

THE BOOK OF ACTS | GOD'S REVELATION OF TRANSITION

SESSION 1: THE RECORD OF DISPENSATIONAL CHANGE | JANUARY 8, 2014

THE MISGUIDED TEACHING OF THE BOOK OF ACTS.

- The common concept is that the Book of Acts gives a history of the church and serves as a pattern for how the church should operate.
 - The purpose of Acts, then, is to convince Theophilus that no one is able to hinder the victorious march of Christ's gospel.¹
 - One of Luke's goals was to, "to describe the establishment and growth of the early church from the ascension to the imprisonment of Paul."²
 - "Acts intends to describe how the apostles continued this work of Jesus. The Gospel begins in Jerusalem and fans out over the whole Roman world to the Imperial City itself."³
 - Luke was concerned to show how the church began in Jerusalem, in the heart of Judaism, and how it expanded with an even greater impact on the Gentiles. Luke showed how Jewish and Gentile Christians with their major differences learned how to have fellowship together, a lesson still very relevant to the life of the church.⁴

The typical understanding-

- Acts is the story of the birth of the church.
- Acts displays the early days of the church and sets the pattern for the church.
- The work of the Holy Spirit in the book of Acts is indicative of His work in the church today.

THE MEASURE OF THE PROBLEM. IF ACTS IS THE STORY AND PATTERN OF THE CHURCH-

- What shall we preach?
 - Acts 2:38 or Acts 16:31?
- How shall we give?
 - Acts 2:45 or Acts 11:29
- What protection shall we find?
 - Acts 12:11 or Acts 26:32
- What Spirit-empowerment will be ours?
 - Acts 2:4 or Acts 28:25

WHAT IF WE DIDN'T HAVE THE BOOK OF ACTS?

- The Book of Romans would open and close with dozens of questions.
 - Who is Paul?
 - What happened to the 12 Apostles?
 - Why are the gentiles so prominent?

¹ Kistemaker, Simon J., and William Hendriksen. *Exposition of the Acts of the Apostles*. Vol. 17. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1953–2001. Print. New Testament Commentary.

² Gangel, Kenneth O. *Acts*. Vol. 5. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1998. Print. Holman New Testament Commentary.

³ Gaertner, Dennis. *Acts*. Joplin, MO: College Press, 1995. Print. The College Press NIV Commentary.

⁴ Polhill, John B. "Acts." *Holman Concise Bible Commentary*. Ed. David S. Dockery. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1998. 497–498. Print.

- The prominent issue of “neither Jew nor Greek” would be utterly mysterious.
- Where did all these churches come from?
- What’s up with the Holy Spirit?

THE MEANING OF THE BOOK OF ACTS

- Acts is not about the birth of the church, but the “concluding” of Israel in unbelief (Romans 11:32).
- The Book of Acts is the transition between God’s dealing with Israel to His mysterious (unforeseen) work with the church.
- In this study of the book of Acts, we will see
 - the Kingdom offered, with all the power of the Holy Spirit
 - the Kingdom rejected by the nation of Israel
 - the Gospel proclaimed to Jew and gentile
 - the Church established after Israel was

A FUNDAMENTAL VIEW OF ACTS

- Sadly, many modern dispensationalists (and all Covenant Theologians) reject a “transition” revelation in the book of Acts.
 - They are parrots, refusing to look at the very fundamental theological issues of the book.
 - Since the days of H.A. Ironside, those who hold my view have been considered “heretics” within dispensationalism.
- If only those who throw stones would consider the words of C.I. Scofield-

“Acts is in two chief parts: In the first section (1–9:43) Peter is the prominent personage, Jerusalem is the centre, and the ministry is to Jews. Already in covenant relations with Jehovah, they had sinned in rejecting Jesus as *the Christ*. The preaching, therefore, was directed to that point, and repentance (i.e. “a changed mind”) was demanded. The apparent failure of the Old Testament promises concerning the Davidic kingdom was explained by the promise that the kingdom would be set up at the return of Christ (Acts 2:25–31; 15:14–16). This ministry to Israel fulfilled Lk. 19:12–14. In the persecutions of the apostles and finally in the martyrdom of Stephen, the Jews sent after the king the message, “We will not have this man to reign over us.” In the second division (10:1–28:31) Paul is prominent, a new centre is established at Antioch, and the ministry is chiefly to Gentiles who, as “strangers from the covenants of promise” (Eph. 2:12), had but to “believe on the Lord Jesus Christ” to be saved. Chapters 11, 12, and 15 of this section are transitional, establishing finally the distinction, doctrinally, between law and grace. Galatians should be read in this connection. The events recorded in The Acts cover a period of 32 years.”⁵

⁵ C. I. Scofield, ed., *The Scofield Reference Bible: The Holy Bible Containing the Old and New Testaments* (New York; London; Toronto; Melbourne; Bombay: Oxford University Press, 1917), 1147.