

SPEECHES IN ACTS

Should The Book Really Be Called

The Words Of The Apostles?

Class One - Introduction

OVERVIEW OF CLASSES

SATURDAY

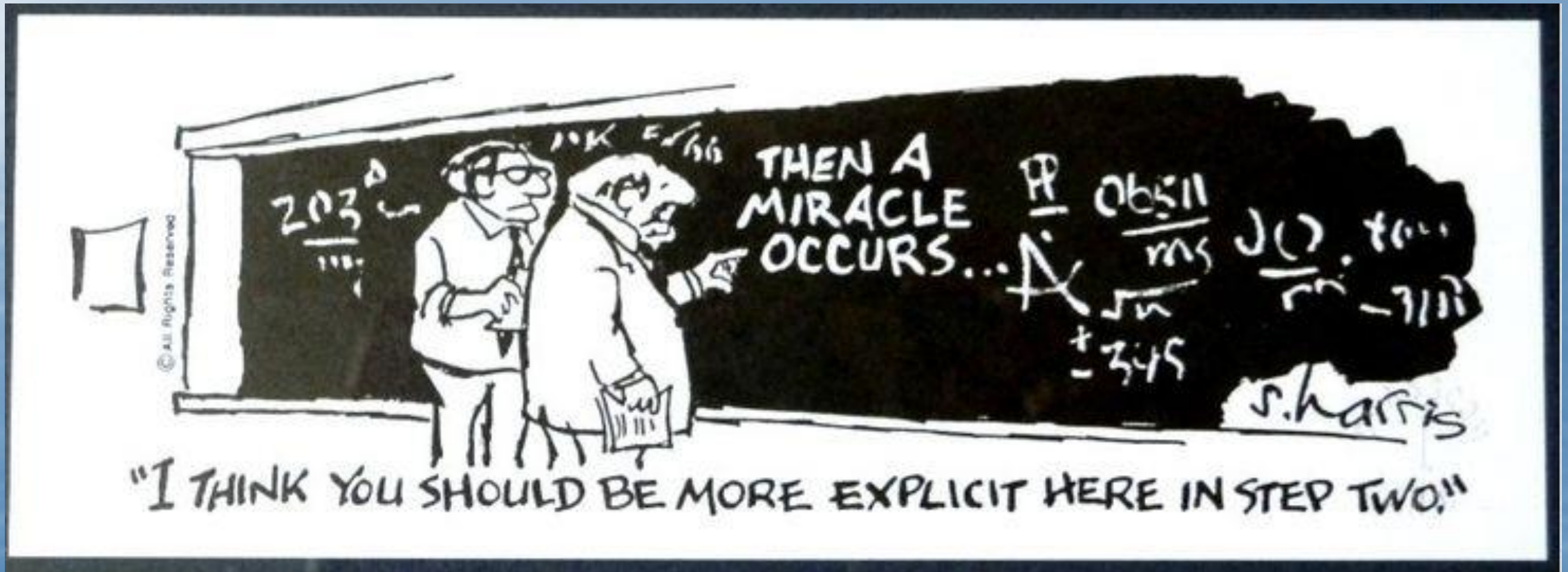
- Class One – Background – Who Do You Trust?
- Class Two – Peter Kicks Things Off
- Class Three – Stephen Gives His All

SUNDAY

- Class Four – Sunday School – Paul To Both Jews & Gentiles
- Class Five – Exhortation – So What?

OBJECTIVE OF THIS WEEKEND

- To be more explicit about why the Book of Acts is written the way it is
- Not just rely on an appeal to the Divine to prove what we say



TAKE IT FROM THE ELOHIM

Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, **according to our likeness**; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." So God created humankind **in his image, in the image of God** he created them; male and female he created them. *Genesis 1:26-27 (NRSV)*

*While we may not know the full import of what it means to be in God's image and according to His likeness, it is clear we are different from and superior to other parts of his creation because of this. In large part, it is because we have **reason** and **intellect** so we should use these God-given gifts to understand and appreciate His Word*

TAKE IT FROM PETER

For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we had been eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received honor and glory from God the Father when that voice was conveyed to him by the Majestic Glory, saying, "This is my Son, my Beloved, with whom I am well pleased." We ourselves heard this voice come from heaven, while we were with him on the holy mountain. *2 Peter 1:16-18 (NRSV)*

The Scriptures are not humanly-created myths, nor are they exclusively of Divine origin. They were written by human beings and capable of being understood on that basis. To do so is not to deny the Divine but to more deeply appreciate the miracle behind their creation.

WHY “THE WORDS OF THE APOSTLES?”

- “About half of the Book of Acts consists of speeches, discourses, and letters,”
- “There are approximately 1,000 verses in the Acts of the Apostles. A bit more than 30% of them are in the various speeches recorded there.”
- Luke skillfully uses speeches to deliver his (and His) message. While the book contains vivid descriptions of travels and actions, it is the speeches which drive the story and form the backbone of the book.
- Also, from a human standpoint, we understand people better when we hear from them. Luke gives us an opportunity to listen to the speakers and come to know their personalities

DON'T BELIEVE ME? CHECK THIS OUT

- The words of the risen Jesus and the angels to the apostles 1:4b-5, 7-8, 11
- Peter's speech and the disciples' prayer prior to the enrollment of Matthias 1:16-22, 24b-25
- Peter's speech at Pentecost 2:14b-36, 38-39, 40b
- Peter's speech in Solomon's portico of the Temple 3:12-26
- Peter's speech to the Jewish authorities after his and John's arrest 4:8b-12, 19b-20

DON'T BELIEVE ME? CHECK THIS OUT

- The prayer of the apostles and their friends 4:24b-30
- The speech of Peter and the apostles to the council 5:29b-32
- Gamaliel's speech to the council 5:35b-39
- The speech by the Twelve before the appointment of the Seven 6:2b-4
- Stephen's speech 7:2-53, 56, 59b, 60b

DON'T BELIEVE ME? CHECK THIS OUT

- Peter's speech in Cornelius' house 10:28b-29, 34b-43, 47
- Peter's speech to the circumcision party 11:5-17
- Paul's speech at Antioch of Pisidia 13:16b-41, 46-47
- The speech of Barnabus and Paul at Lystra 14:15-17
- Peter's speech at the Jerusalem gathering 15:7b-11

DON'T BELIEVE ME? CHECK THIS OUT

- James' speech at the Jerusalem gathering 15:13b-21
- Paul's speech in the middle of the Areopagus 17:22-31
- Paul's speech to the Corinthian Jews 18:6b-d
- Gallio's speech to the Corinthian Jews 18:14-b-15
- Demetrius' speech 19:25b-27

DON'T BELIEVE ME? CHECK THIS OUT

- The speech of the Ephesian elders 19:35b-40
- Paul's speech to the Ephesian elders 20:18b-35
- Agabus' speech in Caesarea 21:11b-c
- Paul's speech to the disciples in Caesarea 21:13b-c
- The speech of James and the Jerusalem elders 21:20b-25

DON'T BELIEVE ME? CHECK THIS OUT

- The speech of the Jews from Asia 21:28
- Paul's speech to the Jerusalem Jews 22:1, 3 to 21
- Paul's speech before the council 23:1b, 3, 5, 6b
- The Pharisees' speech in the council 23:9c-d
- Tertullus' speech 24:2b-8

DON'T BELIEVE ME? CHECK THIS OUT

- Paul's speech before Felix 24:10b-21
- Paul's speech before Festus 25:8b, 10b-11
- Festus' speech 25:14c-21, 24 to 27
- Paul's speech before King Agrippa 26:2-23, 25 to 27, 29
- Paul's speech(es) during the sea voyage to Rome 27:10b, 21b-26, 31b, 33b-34
- Paul's speech to the Roman Jewish leaders 28:17c-20, 25b-28

THE “WE” PASSAGES

- We can surmise that Luke was present to hear some of the speeches because of the so-called “We” passages (16:10–17; 20:5–15; 21:1–8; 27:1–28:16).
- We can also suppose that Luke had many opportunities to hear from others about speeches they gave (e.g., Peter & Paul)
- Or from others who were present to hear (e.g., from Paul about Stephen’s speech)
- This is also how Luke would have known about incidents in his Gospel (e.g., Mary’s accounts of the birth of Jesus)

ACTS VERSUS HISTORY

In most of human affairs:

“When all is said and done ...
there’s a lot more said than done”

In The Acts of the Apostles:

“When all was said and done ... a lot was said and done”

“IF I HAVE SEEN FURTHER, IT IS BY STANDING ON THE SHOULDERS OF GIANTS.” ISAAC NEWTON

The following resources have been particularly helpful and are recommended for further study on the topics:

Christadelphian Sources

- *Beginning at Jerusalem* – John M. Hellowell
- *Acts and Epistles* – Alfred Norris
- *Studies in the Acts of the Apostles* – H. A. Whittaker
- *Speeches in Acts* – John Carter

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Non-Christadelphian Sources

- *The Tyndale New Testament Lectures*
- *Society of Biblical Literature Lectures*
- *Gospel Preaching in Acts*

TRY TO ANSWER A FEW QUESTIONS

- What themes, if any, are common to all the speeches?
- How does the content of the speeches vary, if at all, depending on the audience?
- How does the content of the speech depend, if at all, on the speaker?

PREACHING IN ACTS

There are 48 places where Acts mentions that Gospel preaching took place (see Handout for details). In most cases, little or nothing of the content is preserved, but substantial preaching by Peter, Stephen, and Paul have been preserved

God Willing, we also hope to draw some lessons from those speakers for speakers today to help in presenting the Gospel message

FEATURES OF THE BOOK OF ACTS

- Provides a bridge to and for the other writings in the New Testament
- As second volume of Luke's Gospel, joins what Jesus "began to do and teach" (*Lk. 1:1*) to what He continued to do and teach through the Apostles
 - " ... you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." *Acts 1:8 (NRSV)*

This verse can also be considered an outline of the Book, which traces the spread of the Gospel outward from Jerusalem

We will see this outward development via a close examination of some of the speeches given in Acts

WHEN WAS THE BOOK OF ACTS WRITTEN?

This is a very important question

Answer helps determine when Luke's Gospel (*The first book, O Theophilus*) was written

1. The earlier date for Acts, the earlier date for Luke
2. The earlier date for Luke, the earlier date for Mark (the oldest Gospel)
3. The earlier date for Mark, the more contemporaneous the account
4. The more contemporaneous the account, the more reliable the narrative

WHEN WERE THE GOSPELS WRITTEN?

No unanimity among scholars, with varying dates in the 1st and 2nd centuries

Without going into details, here's what I will take for the "Gospel Truth":

1. Mark ~ AD 40 – AD 50
2. Matthew ~ AD 45 – AD 55
3. Luke ~ AD 50 – AD 55
4. John ~ AD 85 – AD 100

Book of Acts was written sometime after the Gospel of Luke, but prior to destruction of Jerusalem by Romans in AD 70

PROBABLE TIMELINE FOR ACTS

DATE	ACTION	CHAPTER
30 AD	Ascension, Matthias, Pentecost, <u>Peter Preaches</u> , Peter & John Arrested, Communal Living, Ananias & Sapphira, Healings	Acts 1 – Acts 5
31 AD	<u>Stephen's Speech</u> & Death, Saul's Persecutions, Philip in Samaria, Simon the Sorcerer, Philip & Ethiopian	Acts 6 – Acts 8
34 AD	Saul's Conversion	Acts 9
37 AD	<u>Peter Preaches to Gentiles</u>	Acts 10 – Acts 11
42 AD	Barnabas Sent to Antioch, Peter Imprisoned	Acts 11 – Acts 12
44 AD	Herod Agrippa I Dies	Acts 12
48 AD	Paul's 1 st Journey, <u>Preaching in Pisidian Antioch</u> , Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, Return to Syrian Antioch, Jerusalem Council	Acts 13 – Acts 15

PROBABLE TIMELINE FOR ACTS

DATE	ACTION	CHAPTER
49 AD	Paul's 2 nd Journey, Preaching in Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, <u>Athens</u>	Acts 15 – Acts 17
51 AD	Paul in Corinth	Acts 18
54 AD	Paul in Ephesus	Acts 19
57 AD	Paul in Macedonia & Greece	Acts 20
59 AD	Paul Returns to Jerusalem	Acts 21 – Acts 23
60 AD	Paul Imprisoned in Ceasarea	Acts 24
62 AD	Paul Before Festus, Agrippa, Shipwreck, Malta, Rome	Acts 25 – Acts 28

RATIONALE FOR DATING ACTS

Most likely written before AD 70, and probably in AD 62 or AD 63 –
Why this date?

No mention of the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem in AD 70

Wouldn't Luke have mentioned this in Acts if it had happened, since it had been prophesied in his Gospel? After all, he did mention fulfilled prophecies, so wouldn't his message been strengthened by pointing out that Jerusalem's fate was predicted?

RATIONALE FOR DATING ACTS

No mention of Nero's persecutions reliably dated from AD 64. Nero ruled from AD 54 to AD 68, and the fire happened in AD 64. This was the beginning of a severe persecution under Nero.

Luke wasn't shy about recording martyrdoms, and naming names, so why would he, as a faithful historian, omit details of the worst persecution in early Christian history?

NATIONAL DESTRUCTION FORETOLD

When you see **Jerusalem** surrounded by armies, then know that its **desolation has come near...** For there will be **great distress** on the earth and wrath against this people; **they will fall by the edge of the sword** and be **taken away as captives** among all nations; and **Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles**, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. *Luke 21:20-24 (NRSV)*

Luke cites this prophecy of Jesus in his Gospel – why wouldn't he mention its fulfillment in his second book? Was it because it was still in the future?

LUKE'S USE OF FULFILLED PROPHECY

At that time **prophets** came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. One of them named Agabus stood up and **predicted by the Spirit that there would be a severe famine** over all the world; **and this took place during the reign of Claudius**. The disciples determined that according to their ability, each would send relief to the believers living in Judea; this they did, sending it to the elders by Barnabas and Saul. ***Acts 11:27-30***
(NRSV)

Luke clearly uses fulfilled prophecy in Acts to bolster the message and attest to its truthfulness

RATIONALE FOR DATING ACTS

Luke records, in some detail, the martyrdom of some of the early disciples:

Then they dragged him out of the city and began to stone him ... While they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Then he knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he died.
Acts 7:58-60 (NRSV)

About that time King Herod laid violent hands upon some who belonged to the church. He had James, the brother of John, killed with the sword. ***Acts 12:1-2 (NRSV)***

EMPEROR NERO

- Adopted by his grand-uncle Emperor Claudius (yes, that same Claudius we saw in Acts 12)
- Named as successor to Claudius in AD 54
- Reigned until AD 68 when he committed suicide
- Great Fire damaged much of the city of Rome in AD 64
- Burned for 5 days – no, Nero didn't "fiddle" while Rome burned, but many blamed him for fire
- To deflect criticism, he blamed Christians and persecuted them – supposedly including Peter & Paul

RATIONALE FOR DATING ACTS (CONT.)

No Roman persecution mentioned, but rather ...

when the town clerk had quieted the crowd, he said ... "the courts are open, and there are proconsuls"; let them bring charges there against one another. If there is anything further you want to know, it must be settled in the regular assembly. **Acts 19:35-39 (NRSV)**

The (Roman) officials in Ephesus were helpful to the disciples, and intervened on their behalf with an unruly mob

RATIONALE FOR DATING ACTS (CONT.)

No mention of the death of Paul or James

He lived there two whole years at his own expense and welcomed all who came to him, proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance. ***Acts 28:30-31 (NRSV)***

Paul's 1st imprisonment described as Acts comes to a close. There is no mention of Paul's 2nd imprisonment around AD 65 and death in AD 66 (subjects for another time)

No mention of the death of James either

Then after three years I did go up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and stayed with him fifteen days; but I did not see any other apostle except James the Lord's brother. ***Galatians 1:18-19 (NRSV)***

James is thought to have been murdered about AD 62 in Jerusalem. Wouldn't Luke have mentioned the death of either of these pillars of the early Church?

While there are those who hold to a later date (even into the 2nd century), we will use the earlier dating

HISTORICAL RELIABILITY OF ACTS

In Luke's Own Words:

Since many have undertaken to set down an orderly account of the events that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed on to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, I too decided, after investigating everything carefully from the very first, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed. *Luke 1:1-4 (NRSV)*

HISTORICAL RELIABILITY OF ACTS

From a current encyclopedia:

“Archaeological inscriptions and other independent sources show that Acts contains accurate details of 1st century society, specifically with regard to titles of officials, administrative divisions, town assemblies, and rules of the Jewish temple in Jerusalem”. *Wikipedia*

HISTORICAL RELIABILITY OF ACTS

- Lots and lots of details in Acts – things which are verifiable through other sources
- Covering more than 30 years, and encompassing areas from Judea to Rome
- Descriptions of people, cultures, nautical and trade terms, varying governmental bodies and titles
- Archeology has uncovered confirmation of many of these details, many of them incidental to the narrative
- Luke's objectivity is reinforced by his inclusion of the good and the bad – disagreements and personal fallings-out and internal feuds

WHOSE WORDS ARE THESE?

The “speeches” we have recorded in Acts are certainly summaries of what was originally delivered

- Most would only take a few minutes to read aloud
- Paul could certainly speak longer than that – just ask Eutychus (Acts 20:7-9)

WHOSE WORDS ARE THESE?

So the question is – Did Luke put his own words into the speakers mouths?

- No unanimity in the minds of commentators – popular opinion has moved back and forth over time
- Without minimizing effect of Divine inspiration, or resorting to it as an explanation
- Worth looking at reasons to think Luke did accurately summarize what others spoke

WHOSE WORDS ARE THESE?

Was Luke “the beloved physician” (Col. 4:14) also Luke “the historian”

He certainly saw himself that way:

I too decided, after investigating everything carefully from the very first, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed. ***Luke 1:3-4 (NRSV)***

As did Herodotus (aka “the Father of History):

“These are the researches of Herodotus of Halicarnassus, which he publishes, in the hope of thereby preserving from decay the remembrance of what men have done...” ***The History of Herodotus (opening statement)***

Luke seems to have inherited the traditions of Greek historical writing

WHOSE WORDS ARE THESE?

Thucydides (another famous Greek historian) declared that in composing his speeches, he:

"adhered as closely as possible to the general sense of what was actually said." *History of the Peloponnesian War*

WHOSE WORDS ARE THESE?

Luke seems to have adopted this approach for the speeches we find in Acts

- Generally, Luke uses excellent “classical” Greek
- Notable differences in language used to describe events
 - Acts 1 – 15 (set in Palestine) have decided Aramaic characteristics
 - As if Mary related actions in Luke 1 & 2
 - Acts 16 – 28 (generally outside Palestine) are more classical Greek

LOOK AT PETER'S WORDS

In Acts (via Luke)

- Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:
Acts 2:23 (KJV)

In First Peter (by himself)

- Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied. *1 Peter 1:2 (KJV)*

LOOK AT PETER'S WORDS

In Acts (via Luke)

- Then Peter said, **Silver and gold have I none;** but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. ***Acts 3:6 (KJV)***

In First Peter (by himself)

- Forasmuch as ye know that ye were **not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold,** from your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers; ***1 Peter 1:18 (KJV)***

LOOK AT PETER'S WORDS

In Acts (via Luke)

And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all. ***Acts 3:16 (KJV)***

In First Peter (by himself)

Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God. ***1 Peter 1:21 (KJV)***

LOOK AT PETER'S WORDS

In Acts (via Luke)

- And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all. *Acts 3:16 (KJV)*

In First Peter (by himself)

- Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God. *1 Peter 1:21 (KJV)*

LOOK AT PETER'S WORDS

In Acts (via Luke)

And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God **to be the Judge of quick and dead.** *Acts 10:42 (KJV)*

In First Peter (by himself)

Who shall give account to him that is ready **to judge the quick and the dead.** *1 Peter 4:5 (KJV)*

LOOK AT PETER'S WORDS

In Acts (via Luke)

Repent therefore, and turn to God ... So that times of refreshing may come ... until the **time of universal restoration**. *Acts 3:19-21 (NRSV)*

In Second Peter (by himself)

Since **all these things are to be dissolved** in this way, what sort of persons ought you to be in **leading lives of holiness and godliness**, *2 Peter 3:11 (NRSV)*

The Greek texts of Peter's words throughout both Acts and Peter's Epistles are even closer than would appear, and are unlike Luke's use of Greek in other places

LOOK AT STEPHEN'S WORDS

- In total, the Book of Acts quotes from the Old Testament 40 times
- Almost 40% (15 of 40) of these quotations appear in Stephen's speech
- This repeated use of the Old Testament does not resemble Luke's (a Gentile) writing, but rather a Jewish background and a deep understanding of the Scriptures
- There are 23 Greek words that are not found elsewhere in Acts (or anywhere else in the New Testament, for that matter) apart from Stephen's speech

LOOK AT PAUL'S WORDS

In Acts (via Luke)

finish ... the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus,
to testify to the good news of
God's grace. *Acts 20:24b*
(NRSV)

In his Epistles (by himself)

... "See that you **complete the task that you have received in the Lord.**" *Colossians 4:17*
(NRSV)

LOOK AT PAUL'S WORDS

In Acts (via Luke)

- **serving the Lord with all humility ... Acts 20:19**
(NRSV)
- But I do not count my life of any value to myself, if only **I may finish my course ... Acts 20:24a** ***(NRSV)***

In his Epistles (by himself)

- Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, **serve the Lord.**
Romans 12:11 (NRSV)
... **with all humility**
Ephesians 4:2 (NRSV)
- I have fought the good fight, **I have finished the race ... 2**
Timothy 4:7 (NRSV)

SUMMARY

- We have intellect and reason, so we should apply them to our Bible study
- Much of Acts is taken up with the spoken word, which gives us insight into the speakers and their messages
- Acts is a reliable history (witness) to the events of the mid-first century, written down shortly after those events took place
- Luke is an accurate reporter of what was said, and did not just put his own words onto other's mouths
- We can therefore trust what we read and the men who spoke and the man who wrote the ***“Words Of The Apostles”***

SPEECHES IN ACTS

Should The Book Really Be Called

The Words Of The Apostles?

Class One - Introduction