



One Small Step

Since there is no biblical book of Luke-Acts, whence the title of this issue? That Luke and Acts are two volumes by a single author is not a discovery of modern critical scholarship, but a tradition of the earliest church. Critical scholarship has probed and examined this tradition, and, though it might speak of the author's use of sources and of possible additions to the original documents, it has generally affirmed the simple observation that the two works belong together because they stem from a common writer.

More recently, however, biblical scholarship has adopted new methods. Some extreme adherents of literary criticism claim no interest whatsoever in the question of original authorship. Some statements by canonical critics would seem to suggest that biblical books should be understood only in their canonical context. Well, then, is our focus on Luke-Acts anachronistic? It assumes a strong interest in common authorship, and it reads books apart from traditional canonical order.

Apparently our title implies an overlapping of some methods and a challenge to others—at least in their extreme form. So do the individual articles (which raise traditional, historical-critical, literary, canonical, rhetorical, and social questions). In my opinion, this is a happy state of affairs. In his final class period before retirement, Gerhard von Rad admonished those of us present to stop asking about an author's theological or methodological "school" before reading his or her work (i.e., to dismiss it if it were not "correct"); the only question to ask, said von Rad, is whether or not the work has advanced our knowledge *ein Schrittlein* (one small step). And he added, it won't be more than a *Schrittlein* for any of us. So the question to ask of this issue of *Word & World* and its articles is not whether or not they use your favorite methodology, but whether they advance our knowledge one little step. Since they did for me, I commend them to you.

The issue opens with three articles raising basic exegetical questions. *Mark Allan Powell*, for example, deftly examines terms related to salvation in Luke-Acts. For Luke, he says, salvation is participation in the reign of God. Luke offers an encouraging word on the subject of salvation, urging us to believe that the possibility of living as God intends may be greater than we imagine.

Susan R. Garrett argues that Luke employs two models other than that of atonement for interpreting Jesus' death—Jesus was a "second Moses," leading an exodus from bondage to Satan, and a "second Adam," whose death and resurrection removed the curse of death put on humankind in the first Adam.

Reading the gospel of Luke as a single continuous narrative, says *Robert C. Tannehill*, will produce new insights. He demonstrates this by examining what

happens to the social hope raised by the birth narrative's announcement of a king who will rescue Israel from its enemies. Though expectations are transformed, the social hope remains—with surprising results.

Now we move to a series of articles which ask more directly about the interpretation of Luke-Acts for the present. For example, *David L. Tiede* combines his vocations of exegete and seminary president to examine the nature of leadership in Luke-Acts. He finds a vision of authority grounded in service which can inform not only present leaders in the church but also those in the corporate world and international affairs.

Jacob Jervell reviews the direction of recent interpretative trends, establishing the foundation for the two articles to follow. Jervell points out, above all, a new appreciation of the Jewishness of Luke's writings. This reading requires a much more positive estimate of the place of Jewish Christianity in the early church, even as late as the end of the first century.

Drawing on these recent insights, *Anthony J. Saldarini* argues that Luke does not imply that Judaism has been rejected by God and that Christians have replaced Jews as God's people. Rather, Luke's rebukes of Israel are in the tradition of the prophets, calling the one people of God to repentance. This view has important implications for Jewish-Christian relations.

Working from a similar perspective, *Donald Juel* dares to raise for us the question of truth. What does Peter's speech in Acts 3 mean? To whom? Is it true? Juel's insistence on hearing the text's rhetoric, its public claims, brings it before us with a new urgency. We cannot keep it at a "safe" historical or academic distance.

Finally, *Walter E. Pilgrim* chooses to look at Luke-Acts for themes that might contribute to the contemporary discussion about the global ecological crisis. His work shows that asking new questions of old texts produces new and important insights for the church's teaching and preaching.

Following the theme of the issue, the resource section includes a Texts in Context study by *Gary Simpson* in which he considers the Lenten texts from Luke's gospel. In Face to Face, *Carl Volz* and *Roy Harrisville* square off on the goal of ecumenism.

Outside the theme, we are pleased to present a revision of senior New Testament scholar *J. Louis Martyn's* lecture to the Society of Biblical Literature in its "How My Mind Has Changed (or Remained the Same)" series. For this publication, Professor Martyn has added a title reflecting the content of the address and provided a précis of the critical responses.

Along with this issue, subscribers will receive a somewhat belated index of the first ten years of *Word & World*. It is a sign of hope—hope that articles already published will continue to be of use and that the journal will continue to be around for decades to come, doing "Theology for Christian Ministry."

F.J.G.