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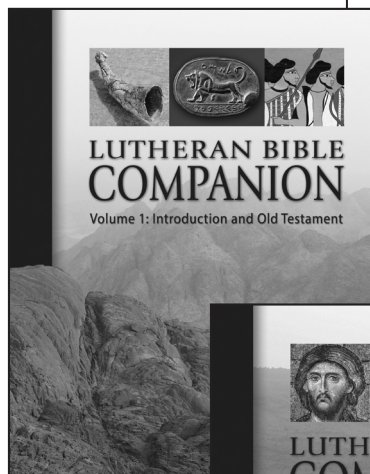
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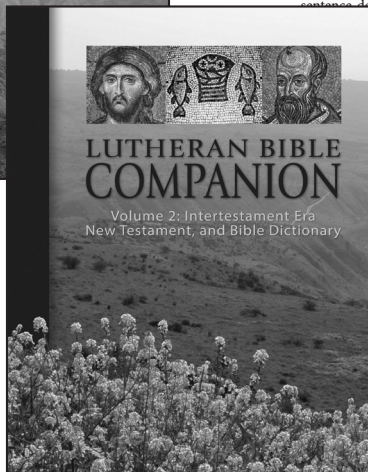
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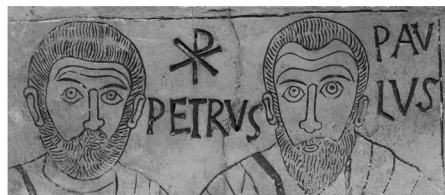
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THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

and monumentally sketched. There are, for instance, large gaps in the record of the career of Paul; both his two years' ministry at Corinth and his three years' ministry at Ephesus are merely illustrated by means of typical incidents rather than chronicled. Indeed, the whole work illustrates rather than chronicles the course of the Word that proclaims and presents Christ. Luke selects incidents and actions that illumine and bring out in clear outline the impact of that Word upon people, the tensions and conflicts that ensue when the Word of the Lord is heard, and the triumphant progress of that Word despite tensions and conflicts.

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 by a considerable role in the narrative: **Stephen**, **Philip**, **Barnabas**, **Agabus**. Furthermore, if the title were to be understood in suggested by similar works current in antiquity, such as *The Acts* by Callisthenes or *The Acts of Hannibal* by Sosylus, it could misleading. It would suggest a narrative of human heroism and event. Of course, the very term *apostle*, as defined by Jesus by the apostles themselves, should have excluded that idea, for as by definition nothing of himself and everything by virtue of sion given him by his Lord. But would Luke have selected a title suggested the idea of human greatness? His book tells the story of ecause, and insofar as, men are instrumental in the growth and the Word of the Lord.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

OUTLINE

The Book of Acts may be divided most easily between the work of Peter (chs 1–12) and the work of Paul (chs 13–28). Also, 1:8 provides a helpful outline for the progress of the 25 years of history presented in Acts (c AD 33–58):

- From Jerusalem (1:1–6:7)
- To Judea and Samaria (6:8–9:31)
- To the ends of the earth (9:32–28:31)

The following detailed outline takes into account the main characters as well as the progress from Jerusalem out to the broader Roman Empire and its capital.

- I. Prologue (1:1–2) (Links Acts to Luke and Shows That Christ's Work Continues as the Spirit Works In and Through the Church)
- II. Peter and the Church's Foundation: The Gospel Spreads from Judea to Galilee and Samaria (1:3–14:28)
 - A. The Church Is Born (1:3–2:47)
 1. Jesus teaches about the kingdom of God, promises the Holy Spirit, and ascends into heaven (1:3–11)
 2. Matthias chosen to replace Judas: the foundation of the 12 apostles is restored (1:12–26)
 3. Pentecost: the descending Spirit gives birth to the Church (ch 2)
 - B. Peter and John Carry on the Work of Christ in Jerusalem (chs 3–5)
 1. Peter and John's first trial and its effects (3:1–5:11)
 2. Peter and John's second trial and its effects (5:12–42)
 - C. The Martyrdom of Stephen and Initial Spread of the Gospel (chs 6–8)
 1. Stephen and his martyrdom (6:1–8:1a)



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