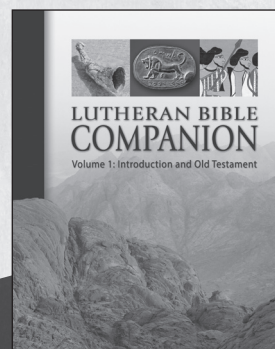


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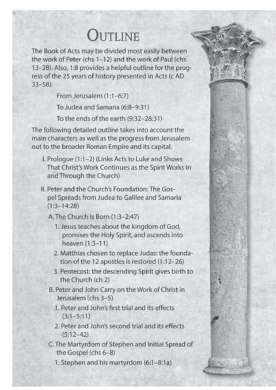
Fourth-century engraving of Peter and Paul, key figures in Acts.



Characters

"Acts of the Apostles" can hardly be the title given to the second part of his work by Luke himself. Of the apostles, only Peter and Paul are really leading figures. John appears a few times in the early chapters and then disappears. James the son of Zebedee appears only as a martyr, with one short sentence devoted to his execution. On the other hand, men who are not apostles play a considerable role in the narrative: Stephen, Philip, Barnabas, Silas, Agabus. Furthermore, if the title were to be understood in the sense suggested by similar works current in antiquity such as *The Acts of Alexander* by Callisthenes or *The Acts of Hannibal* by Sosthenes, it could actually be misleading. It would suggest a narrative of human heroism and human achievement. Of course, the very term apostle, as defined by Jesus and as used by the apostles themselves, should have excluded that idea, for the apostle is by definition nothing of himself and everything by virtue of the commission given him by his Lord. But would Luke have selected a title that even suggested the idea of human greatness? His book tells the story of men, only because, and insofar as, men are instrumental in the growth and triumph of the Word of the Lord.

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



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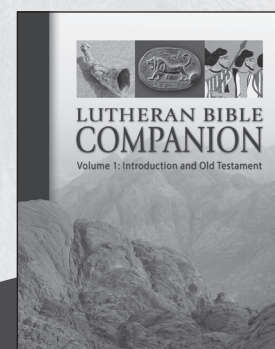
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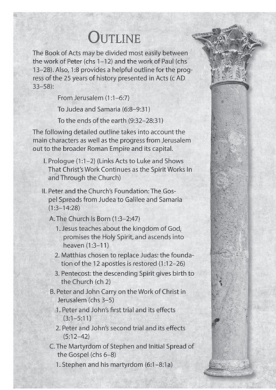
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






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