

Acts Studies: Descriptive, Not Prescriptive

The Literary Genre of Acts is Historical Narrative

- All the preaching in Acts is all inspired by the holy spirit and preserved by the holy spirit for us to read and imitate today.
 - But their other “acts” are what they honestly did over these first three decades as they are still learning the New Covenant as it is still being revealed during their lifetimes.
- On these pages are factual retellings of what actually happened.
 - It is not meant to be taken up as doctrine. They are to be read with discernment.

Some Examples, is this text to be taken as Descriptive or Prescriptive?

1. What do Christians do when we need to replace a leader in the church?

Acts 1: 24 – 26

24 And they prayed and said, “You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one of these two you have chosen

25 to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.”

26 And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

2. Should we expect people who speak foreign languages to understand what is spoken in tongues every time?

Act 2:4 - 6

4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

5 Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven.

6 And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language.

3. Should we expect that if we gather the church and pray without stopping that our loved ones will be miraculously delivered every time?

Acts 12:1 – 3a

1 About that time Herod the king laid violent hands on some who belonged to the church.

2 He killed James the brother of John with the sword,

3 and when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also.

4. Peter prayed three times a day and received a vision, is that how we can have visions?

Act 10:9 – 10

9 The next day, as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the housetop about the sixth hour to pray.

10 And he became hungry and wanted something to eat, but while they were preparing it, he fell into a trance



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Appreciating the Unique Purpose and Role of the Apostles

Unique for the 1st century in two ways:

#1 To speak to the church on behalf of Christ

#2 To perform signs on behalf of Christ

ἀπόστολος (*apostolos*): sent one

- A word commonly used regarding sent ones from the emperor himself.
 - Entrusted to uniquely bear his word and his power.

Hebrews 3:1 Therefore, holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle (ἀπόστολος) and high priest of our confession,

In the First Century, the Doctrine of the New Testament Faith was still being Revealed

Ephesians 2:19 - 21

19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,

20 built on the foundation of the apostles (ἀπόστολος) and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone,

21 in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord.

Revelation 21:14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles (ἀπόστολος) of the Lamb.

Jude 17 But you must remember, beloved, the predictions of the apostles (ἀπόστολος) of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Revelation 2:2 “I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance, and how you cannot bear with those who are evil, but have tested those who call themselves apostles (ἀπόστολος) and are not, and found them to be false.

The Signs of the First Century Apostles were Exceptional

Acts 2:43 And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles (ἀπόστολος).

Acts 5:12a, 15 - 16 Now many signs and wonders were regularly done among the people by the hands of the apostles (ἀπόστολος).

15 so that they even carried out the sick into the streets and laid them on cots and mats, that as Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on some of them.

16 The people also gathered from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all healed.

Act 19:11 - 12

11 And God was doing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul,

12 so that even handkerchiefs or aprons that had touched his skin were carried away to the sick, and their diseases left them and the evil spirits came out of them.

2nd Corinthians 12:12 The signs of a true apostle (ἀπόστολος) were performed among you with utmost patience, with signs and wonders and mighty works.

