community Jews and Gentiles are to live in different ways but in mutual respect and in loving harmony. It is not accidental that all the great missionaries featured in Acts are Jews who have seen God's design and whose fidelity to Judaism impelled them to become disciples of Jesus and to carry out his mission of love, so that Abraham would indeed be 'the father of many nations' (Genesis 17:4). When Paul is not accepted in the synagogue, far from rejecting the Jews, he takes upon himself the mission which they are loathe to shoulder. He does so for them and on their behalf, impelled by the same Holy Spirit who inspired the prophets and whose promised salvation was fulfilled in Jesus and is now being fulfilled in the Church to which all Jews and all peoples are welcome, for, as Isaiah states: 'All flesh will see the salvation of God' (Isaiah 40:5, quoted Luke 3:6). Paul's letters are in complete agreement with Luke in this regard.

Date of composition

Most scholars date the Gospel after the destruction of Jerusalem (70AD) and opt for a date for the publication of Luke-Acts somewhere between 80-85AD. When writing an introductory commentary on Luke's Gospel, I saw no reason to question this. However, on further investigation I find no firm basis for this dating. The arguments for an earlier date seem now to me to be more persuasive. Granted that Luke is interested in the relationship of the Christian community to both Judaism and the Roman empire, it is surprising that he makes no reference either to the Roman-Jewish war and the destruction of Jerusalem (66-70AD) or to the Roman persecution under Nero (64AD). Furthermore, as a historian, he makes no attempt to reflect on the significance of these important events for the themes which he is developing. It is possible that he simply wished to conclude his work with the gospel being proclaimed from the heart of the Roman Empire. Other reasons are suggested for these omissions, but there are scholars who make a good case for dating Luke-Acts in 62AD, before these events took place. By 62AD, Luke's careful investigations have been going on for over four years. By then he was also in a position to have met Mark and to see Mark's Gospel as providing an excellent structure into which to introduce his own findings.

Note on the text of Acts

Along with the majority of commentators, we shall be using what is generally called the Eastern or Alexandrian text, represented by a third century papyrus codex (P⁴⁵) and by two fourth century parchment codexes, Sinaiticus and Vaticanus. There is a longer text, called the Western text, represented especially by the Bezae codex in the Cambridge library. Whereas there are 18,401 words in the Alexandrian text, there are 19,983 words in the Western text. The additions in the Western text are mainly of three kinds: it likes to add emphasis, to add titles to Jesus' name, and to emphasise the inspired quality of words and actions. Most scholars consider the Western text to be secondary.

Dating the events recorded in Acts

The information given us by Luke in relation to Paul's stay in Corinth (Acts 18:1-18) enables us conclude that Paul was in Corinth in 51AD. By working back from that date, and forward from it, we are able to establish an approximate date line for the events recorded by Luke. There is a wide range of different opinions on details, but arguments can be brought forward to establish the following as a reasonable reconstruction.

33	Jesus' crucifixion
34	Paul's conversion and preaching in and around Damascus (Acts 9:1-22; Galatians 1:17)
37	Paul escapes from Damascus and visits Jerusalem (Acts 9:23-29; Galatians 1:18-20, 2Corinthians 11:32-33)
37-45	Paul preaches in and around Tarsus in Cilicia (Acts 9:30; 11:25-29; Galatians 1:21-24)
45	Paul is invited by Barnabas to work in Antioch (Acts 11:25-26)
46	Paul visits Jerusalem with Barnabas and has an important meeting with Peter, John and James (Acts 11:30; Galatians 2:1-10)
47-48	Missionary Journey to Cyprus and Southern Galatia (Acts 13:1 -14:28; Galatians 4:13-14; 2Timothy 3:11)
49	The Jerusalem Conference (Acts 15:1-29)
49 spring-summer	Journey through Syria-Cilicia and Galatia, to Troas (Acts 15:35 - 16:10)
49-50 autumn--winter	Paul is in Philippi with Silas and Timothy (Acts 16:11-40; 1Thessalonians 2:2; 2Corinthians 11:9)
50 spring-summer	The missionaries are in Thessalonica and Berea (Acts 17:1-14; 1Thessalonians 2:1-2; Philippians 4:15-16)
50 autumn	Paul arrives in Corinth via Athens Athens (Acts 17:15-34; 1Thessalonians 3:1) Corinth (Acts 18:1-18; 1Thessalonians 3:6)

Introducing Acts

52 spring	Paul leaves Corinth for Jerusalem, staying over briefly in Ephesus (Acts 18:18-22)
52 summer	Paul visits Antioch and journeys through Galatia to Ephesus (Acts 18:23; 19:1)
52 autumn	Paul begins three year stay in Ephesus (Acts 19:1 - 20:1; 1Corinthians 16:8)
55 summer	Paul leaves Ephesus for Troas and Macedonia (Acts 20:1; 2Corinthians 2:12-13; 7:5-6; 9:2-4)
56	Mission in Macedonia and Illyricum (Acts 20:2; Romans 15:19)
56-57	Paul spends the winter in Corinth (Acts 20:3; 2Corinthians 13:1; Romans 15:26; 16:1)
57 spring	Paul journeys through Macedonia and Troas to Miletus (Acts 20:3-38) Paul continues his journey to Caesarea and on to Jerusalem (Acts 21:1 - 23:30)
57-59	Paul is held in custody in Caesarea (Acts 23:31 - 26:32)
59 autumn	Paul is taken under guard from Caesarea to Malta (Acts 27:1-44)
59-60	The crew along with Paul and his guards spend the winter in Malta (Acts 28:1-10)
60 spring	The sea voyage from Malta to Rome (Acts 28:11-14)
60-62	Paul is in Rome awaiting trial (Acts 28:15-31)

The Structure of Acts

Section I. The exalted Jesus and the gift of the Holy Spirit

- | | |
|---|---------|
| 1. Jesus' final words and ascension | 1:1-11 |
| 2. Awaiting in prayer the One promised by the Father | 1:12-14 |
| 3. Twelve : symbol of a unified Israel and its mission to the world | 1:15-26 |
| 4. All were filled with the Holy Spirit | 2:1-13 |

Section II. Witnessing to Jesus in Jerusalem

Part 1. Witnessing to Jesus as the Lord-Messiah, the Servant-Son and the Rejected and Exalted Saviour

- | | |
|--|---------|
| 1. Witnessing to Jesus as the Lord-Messiah | 2:14-36 |
| 2. Exhortation to repent and be baptised | 2:37-41 |
| 3. The community of the Lord-Messiah | 2:42-47 |
| 4. The restoration of Israel: a lame man is healed | 3:1-10 |
| 5. Witnessing to Jesus as the Servant-Son of God | 3:11-26 |
| 6. Peter and John are arrested | 4:1-4 |
| 7. Witnessing to Jesus as the rejected and exalted Saviour | 4:5-22 |
| 8. The community in prayer and in fellowship | 4:23-37 |

Part 2. The call to repent and be saved

- | | |
|--|---------|
| 1. Sin in the church | 5:1-11 |
| 2. Jesus' saving action continues through those who witness to him | 5:12-16 |
| 3. The arrest and miraculous liberation of the apostles | 5:17-26 |
| 4. The religious leaders are challenged to repent and be saved | 5:27-42 |

Part 3. Ministry to the Greek-speaking Christian Jews in Jerusalem

- | | |
|--|-------------|
| 1. Seven are chosen to minister to the Greek-speakers | 6:1-7 |
| 2. Accusations levelled against Stephen | 6:8-14 |
| 3. A Jewish-Christian reading of the history of Israel | 6:15 - 7:50 |
| 4. A prophetic denunciation and a prophetic vision | 7:51-56 |
| 5. The first martyr | 7:57 - 8:1a |

Introducing Acts

Section III. The word spreads from Jerusalem to Caesarea:

Part 1. A renewed and unified Israel

1. Samaritans are welcomed into communion 8:1b-25
2. The word is welcomed by a Jew from the Diaspora 8:26-40

Part 2. The conversion of the persecutor who becomes a witness to Jesus

1. The persecutor 9:1-2
2. Saul encounters the Living One and is welcomed into the community 9:3-19a
3. Saul witnesses to Jesus in Damascus 9:19b-25
4. Saul is welcomed in Jerusalem where he continues his witness 9:26-31

Part 3. Gentiles are welcomed into the church

1. Peter moves out beyond Jerusalem 9:32-43
2. Peter welcomes Gentiles into the community 10:1-48
3. The Jerusalem community recognises the Gentiles 11:1-18

Section IV. The Church in Antioch : the Wonders of God's Grace

Part 1. Antioch and Jerusalem

1. The 'Christians' in Antioch 11:19-26
2. Caring for the church in Jerusalem 11:27-30
3. Peter is freed from prison and leaves Jerusalem 12:1-17
4. The death of Herod Agrippa 12:18-23
5. Barnabas and Saul return to Antioch 12:24-25

Part 2. A missionary expedition from Antioch

1. Missionaries are sent from Antioch and reach Cyprus 13:1-12
2. Paul proclaims Jesus in the synagogue in Antioch (Pisidia) 13:13-43
3. The missionaries answer the call to proclaim Jesus to the Gentiles 13:44-52
4. Acceptance and opposition in Iconium 14:1-7
5. Paul survives stoning in Lystra 14:8-20
6. Return journey from Derbe to Antioch 14:21-28

Part 3. The Jerusalem Assembly

1. To be saved, do Gentiles need to follow the law of Moses? 15:1-6
2. Peter's prophetic word 15:7-12
3. A pastoral decision is made by James 15:13-21
4. The decision is sent to Antioch 15:22-35

Section V. Proclaiming the Word from city to city**Part 1. Macedonia and Achaia**

- | | |
|--|---------------|
| 1. Drawn to Macedonia | 15:36 - 16:10 |
| 2. Philippi: the liberating Word | 16:11-40 |
| 3. Thessalonica and Beroea: encounter with Jewish ideology | 17:1-15 |
| 4. Athens: encounter with Greek 'wisdom' | 17:16-34 |
| 5. Corinth: the synagogue, the city and the courtroom | 18:1-18 |

Part 2. Ephesus

- | | |
|--|----------|
| 1. Drawn to Ephesus | 18:19-28 |
| 2. A new Pentecost | 19:1-7 |
| 3. Proclaiming the Word | 19:8-20 |
| 4. To Jerusalem and on to Rome | 19:21-22 |
| 5. An encounter with pagan economy: Artemis of the Ephesians | 19:23-41 |
| 6. A final visit: from Ephesus to Corinth and back | 20:1-16 |
| 7. Paul's farewell to the east | 20:17-38 |
| 8. Heading for Jerusalem | 21:1-14 |

Section VI. Paul the prisoner: a witness to grace**Part 1. prophetic witness in the midst of his people**

- | | |
|--|---------------|
| 1. Paul as a loyal and faithful Jew | 21:15-26 |
| 2. Seized in the Temple | 21:27-40 |
| 3. Witnessing before the Jewish crowd | 22:1-21 |
| 4. A Roman citizen | 22:22-29 |
| 5. Witnessing before the Sanhedrin | 22:30 - 23:11 |
| 6. A conspiracy to kill Paul | 23:12-22 |
| 7. Transferred to the tribunal of the governor | 23:23-35 |

Part 2. Prophetic witness before the nations

- | | |
|---|---------------|
| 1. Witnessing before the Roman governor | 24:1-21 |
| 2. Detention in Caesarea | 24:22-27 |
| 3. Appeal to the court of Caesar | 25:1-12 |
| 4. A Jewish king and a Roman governor | 25:13-22 |
| 5. Witnessing before king and governor | 25:23 - 26:23 |
| 6. Paul's prayer | 26:24-32 |

Introducing Acts

Part 3. To Rome

A. A sea voyage to Rome

1. From Caesarea to Crete 27:1-8
2. Caught in a storm 27:9-20
3. Hope and salvation 27:21-44
4. Malta welcomes the missionary 28:1-10
5. Arrival in Rome 28:11-16

B. Witnessing in Rome

1. A prisoner because of the hope of Israel 28:17-22
2. 'I would heal them' : Salvation offered to the nations 28:23-31

Acts in the Liturgy

1:1-11	Ascension
1:12-14	7th Sunday of Easter, Year A
1:15-17, 20-26	7th Sunday of Easter, Year B
1:18-19	not in lectionary
2:1-11	Pentecost (day)
2:12-13,15-21	not in lectionary
2:14, 22-32	Monday of 1st week of Easter
2:14, 22-28	3rd Sunday of Easter, Year A
2:14, 36-41	4th Sunday of Easter, Year A
2:33-35	not in lectionary
2:36-41	Tuesday of 1st week of Easter
2:42-47	2nd Sunday of Easter, Year A
3:1-10	Wednesday of 1st week of Easter
3:11-26	Thursday of 1st week of Easter
3:13-15, 17-19	3rd Sunday of Easter, Year B
4:1-12	Friday of 1st week of Easter
4:8-12	4th Sunday of Easter, Year B
4:13-21	Saturday of 1st week of Easter
4:22	not in lectionary
4:23-31	Monday of 2nd week of Easter
4:32-37	Tuesday of 2nd week of Easter
4:32-35	2nd Sunday of Easter, Year B
5:1-11	not in lectionary
5:12-16	2nd Sunday of Easter, Year C
5:17-26	Wednesday of 2nd Sunday of Easter
5:27-32, 40-41	3rd Sunday of Easter, Year C
5:27-33	Thursday of 2nd week of Easter
5:34-42	Friday of 2nd week of Easter
6:1-7	5th Sunday of Easter, Year A
6:1-7	Saturday of 2nd week of Easter
6:8-15	Monday of 3rd week of Easter
7:1-50	not in lectionary
7:51 - 8:1	Tuesday of 3rd week of Easter
7:55-60	7th Sunday of Easter, Year C
8:1-8	Wednesday of 3rd week of Easter
8:9-13, 18-25	not in lectionary
8:5-8, 14-17	6th Sunday of Easter, Year A
8:26-40	Thursday of 3rd week of Easter
9:1-20	Friday of 3rd week of Easter
9:21-25	not in lectionary
9:26-31	5th Sunday of Easter, Year B
9:31-42	Saturday of 3rd week of Easter
9:43	not in lectionary

Introducing Acts

10:1-24, 27-33	not in lectionary
10:25-26, 34-35, 44-48	6th Sunday of Easter, Year B
10:34-38	Baptism of our Lord
10:34, 37-43	Easter (day)
11:1-18	Monday of 4th week of Easter
11:19-26	Tuesday of 4th week of Easter
11:27-30	not in lectionary
12:1-23	not in lectionary
12:24 - 13:5	Wednesday of 4th week of Easter
13:6-12	not in lectionary
13:13-25	Thursday of 4th week of Easter
13:14, 43-52	4th Sunday of Easter, Year C
13:16-17, 22-25	Christmas Eve
13:26-33	Friday of 4th week of Easter
13:34-43	not in lectionary
13:44-52	Saturday of 4th week of Easter
14:1-4	not in lectionary
14:5-18	Monday of 5th week of Easter
14:19-28	Tuesday of 5th week of Easter
14:21-27	5th Sunday of Easter, Year C
15:1-6	Wednesday of 5th week of Easter
15:1-2, 22-29	6th Sunday of Easter, Year C
15:7-21	Thursday of 5th week of Easter
15:22-31	Friday of 5th week of Easter
15:32-41	not in lectionary
16:1-10	Saturday of 5th week of Easter
16:11-15	Monday of 6th week of Easter
16:16-21, 35-40	not in lectionary
16:22-34	Tuesday of 6th week of Easter
17:1-14, 16-21	not in lectionary
17:15,22-18:1	Wednesday of 6th week of Easter
18:1-8	Thursday of 6th week of Easter
18:9-18	Friday of 6th week of Easter
18:19-22	not in lectionary
18:23-28	Saturday of 6th week of Easter
19:1-8	Monday 7th week of Easter
19:9-41	not in lectionary
20:1-16	not in lectionary
20:17-27	Tuesday of 7th week of Easter
20:28-38	Wednesday of 7th week of Easter
21:1-40	not in lectionary
22:1-29	not in lectionary
22:30; 23:6-11	Thursday of 7th week of Easter

23:1-5, 12-35	not in lectionary
24:1-27	not in lectionary
25:1-12	not in lectionary
25:13-21	Friday of 7th week of Easter
25:22-27	not in lectionary
26:1-32	not in lectionary
27:1-44	not in lectionary
28:1-15, 21-29	not in lectionary
28:16-20,30-31	Saturday of 7th week of Easter

Season of Easter

EASTER SUNDAY Acts 10:34, 37-43

Monday : Acts 2:14, 22-32
 Wednesday : Acts 3:1-10
 Friday : Acts 4:1-12

Tuesday : Acts 2:36-41
 Thursday : Acts 3:11-26
 Saturday : Acts 4:13-21

SUNDAY 2 Year A : Acts 2:42-47
 Year B : Acts 4:32-35
 Year C : Acts 5:12-16

Monday : Acts 4:23-31
 Wednesday : Acts 5:17-26
 Friday : Acts 5:34-42

Tuesday : Acts 4:32-37
 Thursday : Acts 5:27-33
 Saturday : Acts 6:1-7

SUNDAY 3 Year A : Acts 2:14, 22-28
 Year B : Acts 3:13-15, 17-19
 Year C : Acts 5:27-32, 40-41

Monday : Acts 6:8-15
 Wednesday : Acts 8:1-8
 Friday : Acts 9:1-20

Tuesday : Acts 7:51 - 8:1
 Thursday : Acts 8:26-40
 Saturday : Acts 9:31-42

SUNDAY 4 Year A : Acts 2:14, 36-41
 Year B : Acts 4:8-12
 Year C : Acts 13:14, 43-52

Monday : Acts 11:1-18
 Wednesday : Acts 12:24 - 13:5
 Friday : Acts 13:26-33

Tuesday : Acts 11:19-26
 Thursday : Acts 13:13-25
 Saturday : Acts 13:44-52

Introducing Acts

SUNDAY 5

Year A : Acts 6:1-7
Year B : Acts 9:26-31
Year C : Acts 14:21-27

Monday : Acts 14:5-18
Wednesday : Acts 15:1-6
Friday : Acts 15:22-31

Tuesday : Acts 14:19-26
Thursday : Acts 15:7-21
Saturday : Acts 16:1-10

SUNDAY 6

Year A : Acts 8:5-8, 14-17
Year B : Acts 10:25-26, 34-35, 44-48
Year C : Acts 15:1-2, 22-29

Monday : Acts 16:11-15
Wednesday : Acts 17:15.22 - 18:1

Tuesday : Acts 16:22-34
Thursday : Acts 18:1-8

ASCENSION THURSDAY Acts 1:1-11

Friday: Acts 18:9-18

Saturday : Acts 18:23-28

SUNDAY 7

Year A : Acts 1:12-14
Year B : Acts 1:15-17, 20-26
Year C : Acts 7:55-60

Monday : Acts 19:1-8
Wednesday : Acts 20:28-38
Friday : Acts 25:13-21

Tuesday : Acts 20:17-27
Thursday : Acts 22:30; 23:6-11
Saturday : Acts 28:16-20, 30-31

PENTECOST SUNDAY Acts 2:1-11

Outside the Season of Easter

CHRISTMAS EVE Acts 13:16-17, 22-25

BAPTISM OF OUR LORD Acts 10:34-38