**The Book of Acts: The Question of Historical Precedent (F&S ch. 6)**

What was Luke’s purpose in writing Acts? Acts 1:1-2 continues the description of what Jesus began (Luke 1:1-4) and now what the Apostles continue to do. The content of Acts shows that Luke’s purpose was to chronicle the development of the Church in the first 30 years after Jesus; to describe its growth in the Roman world by the work of the Apostles and especially the Gentile mission of Paul.

The normative (i.e. prescriptive) aspects of Acts relate to the **message** of the Gospel (e.g. repent, believe, be baptized, establish cells of believers to worship and do the work of ministry). The **methods** that carried this mission are descriptive within their time and place and were not intended to prescribe “how” mission must be done. As Fee notes, “Many sectors of evangelical Protestantism have a **“restoration” mentality**. We regularly look back to the church and Christian experience in the first century either as the norm to be restored or the ideal to be approximated. Thus we often say things like, ‘Acts plainly teaches us that…”. However, …” (113). Luke’s purpose was on the repetitive message NOT methods (see Fee’s explanation and Voorwinde’s 36 illustrations).

Arminian and Charismatic movements argue for the total normative nature of Acts because they desire to justify their practices (e.g. baptism by the Spirit; speaking in tongues; performance of miracles; etc.). These movements have their own scholars and therefore their own body of literature.

The following items provide a start with bibliography for expansion. I chose internet items for your convenience of “getting started.”

**\*\*Voorwinde**, Stephen (*Vox Reformata* 2016) [http://www.rtc.edu.au/RTC/media/Documents/Vox articles/How-Normative-is-Acts.pdf?ext=.pdf](http://www.rtc.edu.au/RTC/media/Documents/Vox%20articles/How-Normative-is-Acts.pdf?ext=.pdf)

**Blomberg**, *From Pentecost to Patmos*, p. 10

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/justin-taylor/how-do-we-know-whats-normative-in-the-book-of-acts/>

**Woodbridge**, Noel (South African Theological Seminary) [https://www.sats.edu.za/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Woodbridge-Interpreting-Acts-The-INCUR-Model.pdf](file:///Users/drgarytmeadors/Library/Containers/com.apple.mail/Data/Library/Mail%20Downloads/30FA8DE9-A3E1-4610-9E25-B98733839E54/https:/www.sats.edu.za/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Woodbridge-Interpreting-Acts-The-INCUR-Model.pdf)

**Summaries of Fee** and Stuart on Acts

<https://zondervanacademic.com/blog/book-of-acts-descriptive-or-prescriptive-heres-how-to-read-the-bible-for-all-its-worth>

<http://redeemernw.org/blog/learners/a-way-to-read-the-bible/acts-the-question-of-historical-precedent-part-7>

<https://nelima.wordpress.com/2012/10/02/acts-the-question-of-historical-precedent/>

**Charismatics say Yes!!**

<https://www.patheos.com/blogs/adrianwarnock/2013/02/10-reasons-why-acts-is-normative/>

<https://sweetbabyjosh.wordpress.com/2013/11/20/is-the-acts-narrative-normative/>

**One test of normativeness is to look for epistolary repetition of patterns. Their presence clarifies claims; their lack of data challenges claims.**