

The traditional authorship of ACTs has never been seriously questioned. Once the identity of the author of the third Gospel is decided upon, the interrelationship of the two books decides the issue.

Since Acts was written as the second part of a two-part work, its purpose is tied up in the purpose of the Gospel. Just as the book of Luke describes its origins, Acts describes the spread and growth of the church. If, as some believe, ACTs was written as Paul's defense before Caesar, it would explain why Luke is careful to illustrate the innocence of Jesus (Luke 23:4, 14, 22) and Paul's positive relationship with Roman authorities (Acts 16:35-40; 17:6-9, 18:12-16, etc.).

Acts is mainly a narrative, often in the form of a travelogue. It also contains many speeches or sermons (e.g. 1:16-22; 2:14-36; 3:12-26, etc.).

Outline:

Acts can be outlined along the general lines of
Acts 1:8:

Theme: The Spread of the Gospel:

- I. In Jerusalem 1:1-6:7
- II. Through Palestine 6:8-9:31
- III. To Antioch 9:32-12:24
- IV. To Asia Minor 12:25-16:5
- V. To Europe 16:6-19:20
- VI. To Rome 19:21--28:31

History of Redemption:

The underlying motif of ACTs is the work of the Holy Spirit. Promised in 1:4, he comes upon the Jewish disciples in 2:1-4 and upon Gentile converts in 10:44-45. This coming is a signal to begin working, not to wait for the return of the Lord (1:11). The Holy Spirit guides his agents (8:29,39; 10:19ff; 16:6ff), chooses some for particular works (13:2), and speaks through his prophets (11:28, 20:23, 21:4-11). He is also prominent in the letter sent out by the council (15:28). Many miracles take place through his power. These, however, decrease in frequency as the book progresses.

Paul also defends Christianity against the charge of being just one more pagan religion (14:15-18; 17:22-31). Acts is careful to state both explicitly and by example that there is neither "Jew nor Gentile, bond nor free, male nor female" in Christ (cf 8:5 ff, 26ff, 40; 10:9-16, 44-45; 16:4-15; 18:26). The flow of Acts is in line with 1:8 --the steady growth of the Gospel