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Description

Acts is the fifth book of the New Testament and it continues where the first four end. The Gospels record the life, words, and acts of the eternal Son of God, our Saviour: from His birth to the cross, to the tomb and to His resurrection. The Gospels close with the apostles in Jerusalem, receiving the Great Commission and as a company (the 120) waiting for the promise of the Father. Once they received this promise and the Holy Spirit had come to indwell them -- sent by the exalted Son of man -- they received power from "on high" needed for the work our risen Lord gave them to do (Luke 24:49).

- Acts can easily be understood, but also misunderstood. Some use it as their textbook to proclaim that the same things which happened, then, should also happen today. Others, rejecting this, build on human traditions and inventions. Both approaches are faulty. In this book about Acts, the author, with the Lord's help, seeks to keep a healthy balance in these matters, avoiding such extreme positions, trying to maintain a sound balance between interpretation and application.

- Luke contributed most to the New Testament, slightly over one forth. The Space given to Luke, in proportion to the rest of the New Testament, is by itself an indication of the significance of his Writings as intended by the Holy Spirit. Acts is like a bridge between the Gospels and the rest of the New Testament and is indispensable for a good understanding of the Epistles for it functions as a link to these as well. Acts substantiates the fulfilment of the Lord's promises to HIS disciples as to the coming and ministry of the Holy Spirit, who worked a tremendous transformation in the lives of the Twelve and in people who accepted their message and responded to the heavenly Lord's calling. This is also true for today.

- Both in his Gospel and especially in Acts, Luke describes several aspects of the transition from a Jewish context to something new, which rises above human distinctions that had existed so far. Just as the Lord was opposed in His earthly ministry, so Acts reports various forms of opposition to the Lord while working from heaven through His Spirit and by His servants (today this has not changed). Luke's writings emphasize a progression, extension, and continuation in God's work. The expanding influence of Christianity, under the direction of the Lord in the glory, is one of the key-themes of Acts. As Luke's Gospel emphasizes Christ's work on earth, so Acts describes the Spirit's work on earth as indispensable and prominent, until the Lord's return to take His Church to heaven.

- Acts shows the importance of preaching (Peter, Stephen; Paul), which is still needed today. Acts defends Peter and Paul's apostleship and ministry, whereas the religious leaders rejected both, as they had done with Christ. If we reject the apostles' ministry, we put them back in prison, figuratively speaking. Sadly, this is what has happened, in Church history and even in our days. Acts describes the realization of God's purpose (Ephesians 3:8-11) and shows that God's promises to Israel as a nation were postponed, not cancelled (see Acts 1:7). God still has a plan for His earthly people.

- Establishing a link between his first and second composition, Luke begins his second one by briefly summarizing Christ's activities after His resurrection. He then describes Christ's ascension and reports about the waiting and praying disciples, ready to begin the great work as soon as they received the promised Holy Spirit. With the descent of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, Luke continues to describe how the apostles and others with them preached the gospel according to Christ's commission. Acts is the history of apostolic evangelization. It describes many conversions and changed lives, reporting the beginnings of the history of the Church. The book divides into three main parts (Acts 1-7; 8-12; 13-28). With Acts 12:24, the middle section of the book comes to a close. At that point in time, the gospel message has made its way from Jerusalem through Judea and Samaria. After Peter's ministry has been described in Acts chapters 1 to 12, Luke then focuses his readers' attention on Paul and his ministry, reaching out to "the ends of the earth" (1:8; 13:47), which includes his journey to Rome (Acts 27-28).

- This volume has as title "The Glories That Should Follow" and has also two main parts. In it the author stays close to the text of Acts, elaborates on specific details, including word-studies and comments on Greek words. The second part discusses more in-depth some important themes and topics.

751 pages – Softcover – Author: Alfred Bouter