

ACTS STUDIES IN THE 1990'S: UNITY AND DIVERSITY

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Those who study Acts during this decade will find at their fingertips a plethora of commentaries, monographs, articles, and studies which have come to the fore as a result of the "storm center" surrounding Luke-Acts which van Unnik described in 1966.¹ The past four decades have witnessed an incredible upsurge of interest in Lukan studies, especially in the Book of Acts. There are now so many areas of specialization that the Lukan scholar may sometimes feel he knows more and more about less and less! This is certainly the case when one approaches the study of Acts. The "storm" has subsided; the "stream of Lukan scholarship has become a torrent,"² but the rivulets formed by the runoff in recent Acts' studies are now fairly recognizable.

The purpose of this article is two-fold. First, it addresses the question, what are the areas in Acts' studies today which are now fairly well settled in terms of a general consensus of scholarship? Such areas will be identified and discussed in broad strokes. Second, it asks, what are the areas where there is still considerable debate among scholars regarding Acts? Though the "storm" has subsided, the runoff has formed numerous rivulets which we will attempt to survey.

Prior to 1950, Luke was primarily viewed as a historian (according to some not a very good one!) with little recognition of his theological interests. Research was conducted along source- and redaction-critical lines concluding that Luke-Acts was more or less a pastiche assembled from numerous sources. However, there was little agreement as to where the sources ended and the narrative hand of Luke began.

¹ w. C. van Unnik, "Luke-Acts, a Storm Center in Contemporary Scholarship," *Studies in Luke-Acts* (ed. by L. Keck and J. Martyn; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1966) 15-32.

² So remarked I. H. Marshall in a postscript on Lukan studies since 1979 in his 1989 edition of *Luke: Historian and Theologian* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1989).

Today the situation has changed. There is now widespread agreement among Lukan scholars that Luke-Acts is to be viewed as: (1) history, (2) theology, and (3) a work of literary excellence.³ Although such a consensus exists regarding these three broad categories, none exists within each category as to how Luke's historiography, theology, or literary structure should be defined. For example, with regard to historicity, scholars run the gamut from viewing Acts as more or less unreliable historically to those who see Acts as historically accurate even down to minute details.⁴ By and large, Lukan scholars tend to view the historicity of Acts with less scepticism as research progresses.⁵

With respect to the theology of Acts, Conzelmann's work, *The Theology of St. Luke*,⁶ originally published in German in 1953 and

³ This threefold approach to Luke-Acts is reflected in the title of an excellent article by E. Richard, "Luke-Writer, Theologian, Historian: Research and Orientation of the 1970's," *BTB* 13 (1983), 3-15; cf. also sect. 7 entitled "Luke as Theologian, Historian and Writer" in E. Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles*, trans. by E. B. Noble and G. Shinn (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1971) 90-112.

⁴ Consult E. Pluemacher, *Lukas als hellenistischer Schriftsteller: Studien zur Apostelgeschichte* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1972); C. Herner, "Luke the Historian," *BJRL* 60 (1977): 28-51; C. H. Gempf, ed. *The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History* (WUNT 49; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1989); W. W. Gasque, "The Book of Acts and History," *Unity and Diversity in New Testament Theology* (ed. by R. A. Guelich; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978) 54-72; idem, "The Historical Value of Acts," *Tyndale Bulletin* 40 (1989) 136-57; F. F. Bruce, "The Acts of the Apostles: Historical Record or Theological Reconstruction?" *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* 2/25 (1985): 2570-2603; W. C. van Unnik, "Luke's Second Book and the Rules of Hellenistic Historiography," *Les Actes des Apôtres: Traditions, Rédaction, Théologie* (BETL 48; ed. by J. Kremer; Gembloux: Duculot, 1979); M. Hengel, *Acts and the History of Earliest Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980); G. Ludemann, *Das frühe Christentum nach den Traditionen der Apostelgeschichte: ein Kommentar* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1987).

⁵ This fact is born out by consideration of the fact that the two most important commentaries on Acts published in Germany in the 1980s, G. Schneider's *Die Apostelgeschichte* (HTKNT; 2 vols.; Freiburg: Herder, 1980, 1982) and J. Roloff's *Die Apostelgeschichte* (NTD; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1981) both assess the historicity of Acts in a more positive vein than either Haenchen or Conzelmann. Consult also C. J. Herner's *The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History* (ed. by C. H. Gempf; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1989) which is the most recent treatment on the subject. Herner supports the historicity of Acts through his painstaking investigation of archaeological data amassed in the 20th century.

Herner's work, coupled with the two commentaries by F. F. Bruce which were originally published in the 1950s but which have both recently been revised and updated along with his other writings on Acts, constitutes the best defense of the historicity of Acts: F. F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts* (NICNT; rev. ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), and idem, *The Acts of the Apostles: The Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary* (rev. ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990).

⁶ H. Conzelmann, *The Theology of St. Luke* (New York: Harper & Row, 1961).

translated into English in 1961, dominated the discussion of Lukan theology for nearly two decades. However, the systematic dismemberment of Conzelmann's thesis that in Luke primitive Christian eschatology has been replaced by a theology of salvation history has produced a mushrooming of monographs and articles with which one can hardly keep up. In 1976, C. H. Talbert could conclude rightfully that there was widespread agreement among Lukan scholars that Conzelmann's synthesis was inadequate.⁷

There can be no doubt that the increasingly skeptical attitude among some scholars regarding the historicity of Acts coupled with the demise of Conzelmann's thesis has led to the rediscovery of Luke the theologian. The broadest and swiftest moving rivulet in Luke-Acts studies today lies in the area of theology. F. Bovon's work remains the most comprehensive survey of work done on the theology of Luke-Acts.⁸ The best summary of Lukan theology to my mind is that of J. A. Fitzmyer in his commentary on Luke in the Anchor Bible series.⁹ D. Juel and R. O'Toole have produced very readable accounts of the theology of Luke-Acts as a whole.¹⁰ Both authors agree that to treat Luke alone or Acts alone would truncate Luke's thought since he intended his work to be treated as a whole. Juel attempts to determine the themes which unite or distinguish Luke's gospel from Acts.¹¹ He views Luke as Jewish in background or at least a proselyte.¹² His interpretation of Lukan theology is dependent upon J. Jervell and N. Dahl, and he seeks to show that Luke has written to show the continuity of salvation history.¹³

O'Toole attempts a synthesis of Luke's theology, asserting that Luke had one dominant theme to which all other theological concerns were subordinate. This dominant theme is "that God who brought salvation to his people in the OT continues to do this, especially through Jesus Christ."¹⁴ O'Toole's work bears careful consideration for several reasons. His presentation is based on the text of Luke-Acts as a

⁷ C. H. Talbert, "Shifting Sands: The Recent Study of the Gospel of Luke," *Int* 30 (1976) 395.

⁸ F. Bovon, *Luke the Theologian: Thirty-Three Years of Research (1959-1983)* (Princeton Theological Monograph Series 12; Allison Park, PA: Pickwick, 1987).

⁹ J. A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke (I-IX)* (AB 28; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1981), 143-270.

¹⁰ D. Juel, *Luke-Acts: The Promise of History* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1983); R. O'Toole, *The Unity of Luke's Theology: An Analysis of Luke-Acts* (Good News Studies 9; Wilmington, DE: Glazier, 1984).

¹¹ Juel, *Luke-Acts*, 2.

¹² *Ibid.*, 7.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 115-17.

¹⁴ O'Toole, 17.

whole. His methodology is informed by the approach of composition criticism rather than source-redaction criticism, hence he is not always looking for the sources behind the text. The resultant work is something new and fresh in Lukan studies in that his synthesis of the evidence has yielded a viable theory regarding Luke's theological outlook.

Although O'Toole has emphasized the continuity of salvation history as the key theological theme in Luke-Acts, he has many precursors who have laid the groundwork for such an approach to Lukan theology. J. Dupont,¹⁵ I. H. Marshall,¹⁶ M. Domer,¹⁷ and F. Bovon,¹⁸ have all suggested that the continuity of salvation history and the inclusion of the Gentiles into salvation history are of major import for Luke.

B. Gaventa's article on the theology of Acts is a helpful analysis of the present state of affairs.¹⁹ Particularly valuable is her identification and analysis of the four major methods which have been used for identifying the theology of Acts.²⁰ These methods she identifies as redaction criticism, speeches, "key" texts, and theological themes. Practitioners of these methodologies include K. Loning²¹ with redaction criticism, H. J. Cadbury²² and M. Dibelius²³ with the speeches in Acts, E. Franklin²⁴ with "key" texts, and F. W. Danker,²⁵ D. Bock²⁶ and a

¹⁵ Cf. especially *The Salvation of the Gentiles: Studies in the Acts of the Apostles* (New York: Paulist, 1979) as well as his many other writings on Luke-Acts.

¹⁶ In addition to his New International Greek Text Commentary on Luke and his commentary on Acts in the Tyndale series, see his *Luke: Historian and Theologian* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970, repro 1989). Consult also his "The Present State of Lukan Studies," *Themelios* 14 (1988) 52-57.

¹⁷ M. Domer, *Das Heil Gottes: Studien zur Theologie des lukanischen Vopelwerkes* (Bonner biblische Beitruge 51; Cologne: Peter Hanstein, 1978).

¹⁸ Bovon, *Luke the Theologian*, 239-66.

¹⁹ B. R. Gaventa, "Toward a Theology of Acts: Reading and Rereading," *Int* 42 (1988) 146-57.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 148-50.

²¹ K. Loning, *Die Saulustradition in der Apostelgeschichte* (Munich: Aschendorff, 1978).

²² H. J. Cadbury, *The Style and Literary Method of Luke* (2 vols.; Harvard Theological Studies 6; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1919-21).

²³ M. Dibelius, *Studies in the Acts of the Apostles* (London: SCM, 1956).

²⁴ E. Franklin, *Christ the Lord: A Study in the Purpose and Theology of Luke* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1975).

²⁵ F. W. Danker, *Luke* (Proclamation Commentaries; 2d ed.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987).

²⁶ D. Bock, *Proclamation from Prophecy and Pattern: Lukan Old Testament Christology* (Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 12; Sheffield: JSOT, 1987).

host of others with theological themes. Her point that narrative development is a crucial consideration to the theology of Acts is well taken.²⁷

Another important article on recent study of Acts is that by W. W. Gasque²⁸ whose scholarship in the field is well known. He devotes several pages to the treatment of Luke's theology under the headings of theology proper, salvation, Christology, ecclesiology, the Holy Spirit, and the speeches.

One should not exclude the work done by the Luke-Acts seminars at the meetings of the Society of Biblical Literature in the past two decades. These seminars were under the direction of C. Talbert and produced a number of articles and monographs.²⁹

In addition to Luke's historical and theological pretensions, we may note that it is now generally agreed upon by Lukan scholars that he had literary pretensions as well. Since the days of Cadbury, it has become a settled point among Lukan scholars that Luke-Acts should be treated as a single whole; two parts of the same work. Luke intended for his two volumes to tell a single story, and he has so constructed his narrative.³⁰

Luke's fondness for parallelism has been described by Cadbury³¹ and Morgenthaler.³² In the overall narrative framework of Luke-Acts,

²⁷ Gaventa, *Toward a Theology of Acts*, 157.

²⁸ W. W. Gasque, "A Fruitful Field: Recent Study of the Acts of the Apostles," *Int* 42 (1988) 117-31. For the most exhaustive account of Acts studies prior to 1970, consult his *A History of the Criticism of the Acts of the Apostles* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975). A new edition of this work with an updated 15-page supplement on recent Acts studies is now available under the title *A History of the Interpretation of the Acts of the Apostles* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1989). See also his "Recent Commentaries on the Acts of the Apostles," *Themelios* 14 (1988) 21-23.

For other works on Acts, consult E. Grasser, "Acta-Forschung seit 1960," *TRu* 41 (1976), 141-94, 259-90; and 42 (1977), 1-68; E. Pluemacher, "Acta-Forschung 1974-1982," *TRu* 48 (1983), 1-56, and 49 (1984), 105-69; F. Hahn, "Der gegenwärtige Stand der Erforschung der Apostelgeschichte: Kommentare und Aufsatzbände 1980-1985," *TRev* 82 (1986), 117-90; G. Wagner, *An Exegetical Bibliography of the New Testament: Volume 2: Luke and Acts* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1985).

²⁹ Consult C. Talbert, ed., *Perspectives on Luke-Acts* (Danville, VA: Association of Baptist Professors of Religion, 1978) and *Luke-Acts: New Perspectives from the Society of Biblical Literature Seminar* (ed. by C. Talbert; New York: Crossroad, 1984).

³⁰ Consult the recent work of R. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts: A Literary Interpretation* (2 vols.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986, 1990).

³¹ H. J. Cadbury, *The Style and Literary Method of Luke* (2 vols.; HTS 6; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1919-20); *The Making of Luke-Acts* (2d ed.; London: SPCK, 1958).

³² R. Morgenthaler, *Die lukanische Geschichtsschreibung als Zeugnis: Gestalt und Gehalt der Kunst des Lukas* (2 vols.; Zurich: Zwingli, 1949). See also C. K. Barrett, *Luke*

scholars have often observed large sections of embedded material arranged in a chiasmic fashion. For example, M. Goulder has shown that the Lukan travel narrative is composed in chiasmic fashion.³³ Likewise, Talbert has proposed that Paul's journey to Jerusalem in Acts 15:1-21:26 is composed in a chiasmic fashion as well and parallels the Lukan travel narrative.³⁴

With the rise of semantic analysis, some work is beginning to be done on the structure of Luke-Acts from this important perspective. David and Doris Blood³⁵ have suggested that the entire Book of Acts is arranged in parallel fashion with the first major section forming a chiasm of the five major summary statements found in 6:7; 9:31; 12:34; 16:5; and 19:20. They analyze the entire Book of Acts from a discourse perspective in the following way:

| | |
|------------------|-------------|
| Introductory Tie | 1:1-11 |
| Part I | 1:12-19:20 |
| Division 1 | 1:12-6:7 |
| Division 2 | 6:8-9:31 |
| Division 3 | 9:32-12:24 |
| Division 4 | 13:25-16:5 |
| Division 5 | 16:6-19:20 |
| Part II | 19:21-28:31 |
| Division 1 | 19:22-21:16 |
| Division 2 | 21:17-23:11 |
| Division 3 | 23:12-26:32 |
| Division 4 | 27:1-28:16 |
| Division 5 | 28:17-31 |

Not only have scholars posited chiasm for large sections of embedded discourse in Luke-Acts, but the entire two-volume work has

the Historian in Recent Study (London: Epworth, 1961) 37-41, for his discussion of Morgenthaleis work.

³³ M. Goulder, "The Chiasmic Structure of the Lukan Journey," *Studio Evangelica* (ed. by F. L. Cross; Berlin: Akademie, 1964), 195-202.

³⁴ C. Talbert, *Literary Patterns, Theological Themes, and the Genre of Luke-Acts* (SBLMS 20; Missoula: Scholars Press, 1974), 56-58.

³⁵ David and Doris Blood, "Overview of Acts," *Notes on Translation* 74 (1979) 2-36.

been viewed as an, example of parallel structure by Morgenthaler³⁶ and as chiastic structure by Goulder,³⁷ K. Wolfe,³⁸ and E. Wallis.³⁹

Morgenthaler's analysis of Luke-Acts alternates between scenes in Jerusalem and travel narrative forming an A B A, A B A B-type structure:⁴⁰

| | | |
|--------------------------|------|-------------|
| I. Scenes in Jerusalem | Luke | 1:5-4:13 |
| Travel Narrative 1 | | 4:14-19:44 |
| II. Scenes in Jerusalem | | 19:45-24:53 |
| III. Scenes in Jerusalem | Acts | 1:4-7:60 |
| Travel Narrative 2 | | 8:1-21:17 |
| IV. Scenes in Jerusalem | | 21:18-26:33 |
| Travel Narrative 3 | | 27:1-28:31 |

In a similar vein, Goulder has suggested that Luke-Acts is structured upon one overarching chiastic framework with the following geographical sections: Galilee-Samaria-udea-Jerusalem-Resurrection-Jerusalem-Judea-Samaria-the uttermost parts of the earth.⁴¹

K. Wolfe has argued that Goulder's analysis is essentially correct, but needs modification at one point. Rather than the resurrection being the central panel, Wolfe suggests that the ascension should be considered the central point. The resultant structure would be as follows:⁴²

| | |
|----|--|
| A | Galilee, Luke 4:14-9:50 |
| B | Journey to Jerusalem (through Samaria and Judea), Luke 9:51-19:40 |
| C | Jerusalem, Luke 19:41-24:49 |
| D | Ascension, Luke 24:50-51 |
| D' | Ascension, Acts 1:1-11 |
| C' | Jerusalem, Acts 1:12-8:1a |
| B' | Judea and Samaria, Acts 8:1b-11:18 |
| A' | To the end of the earth, Acts 11:19-28:31 |

³⁶ Morgenthaler.

³⁷ M. Goulder, *Type and History in Acts* (London: SPCK, 1964).

³⁸ K. Wolfe, "The Chiastic Structure of Luke-Acts and some Implications for Worship," *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 22 (1980) 60-71.

³⁹ E. Wallis, "Thematic Parallelism and Prominence in Luke-Acts," *Notes on Translation* 75 (1979) 2-6.

⁴⁰ Morgenthaler, 163.

⁴¹ Goulder, *Type and History*, 138.

⁴² Wolfe, 67.

Approaching Luke-Acts from a discourse perspective, Wallis has suggested that Luke-Acts can be viewed from the standpoint of its thematic geographical locations and participants. When this is done, there is a resulting cyclic parallelism which forms a loose chiasmus.⁴³

Wallis points out that Luke has grouped main events in his narrative around locations which are not only geographical but also areas of social space: (1) Jerusalem (Jewish officialdom), (2) Judea (Jewish population), (3) Samaria, (Gentiles and 'hybrid' Jews), (4) uttermost part of the earth (Gentile population).⁴⁴ Events which result from the actions of thematic participants (Jesus, Peter, and Paul) in thematic locations are organized into cycles along a spatiosequential story line. Thus, Luke's order is not simply chronological, but reflects progressive action related to defined space.⁴⁵ Each cycle of events is composed of discrete units of episodes designed by Luke to advance the plot one structural step toward the climax. The resulting parallelism between these units of episodes serves as a linking device to give coherence to the entire discourse and at the same time achieve dramatic unity.⁴⁶

Thus it would seem that Luke's literary capabilities were extraordinary, and further work on Luke-Acts from a discourse analysis/narrative approach will prove fruitful in understanding the Lukan purpose and theology.

Thus, there seems to be in current Lukan studies solid agreement that Luke-Acts is a work with a historical aim, theological pretensions, and literary genius. However, other aspects of Acts studies do not fare so well. We now turn our attention to three areas where there is no consensus: the question of sources in Acts, the issue of Luke's attitude toward the Jews in Acts, and the question of purpose in Acts (Luke-Acts).

Probably the best place to turn for a summation of the debate regarding the source question in Acts would be to Haenchen's commentary.⁴⁷ That Luke used sources for the composition of his Gospel and sections of Acts is undeniably based upon the testimony of the Lukan prologue. Exactly how many such sources he used and where

⁴³ Wallis, "Thematic Parallelism," 3.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ Linguists like Wallis and Blood and Blood, who have been interested in discourse analysis for the sake of Bible translation, have been approaching the texts of Scripture from a semantic framework and have actually anticipated those who now believe that Luke-Acts (and other examples of narrative discourse in the NT) should be interpreted from the standpoint of narrative development.

⁴⁷ E. Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary* (14th ed.; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1971) 24-34; 81-90; 116-21.

can they be traced in his two-volume work are questions which have not been answered.

Haenchen expressed skepticism about the use of written sources for Acts, while others such as Dupont⁴⁸ and Ludemann⁴⁹ have not been willing to discount their use. Although 20 years ago Haenchen could refer to this debate as "lively," today the emphasis seems to be less on the source question and more on the analysis of the text at hand regardless of what sources underlie it. One thing is for certain; the issue of sources in Acts has not been settled, nor does it appear likely to be settled in the foreseeable future.

If the source question is not as lively as it once was, the question of Luke's attitude toward the Jews is certainly one issue of hot debate as Acts studies enter the final decade of this century. A half century ago, one point where scholarship (liberal or conservative) could agree was that Luke-Acts represented the most "Gentile" work of the NT. Scholars from F. C. Baur and A. von Harnack to W. Ramsay and A. T. Robertson all agreed on this point. Such was the case until 1962 when a new kid on the block, J. Jervell, began to pummel NT scholarship with article after article urging a "new look" at Luke-Acts.⁵⁰ In essence, Jervell asserts that Luke is pro-Jewish and that he views the church not as the new Israel, but rather as the one people of God composed of believing Jews and Gentiles.

At the opposite extreme from Jervell stands J. T. Sanders who argues vituperatively that Luke was anti-Semitic and thus painted the Jews in the most unfavorable light possible.⁵¹ Unfortunately Sanders' work is marred by his unnecessary use of vitriolic language in describing Luke's attitude toward the Jews. Marshall's assessment of Sanders' argument in his revised edition of *Luke: Historian and Theologian* is well worth reading.⁵²

The most recent work available which presents both sides of this issue is the volume *Luke-Acts and the Jewish People: Eight Critical*

⁴⁸ *The Sources of the Acts: the Present Position* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1964).

⁴⁹ Ludemann, *Das frohe Christentum*.

⁵⁰ Consult the two major works which constitute a collection of his articles on this subject: *Luke and the People of God: A New Look at Luke-Acts* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1972), and *The Unknown Paul: Essays on Luke-Acts and Early Christian History* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984). A partial listing of those who are in basic agreement with Jervell include E. Franklin, *Christ the Lord: A Study in the Purpose and Theology of Luke-Acts* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1975); R. Brawley, *Luke-Acts and the Jews: Conflict, Apology, and Conciliation* (SBLMS 33; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987); and D. L. Tiede, *Prophecy and History in Luke-Acts* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980).

⁵¹ J. T. Sanders, *The Jews in Luke-Acts* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987).

⁵² Marshall, *Luke: Historian and Theologian*, 231-33.

Perspectives edited by J. Tyson.⁵³ Those interested in this aspect of Lukan studies would be well advised to read this work carefully. Each of the eight chapters is an article written by one of the leading scholars in the field of Luke-Acts studies. Six of the eight articles were originally papers which were delivered in Atlanta at the 1986 annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature. D. L. Tiede's paper was responded to by D. Moessner; J. Sanders was followed by a response from M. Salmon, and R. Tannehill by M. Cook. An article by J. Jervell heads the chapters while the editor of the work, J. B. Tyson, concludes the work with an article. Both ends of the spectrum are well represented in this work.

Overall there are three major issues relative to the subject which are addressed in this work. First, Luke's attitude toward the Christian mission to the Jews as expressed in Acts is addressed from differing perspectives. Second, questions regarding Luke's intended audience, and his own background are addressed. Was he a Gentile writing for a Gentile audience, or was he himself Jewish writing for a Jewish/Jewish-Christian audience?⁵⁴ In this vein, Salmon's article is especially insightful and provides an excellent critique of Sanders' case that Luke presents the Jews as universally opposed to Christianity.⁵⁵ Third, what is the status of the "God fearers" in Acts? Jervell believes that the Christian mission in Acts is directed only at God fearers and Jews.⁵⁶

A third issue in Acts studies which remains unresolved, and one which is closely related to the question of Luke's attitude toward the Jews, is the question of the purpose of Acts.⁵⁷ The Lukan purpose has

⁵³ J. B. Tyson, ed. *Luke-Acts and the Jewish People: Eight Critical Essays* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1988).

⁵⁴ Building upon the work of Jervell, I have previously argued, based upon lexical, stylistic, semantic, theological, and intentional grounds, that Luke was Jewish and that he is also the best candidate for the authorship of Hebrews. See D. Allen, "An Argument for the Lukan Authorship of Hebrews," (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Texas at Arlington, 1987) and idem, "The Purposes of Luke-Acts and Hebrews Compared," in *The Church at the Dawn of the 21st Century: Essays in Honor of W. A. Criswell*, ed. by P. Patterson, J. Pretlove, and L. Pantoja (Dallas: Criswell Publications, 1989) 221-35.

⁵⁵ M. Salmon, "Insider or Outsider? Luke's Relationship with Judaism," *Luke-Acts and the Jewish People: Eight Critical Perspectives* (ed. by J. B. Tyson; Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1988) 76-82.

⁵⁶ J. Jervell, "The Church of Jews and Godfearers," *Luke-Acts and the Jewish People*, 11-20.

⁵⁷ The best work to date on this subject is R. Maddox, *The Purpose of Luke-Acts* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1982). Other important works include Bovon, *Luke the Theologian*; Richard, "Luke-Writer, Theologian, Historian," 3-15; Brawley, *Luke-Acts and the Jews*, 1987; and P. Esler, *Community and Gospel in Luke-Acts: The Social and Political Motivations of Lukan Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

been described in a variety of ways, including: a defense against heresy, an apology for Paul either addressed to the Roman government or to Jewish Christians; an apology for the church; the transformation of Christianity from a religion of Jewish roots to a world religion, conversion of the Jews to Christianity, conversion of the Gentiles to Christianity and the Gentile mission, confirmation of God's work through Jesus and the disciples, and an effort to show the continuity of salvation history from OT Judaism through Jesus and the apostles to the church and beyond.

Whatever the Lukan purpose or purposes may have been, it is clear that the issue remains in dispute. It is also clear that the question of purpose is not likely to be settled until there is some consensus reached regarding Luke's attitude toward Jews and Judaism. Finally, any attempt to explain the Lukan purpose must take into account the issues of Lukan historicity, theology, literary technique, and pastoral intent.

It would thus seem that the final decade of the 20th century will witness the continuation of discussion regarding several major issues as yet unresolved in Acts studies. These discussions will be welcomed by all in the hopes that a greater understanding of the writings of Luke, which comprise roughly one-fourth of the NT, will be fostered and that Christians everywhere will be encouraged and challenged to be Christ's witnesses "to the uttermost parts of the earth."

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