

The Acts of the Apostles ch. 1

Significance of Luke/Acts

How did a tiny Jewish sect grow to a huge size so fast?

Guided tour of the empire

Recall Luke's attitude to Romans

Uses the most sophisticated Greek

vv. 1-5 Introduction

*Luke part 2, moving from Jerusalem to the Empire

Note the two cities, the Aeneid, rising in the east moving west

*the first book, another travelogue in Judea

*Theophilus "beloved of God" Note: code names in Roman literature

Flavius Clemens and his wife Domatilla (executed by Domitian)

Luke 1:3 "Most Excellent" the title one uses with a senator

*v. 5 the two baptisms, similar but not identical ie cleansing vs sanctification

* appearing to them during 40 days, not necessarily a continued stay

*the Holy Spirit is the promise of the father

vv. 6-12 Ascension

*restoring the kingdom: they cannot shake this Davidic nationalism

*debunking the "three decked universe" They knew all about planets

*References suggest Pythagoras or Anaximander claimed it first

Certainly by Aristotle it's a done deal

*Eratosthenes (1. c. 276-195 BCE) was a Greek astronomer, geographer, mathematician, and poet best known for being the first to calculate the circumference of the earth and its axial tilt.

*sed contra: they are still geocentric

*"if Jesus ascended at speed of light... "

Clearly they are seeing something they cannot understand

*note the presence of angels: this is important recall Bethlehem, Resurrection, Judgement Day contact between this world and next

vv.13-14 The Community

*the community is both men and women (Statue)

*Mary is there also. Possible last reference to her except in Revelation 12

*Silent as always but pointing to her Son; she has a role in the Church

vv. 15-20 The Problem of Judas

*clearly a problem - but he was still designated by Christ- how could it be?

Every age has some bad priests

*Mt 17:25 hanging or exploding? Sol: splanknidzome ("bowel wrenching")
„deeply moved"

vv. 21-26 The Apostolic Succession

*a return to order: 12 apostles, 12 tribes, etc. a desire to get it right

*a good reminder- there will always be scandals and setbacks but we still
go on and on

*Jewish rabbinic vs Christian ordination (smicha)

*Peter- notice who leads -maintains that Judas treason was not an accident
but it was meant to be this way - citing Scripture - a standard bit of rhetoric

*show us the one you have chosen: God is always in charge of the Church

*the Urim and the Thummim: ("Light and Perfection")

Worn inside the ephod or breastplate w/ 12 stones

First reference²⁹ "Whenever Aaron enters the Holy Place, he will bear
the names of the sons of Israel over his heart on the breastplate piece of decision as
a continuing memorial before the Lord. ³⁰ Also put the Urim and the Thummim in
the breastplate, so they may be over Aaron's heart whenever he enters the Presence
of the Lord in the holy of holies. Thus Aaron will always bear the means of making
decisions for the Israelites over his heart before the Lord. (Exodus 28:29 ff)

Composition unknown, used by priests on behalf of kings

Its use: A debate in the army of Israel in the way with the Philistines over
who broke a sacred fast: ⁴¹ Then Saul prayed to the Lord, the God of Israel, "Why
have you not answered your servant today? If the fault is in me or my son Jonathan,
respond with Urim, but if the men of Israel are at fault, respond with Thummim."
Jonathan and Saul were taken by lot, and the men were cleared. ⁴² Saul said, "Cast
the lot between me and Jonathan my son." And Jonathan was taken.

(I Samuel 14:41 ff.)

*the beginnings of the Apostolic Succession

Legitimate authority in the church is never self appointed

Catholicism is not a democracy

*purpose of Church leaders: to bear witness to the resurrection

Repeated later when Greeks and Jews argue (6:2) we must not neglect
the Word of God