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1-1-2002

# NT 620 The Acts of the Apostles

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### Recommended Citation

Anderson, Kevin L., "NT 620 The Acts of the Apostles" (2002). *Syllabi*. Book 1089.  
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**NT620 EXEGESIS OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES**  
**Asbury Theological Seminary**  
(Beta Version Syllabus)

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Spring 2002  
3 Credit Hours  
Five Orlando Campus Sessions and  
Virtual Campus Connectivity

## Course Introduction

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**Description:** Among the writers of the Four Gospels, Luke is unique in his plan to extend the narrative of God's redemptive purpose beyond the story of Jesus and into the history of the early Christian movement. The result is an exciting drama of profound historical and theological import, one that grapples with those figures and events working to fulfil or oppose God's purpose. This exegesis course focuses on the entire narrative of Acts in order to explore Luke's perspective on God's aim for the people of God and their mission.

**Prerequisites:** IBS 1, NT500 (or NT502-502), NT520.

**Geophysical and Virtual in Nature:** This course will be comprised not only of five Saturday sessions in a real-time, geophysical classroom environment, but of virtual classroom activities as well. ExL technology will be integrated into course instruction, class participation, and therefore course grading. This means each student must be able to access the ATS e-mail system using the FirstClass® client. Access is possible: (a) through use of computers available on campus in the Media Center (in Wilmore or Orlando), or (b) through dialing into the system from a home computer or via your ISP connection. Visit <http://www.asburyseminary.edu/it/fc/download.htm> to download the FirstClass® client software.

## Course Objectives

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At the conclusion of this course, participants should be able to:

- employ a range of exegetical approaches relevant to the interpretation of the Acts of the Apostles, and apply those approaches to other New Testament narratives;
- understand the Acts of the Apostles within its socio-historical, literary, and canonical contexts;
- identify central issues in the critical study of the Acts of the Apostles;
- articulate the importance of one's own presuppositions in the task of interpretation;
- articulate primary theological and ethical concerns of the Acts of the Apostles;

- demonstrate awareness of how the theological and ethical concerns of the Acts of the Apostles contribute to those of the canon and of constructive theology and ethics;
- differentiate between critical and homiletical/devotional commentaries and studies of the Acts of the Apostles (and other New Testament books);
- evaluate critically the usefulness of secondary literature in the study of the Acts of the Apostles (and other New Testament books);
- use Greek-based language resources to demonstrate proficiency in lexical semantics;
- use Greek-based language resources to identify grammatical constructions (i.e., with regard to sentence structure and use of clauses);
- use Greek-based language resources to engage in syntactical analyses (e.g., with regard to verbal aspect, mood, and voice; use of the genitive and dative cases, etc.);
- recognize the importance of, and apply, close-reading skills and social-anthropological sensitivities to the text of the Acts of the Apostles;
- evaluate the faithfulness of their own readings of the Acts of the Apostles, as well as the readings of others;
- propose fruitful ways in which the Acts of the Apostles may be read within the horizons of the contemporary church and world; and
- demonstrate a heightened sense of and commitment to the grand story of God's purpose as this is articulated within the narrative of Luke-Acts.

## Course Requirements

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**(1) Class Preparation, Attendance, and Participation (15%).** Participants should complete all of the requirements for each of the five modules of the course. In particular, participants will need to prepare for each Saturday session by (a) carefully reading the assigned texts in the Acts of the Apostles (in accordance with the course schedule), (b) making notations about the text of Acts, (c) dialoguing with others in our virtual classroom about key points of interpretation, and (d) comparing their observations with those in at least one of the following commentaries:

Fitzmyer, Joseph A. *The Acts of the Apostles*. AB31. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1998.

Johnson, Luke Timothy. *The Acts of the Apostles*. SP5. Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical, 1992.

*Because of the limited number of sessions for the course, attendance is imperative. In order to achieve a passing grade for the course, no more than one-half session may be missed.*

**(2) Quiz (15%).** During the first hour of our Saturday session on 23 March 2002 participants will write a quiz based upon their reading and critical analysis of Jacob Jervell, *The Theology of the Acts of the Apostles* (New Testament Theology;

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

**(3) Critical Review (20%).** Due at the beginning of class on 13 April 2002 is a critical review of **one** of the following books:

Cadbury, Henry Joel. *The Making of Luke-Acts*. 2d ed. With a New Introduction by Paul N. Anderson. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1999.

Penney, John Michael. *The Missionary Emphasis of Lukan Pneumatology*. Journal of Pentecostal Studies Supplement 12. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994.

Seim, Turid Karlsen. *The Double Message: Patterns of Gender in Luke and Acts*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1994.

This essay should be approximately 1500 words, or 5-6 double-spaced pages (using 12-point size type and standard one-inch margins). As a *critical* review, the essay should succinctly summarize the author's central theses, briefly demonstrate the author's approach to the subject matter, and critique the author's analysis (e.g., with regard to the author's method, faithfulness to the primary materials, engagement with other voices on issues, etc.).

You will find information on how to write book reviews on ATS's Intranet in the "Students" folder.

**(4) Interpretive Assignments (25%).** Participants will complete **three** interpretive assignments before our final Saturday session on 4 May 2002.

An interpretive assignment must deal with a text that we have not yet discussed in one of our Saturday sessions (consult the course schedule for possible assigned texts). Each interpretive assignment should be no more than 900 words in length (equal to two single-spaced pages with standard one-inch margins, using a 12-point serif font such as Times New Roman).

An individual's interpretive assignment shall be submitted (a) to our virtual classroom for peer review from students who have labored on the same passage, and (b) to me for comments and grading. You must, of course, submit the review to the virtual classroom either as a FirstClass e-mail message or as an attached file (Word, WordPerfect, or .rtf format). *You must submit interpretive assignments to me as **printed documents** (see the specifications above for length and format) at the requisite Saturday sessions.*

Interpretive assignments are not research papers, Sunday School Bible lessons, or sermons. No secondary materials should be consulted in their preparation (apart from Greek lexica or grammar/syntax manuals). They should evidence a close reading of the text on its own terms, with due attention to literary, socio-historical, and theological concerns. The kinds of techniques and skills involved in the

exegetical spadework for completing an interpretive assignment are embodied in Mary H. Schertz and Perry B. Yoder, *Seeing the Text: Exegesis for Students of Greek and Hebrew* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2001). However, remember that an interpretive assignment is the *result* of the process set forth by Schertz and Yoder, not the process itself.

**(5) Research Paper (25%).** At the beginning of our Saturday session on 4 May 2002 participants shall submit an essay of approximately 3000 words in length (10-12 double-spaced pages with standard one-inch margins, using a serif font such as Times New Roman), complete with footnotes (*not* endnotes) and bibliography. The paper should evidence *both* a close reading of a selected pericope from the Acts of the Apostles *and* critical engagement with secondary resources related to your study.

## Course Schedule

SESSION	DATE	MATERIAL TO COVER	INTERPRETIVE ASSIGNMENTS
1	16 February	The Luke-Acts project, the plan of Acts, and Acts 1:1–4:4	Acts 1:15-26 Acts 2:1-13 Acts 3:1-10
2	2 March	Acts 4:5–9:31	Acts 4:23-31 Acts 5:1-11 Acts 6:8-15 Acts 7:54–8:3 Acts 8:26-40
3	23 March	Acts 9:32–14:28 <b>Quiz</b> on Jervell, <i>Theology of the Acts of the Apostles</i>	Acts 11:1-18 Acts 13:1-12
	1-5 April	Reading Week	
4	13 April	Acts 15:1–20:16 Due: <b>Critical Review</b>	Acts 15:6-21 Acts 16:16-40 Acts 17:1-32 Acts 18:24-28 Acts 20:7-12
5	4 May	Acts 20:17–28:31 Due: <b>Research Paper</b>	Acts 21:17-26 Acts 23:1-11 Acts 28:1-10