

Acts Bible Study

Bible Study Class #2 Curriculum (can also be used for handouts)

“The Grand design of Scripture in Luke and Acts”

See the parallel occurrences in the life of Christ in Luke with the life of the Church in the book of Acts. Then see also parallel occurrences in the first half of Acts with that of the second half of Acts (particularly with reference to the ministry of St. Peter with that of St. Paul)

By pointing out the relationship of the text of Luke to the text of Acts, we see specific examples of the fulfillment of the command of Christ to the Apostles to take up the cross and follow Him. It is quite clear that the sequence of events as Luke reports them in Acts reflects the sequence of events in the life of Christ as reported in Luke's Gospel in the following instances:

Luke 3 the baptism of our Lord

Acts 2 the baptism of the community

Luke 4 the rejection of the Gospel message as taught by Jesus

Acts 3-5 the rejection of the Gospel message as preached by Apostles

Luke 13 Herod Antipas seeks to kill Jesus

Acts 12 Herod Agrippa seeks to kill Peter

Luke 14-18 the Gospel to those of lowly estate

Acts 13-20 Gospel to the Gentiles

Luke 9-19 Our Lord's journey around the Galilee on His way to Jerusalem

Acts 19-21 Paul's journey throughout the Diaspora on way to Jerusalem

Luke 20-23 Our Lord's passion 4

Acts 21-26 Paul's passion/4 trials trials

Luke 23.2 Christ charged with sedition

Acts 24.5 Paul charged with sedition

Luke 23.15,22 after having been sent to Jewish rep. of district, our Lord is deemed innocent by Roman govt. official

Acts 25.25, 26.31 after having been sent to Jewish rep of district, St. Paul is considered innocent by Roman govt. official

Luke 23 the death of Christ

Acts 27 the 'death' of Paul at sea (“Buried with Him in baptism”)

Luke 24 the Resurrection of Christ

Acts 28 the 'resurrection' of Paul at sea (“in which Baptism also you were risen with Him”)

Other relationships can be seen in the particulars, but this is suitable as an overview to show that both Sts Peter and Paul obeyed Christ's command to 'come follow me' and both took up their crosses and followed Him.

There is also a "symmetry" and thematic correspondence within the Acts of the Apostles itself with regard to the Acts of St. Peter on one hand and the Acts of St. Paul on the other. This symmetrical pattern corresponds roughly to chs. 1-12 on the one hand and chs. 13-28 on the other.

ch. 2.22-36 St. Peter begins mission with sermon
ch. 13.16-41 St. Paul begins mission with sermon

ch. 2.37-42 St. Peter presents harvest of repentant souls at Pentecost
ch. 20.14-22 St. Paul presents harvest of repentant souls at Pentecost

ch. 8.18-24 St. Peter confronts the sorcerer/magician Simon Magus
ch. 13.6-11 St. Paul confronts the sorcerer/magician Barjesus

ch. 9.36-42 St. Peter raises the dead
ch. 20.9-12 St. Paul raises the dead

ch. 3.1-10 St. Peter heals lame person
ch. 14.8-11 St. Paul heals lame person

ch. 12.7-11 St. Peter miraculously released from death by angel at Pascha, symbolic of the Resurrection event.
ch. 27.22-25 St. Paul is rescued from death at sea by proclamation of angel.

Likewise both correct gentiles who try to worship them (10.25-26; 14.13-15); both are defended by Pharisees (5.34-39; 23.9), and both are selected for their Apostleship first to witness in Jerusalem, then abroad, and finally in Rome by the risen Lord Himself (1.8; 23.11).

What is the point of all this? That St. Luke shows us that the Apostles are continuing in fulfilled prophecy as an Apostolic extension of the Gospel, just as Jesus Himself is the one who properly fulfilled Old Testament prophecy in the Gospel. Luke definitely seeks to make clear that there is a definite and unambiguous connection and relationship between the prophetic Scriptures (i.e. the Old Testament prophecies), the Gospel story of our Lord, and the story of His followers. Christ fulfilled the prophecies concerning Him, and the rest continue to be accomplished in the Assembly of His followers, which is the Apostolic Church. And it should be noted that the ministry of the Lord, and the ministries of Sts. Peter and Paul, the replacement of Judas in the Apostolic College, the events at Pentecost, etc., etc. all begin with prophetic Scripture that is being fulfilled in the Acts of the Apostles.



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