

Foothills Christian Assembly Sermon January 2, 2022
Acts 1: 1 – 3 “Introduction to the Book of Acts”

The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, 2 until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, 3 to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

4 And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," He said, "you have heard from Me; 5 for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." 6 Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" 7 And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. 8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." 9 Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. 10 And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, 11 who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven." 12 Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey.

I. Introduction

a. Acts 1:1-3 “Introduction to the Book of Acts”

- i. The Former Account I made v1 – Luke is the author
- ii. O Theophilus v1 – Theophilus is the primary audience
- iii. The Former Account: all that Jesus began both to do and teach v1
- iv. Until the Day in which He was taken up: Ascension v2
- v. Christ’s commandments He gave to His apostles by the Spirit v2
- vi. Many Infallible Proofs v3
- vii. The Kingdom of God v3

II. The Former Account I made v1 – Acts has the same author as Luke

a. “The former account I made”

b. While neither Luke nor Acts names the author, there is very little debate over the authorship of this two-volume work. This introduction requires the two works to have the same author.

- i. Bock “The Pauline letters name some of the potential candidates who traveled with Paul: Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke (Philem. 24; Col. 4:14). To this list, one could add figures such as Timothy, Titus, Silas, Epaphras, and Barnabas. Yet despite the wide selection of potential candidates available as companions of Paul, the tradition of the church gives attention to only one name as the author of these volumes—Luke. This tradition was firmly fixed in the early church by a.d. 200 and remained so without any hint of contrary opinion. The absence of any dispute about this detail is a strong reason to take the tradition seriously.

Allusions to the Gospel appear as early as 1 Clem. 13.2; 48.4 (ca. 95–96); 2 Clem. 13.4 (ca. 100). In addition, a use of Jesus’ teaching, as reflected in Luke 10:7, appears in 1 Tim. 5:18. Numerous texts comment on authorship. Justin Martyr (ca. 160) in *Dialogue with Trypho* 103.19 speaks of Luke writing a “memoir of Jesus” and notes that the author is a follower of Paul. The Muratorian Canon (ca. 170–180) attributes the Gospel to Luke, a doctor, who is Paul’s companion. Irenaeus (ca. 175–195) in *Against Heresies* 3.1.1 and 3.14.1 attributes the Gospel to Luke, follower of Paul, and notes how the “we” sections suggest the connection. The so-called Anti-Marcionite Prologue to Luke (ca. 175) describes Luke as a native of Antioch in Syria (Acts 11:19–30; 13:1–3; 15:30–35). It says he lived to be 84, was a doctor, was unmarried, wrote in Achaia, and died in Boeotia. Tertullian (early third century) in *Against Marcion* 4.2.2 and 4.5.3 calls the Gospel a digest of Paul’s gospel. The Monarchian Prologue (date disputed: either third or fourth century) gives Luke’s age at death as 74. Finally, Eusebius (early fourth century) in *Ecclesiastical History* 3.4.2 mentions Luke as a companion to Paul, native of Antioch, and author of these volumes.”¹

- III. O Theophilus v1 – this man is the primary audience
 - a. “The former account I made, O Theophilus” – Theophilus is the primary audience
 - b. Who is Theophilus? Remember, this man was also mentioned in the introduction to Luke.
 - i. Luke 1:1-4 “Inasmuch as many have taken in hand to set in order a narrative of those things which have been fulfilled among us, 2 just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered them to us, 3 it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account, most excellent Theophilus, 4 that you may know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed.”
 - ii. Luke wrote his Gospel (“an orderly account”) to Theophilus
 - 1. Why? So that Theophilus would have complete certainty in the truth and reliability of the things in which he had been instructed. The Gospel of Luke was written as a discipleship document to Theophilus so he would be sure of his beliefs.
 - 2. Hence, we can extrapolate that Luke is continuing in this same purpose. Luke-Acts serve as a two-volume discipleship document to strengthen the faith of this man, Theophilus.
 - 3. Bock “In treating Luke 1:3, Bock (1994a: 63–64) suggests that Theophilus’s identity is unknown but that he appears to be a person of high social standing and could well be a Christian Gentile wavering in his faith because of the pressure placed on the churchThe name means “friend or beloved by God.” He

¹ Bock, D. L. (1994). [Luke: 1:1–9:50](#) (Vol. 1, p. 5). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

could be a patron or simply the most important intended reader. Barrett (1994: 65) notes that the name is common and that Luke 1:3 with “most excellent” in its address speaks to a person, not an “ideal” figure. In other words, Theophilus is not a symbolic reference to those beloved of God (Bruce 1990: 98 agrees).²

- iii. “Most excellent” κράτιστε – Theophilus was likely a dignitary of some sort, either in the civil or ecclesiastical realm.
 1. Bock “The identity and spiritual status of Theophilus are unknown. Some have suggested that the name is symbolic of “pious Christians,” since the name means “beloved of God”However, the address to him with the vocative κράτιστε seems to indicate a specific person of high social standing (Acts 23:26; 24:3; 26:25). This greeting could suggest that Theophilus is the patron or monetary backer of Luke’s work ... but there is no clear way to determine this point.”³
- c. But, the impact of this work is by no means limited to one individual. Any person seeking to be sure of the key events and teachings of Jesus’ life would greatly benefit from the book of Luke, and anyone seeking similar certainty about the early Church will greatly benefit from the book of Acts.

IV. The Former Account: all that Jesus began both to do and teach v1

- a. “The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach”
- b. Luke desires for Theophilus to reflect back over the Gospel of Luke prior to reading the 2nd volume, Acts. And, Luke summarizes the Book of Luke in this fashion: “all that Jesus began both to do and teach”
- c. Recall the overview outline of the Book of Luke
 - i. “Luke’s Gospel breaks down nicely into largely geographical divisions (the full outline is printed at the end of this introduction):
 - I. Luke’s preface and the introduction of John and Jesus (1:1–2:52)
 - II. Preparation for ministry: anointed by God (3:1–4:13)
 - III. Galilean ministry: revelation of Jesus (4:14–9:50)
 - IV. Jerusalem journey: Jewish rejection and the new way (9:51–19:44)
 - V. Jerusalem: the Innocent One slain and raised (19:45–24:53)”⁴
- d. As you read through the book of Luke in one sitting (about 2 hours), make note of what you read in two categories: What Jesus did, and what Jesus taught.
 - i. What Jesus Did
 1. Born of a virgin
 2. Amazed religious leaders in the temple as a boy
 3. Resisted the devil’s temptations in the wilderness
 4. Rejected at Nazareth, escapes

² Bock, D. L. (2007). [Acts](#) (p. 52). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

³ Bock, D. L. (1994). [Luke: 1:1–9:50](#) (Vol. 1, p. 63). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

⁴ Bock, D. L. (1994). [Luke: 1:1–9:50](#) (Vol. 1, p. 20). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

5. Healed every kind of disease, raised the dead
 6. Cast out all kinds of demons
 7. Calmed a storm
 8. Preached in the synagogues of Israel
 9. Called His disciples
 10. Prayed all night long
 11. Forgave sins
 12. Sent out the Twelve to preach/heal/cast out demons
 13. Fed the 5,000
 14. Foretold His own death
 15. The transfiguration
 16. Rejected by Samaritan village
 17. Rejoiced aloud in His Father's will
 18. Taught Mary and Martha
 19. Healed on the Sabbath
 20. Triumphant Entry
 21. Wept over Jerusalem
 22. Cleansed the Temple
 23. Defeated arguments of chief priests, Pharisees, and scribes
 24. Ate last Passover with disciples
 25. Instituted Lord's Supper
 26. Taught disciples about humility
 27. Foretold Peter's denial
 28. Suffered and prayed at Gethsemane
 29. Betrayed and arrested
 30. Denied by Peter
 31. Mocked and beaten before unjust trial
 32. Crucified, died and was buried
 33. Resurrected from the dead
 34. Walked with disciples to Emmaus
 35. Showed Himself to His disciples
 36. He taught them about the Kingdom of God, blessed them, and was carried up into heaven
- ii. What Jesus taught
1. About fasting
 2. Lord of the Sabbath
 3. The Beatitudes
 4. Love your enemies
 5. Do not judge wrongly
 6. Judge tree by its fruit
 7. Build your house on the Rock
 8. Parables: sower, lamp under a jar, Good Samaritan, the rich fool, barren fig tree, mustard seed, leaven, narrow door, wedding feast, the great banquet, lost sheep, lost coin, prodigal son,

dishonest manager, rich man and Lazarus, persistent widow,
Pharisee and tax collector, ten minas, wicked tenants

9. "My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it."
 10. Take up your cross
 11. "For he who is least among you all is the one who is great."
 12. Woe to unrepentant cities
 13. The Lord's Prayer
 14. About the devil
 15. About self-deception
 16. Woe to Pharisees and lawyers
 17. Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees
 18. Fear Not
 19. Acknowledge Christ before men
 20. Remain vigilant
 21. Settle with your accuser before going to court
 22. Repent or perish
 23. The coming destruction of Jerusalem and the temple
 24. Count the costs of discipleship
 25. Invincible, eternal Word of God
 26. Divorce and remarriage
 27. We must forgive those who repent
 28. Do our duty quietly unto God
 29. Receive the Kingdom of God like a child
 30. Difficult for the wealthy to enter the Kingdom of God
 31. The Son of Man came to seek and save the lost
 32. Paying taxes to Caesar; legitimate taxation
 33. About the resurrection
 34. Jesus is David's Son
 35. Beware of hypocritical religious leaders
 36. Coming Persecution and Wars; signs before Jerusalem destroyed
 37. Scripture must be fulfilled
 38. Declared Himself the Son of God
 39. That the Christ must suffer, die and be resurrected
 40. That repentance and remission of sins should be preached to all nations, in His Name
- e. Both – following Jesus is both doing and teaching. One without the other is not a faithful imitating of Jesus
- i. Bock "The combination of deed and word is a theme in Luke's Gospel (as the pattern of preaching, Luke 4:16–30, and activity, 4:31–44, shows). The particle τε (*te*) tightly links the preaching and the action, almost

suggesting that they are a package (“a holy knot,” Calvin). The particle is often left untranslated but indicates a close connection”⁵

- f. Jesus “began” both to do and to teach
 - i. Began = Looking back over the Gospel of Luke, we can see what Jesus began to do and to teach. He began, but He has not finished. So, as the book of Acts begins, we are looking forward to see what Jesus will continue to do and to teach, by His Spirit, via His Church.
 - ii. Bock “The idea that Jesus “began” (ἤρξατο, *ērxato*) such activity may well suggest that he is still at work as Luke writes his story of the church in volume 2. Acts 9 describes Jesus’s direct involvement, but the claim is wider than his direct, visible involvement (Bruce 1990: 98). This link is important. What the early church said and did was rooted in and connected to activity in which the risen Jesus was involved. Indeed, the point is that without Jesus and his work, one cannot make sense of the church’s existence and activity.”⁶
- V. Until the Day in which He was taken up: Ascension v2
 - a. “until the day in which He was taken up”
 - b. Luke wants his audience to again consider what he has already stated about Christ’s ascension day, “the day in which He was taken up.”
 - i. Lk 24 “44 Then He said to them, “These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.” 45 And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. 46 Then He said to them, “Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, 47 and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. 48 And you are witnesses of these things. 49 Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.” 50 And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. 51 Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven. 52 And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, 53 and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God. Amen.”
 - ii. Bock “The account in Luke proceeds to the ascension, an event that Luke alone details in the NT. The ascension stands as a key divine act vindicating Jesus and placing him in authority at the right hand of God (Ps. 110:1; Acts 2:32–35). The “taking up” of Jesus is where Luke 24 ended (see Luke 24:51). The language that is used parallels passages

⁵ Bock, D. L. (2007). [Acts](#) (p. 52). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

⁶ Bock, D. L. (2007). [Acts](#) (pp. 52–53). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

where God has taken up righteous men directly to heaven. Acts 1 will review this departure, and Acts 2 will explain it.”⁷

- VI. Christ’s commandments He gave to His apostles by the Spirit v2
- a. “after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen”
 - b. Here, Luke is calling his readers to recall Christ’s commandments to His apostles, especially those given around the time of His ascension, to remain in Jerusalem and await the Holy Spirit’s outpouring of power, to preach repentance and remission of sins to the whole world, beginning at Jerusalem, and in His Name. In addition, it would have brought to mind the necessity of the suffering, resurrected Messiah. So, all the major themes of Acts are present in this recollection: the Church going forward in the power of the Holy Spirit, doing and teaching what Jesus began to do and to teach, preaching repentance and the remission of sins in Jesus’ Name, by the Spirit, to the whole world, beginning at Jerusalem.
 - c. Bock “The commandment alluded to here (ἐντειλάμενος, *enteilamenos*) refers to the call to a mission that these chosen apostles should lead. This mission represents the next phase of God’s work and takes place in fulfillment of Scripture about the Christ, as Luke 24:47 declares. For Luke, Scripture is the voice of God (Jervell 1998: 110). So the plan to take the message of the kingdom out to the world by preaching repentance and the forgiveness of sins takes place as part of the divine program. Except at Acts 14:4 and 14, where Barnabas and Paul are called apostles, the term ἀπόστολος (*apostolos*) refers to the Twelve (or the Eleven, minus Judas; Bruce 1990: 99). In normal usage an apostle is merely a “commissioned, sent agent,” and this is what these Twelve are for Jesus (Le Cornu and Shulam 2003: 8). In Judaism, such a representative speaks for the one who sends him. “A man’s agent is like to himself” (*m. Ber.* 5.5). BDAG (122) notes that the term can simply mean “delegate, envoy, messenger,” but it especially refers to this special group in Acts (1:2; 2:42–43; 4:33, 35, 37; 5:2, 12, 18, 40; 6:6; 8:1, 14, 18; 9:27; 11:1; 14:4; from here on linked with elders: 15:2, 4, 6, 22–23; 16:4). They are to preach repentance for the forgiveness of sins to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem, as witnesses empowered by the Spirit (“power from on high”) sent from the Father (Luke 24:47–49). The linkage between the Spirit’s work and the apostles is frequent in Acts”⁸
 - d. And, this preaching to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem, shapes the entire structure of the book of Acts.
 - e. Outline of the book of Acts:
 - I. Introduction: Jesus ascends to the Father and gives a mission (1:1–11)
 - II. The early church in Jerusalem (1:12–6:7)
 - III. Persecution in Jerusalem moves the message to Judea and Samaria as a new witness emerges (6:8–9:31)

⁷ Bock, D. L. (2007). [Acts](#) (p. 53). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

⁸ Bock, D. L. (2007). [Acts](#) (p. 53). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

IV. The gospel to the Gentiles and more persecution in Jerusalem (9:32–12:25)

V. The mission from Antioch and the full incorporation of Gentiles (13:1–15:35)

VI. The second and third missionary journeys: Expansion to Greece and consolidation amid opposition (15:36–21:16)

VII. The arrest: The message is defended and reaches Rome (21:17–28:31)

VII. Many Infallible Proofs v3

- a. to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days
- b. Luke desires his readers to be absolutely sure that Jesus Christ was resurrected from the dead in all of His humanity, both body and soul. And, Luke wants his readers to know that Jesus did this over the course of 40 days. Timing is important to God.
 - i. Bock “Jesus’s appearances were convincing to those who had not expected a resurrection. These appearances showed that Jesus was still alive. They are part of the confirmation and encouragement Theophilus needs (Luke 1:4). To have seen the resurrection was a qualification for being a “witness” to Jesus (Luke 24:44–48). These appearances gave Jesus the opportunity to continue to instruct about the kingdom of God. He was teaching the witnesses that the rule of God he was bringing now would move on with the next stage of the apostles’ mission”⁹

VIII. The Kingdom of God v3

- a. and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.
- b. This serves as a summary phrase of all that Jesus taught His disciples during the 40 days from His resurrection to His ascension. Jesus Christ is the ascended, enthroned, reigning King of the Cosmos, ruler over all things. His Kingdom’s jurisdiction is limitless, extending beyond the farthest star, and beyond the tiniest known particle, encompassing all that exists, both invisible and visible. His Kingdom’s Law is perfect and pure and cannot be destroyed, and all are called to repent and believe the Gospel of the Kingdom of God.
- c. Bock “Jesus taught his followers about the kingdom, which also was the central theme of his earthly ministry . “God’s Kingdom”...refers to God’s promised rule that comes with Jesus’s messianic program and activity. This expression is not as prevalent in Acts as it is in Luke. It appears thirty-two times in Luke and six times in Acts. For Luke, the idea summarizes a key component of the gospel (Luke 9:2, 6) that already had shown signs of arriving during Jesus’s ministry (Luke 11:20; 17:21). Jesus’s resurrection allows the kingdom to be preached (Acts 28:23, 31). From a literary point of view, the probable content or themes of what is meant here show up in the early speeches of Acts 2–4. So this remark in Acts 1 serves as a thematic introduction”¹⁰

⁹ Bock, D. L. (2007). [Acts](#) (p. 55). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

¹⁰ Bock, D. L. (2007). [Acts](#) (pp. 55–56). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.