

HOW TO READ THE BIBLE FOR ALL ITS WORTH

CHAPTER 6 – ACTS:
THE QUESTION OF HISTORICAL
PRECEDENT

ACTS - OVERVIEW

- Written in narrative form (like much of the OT and some of the Gospels)
- Written over a multi-year period in either the mid 60's or mid 70's AD.
- Split into 6 sections that define the movement of the gospel from the cross to Rome

ACTS - OVERVIEW

- 1:1 – 6:7 – Primitive church with significant Jewish influence
- 6:8 – 9:31 - First expansion to the “Hellenists” – Greek speaking Jewish Christians. Includes Paul’s conversion.

ACTS - OVERVIEW

- 9:32 – 12:24 – Conversion of Gentiles with Cornelius at the center (God-given faith)
- 12:25 – 16:5 – Geographical expansion to the Gentiles and an inclusion of them into the family.

ACTS - OVERVIEW

- 16:6 – 19:20 – The further expansion of the gospel along with the Gentile acceptance and Jewish rejection
- 19:21 – 28:30 – Paul and the expansion of the gospel to Rome with Paul's trials and acquittals.

ACTS - OVERVIEW

- The point of Acts is:
 - To show the expansion of the gospel
 - The faithfulness of the people
 - Above all else, that God was the power behind the movement through the Holy Spirit.

ACTS – GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- How do we determine what is “normative” vs what is “permissible”?
- We must first understand “doctrinal statements”.

ACTS – DOCTRINAL STATEMENTS

- Doctrinal statements are comprised of “primary” and “secondary” aspects of 3 categories:
 - Christian Theology – What we believe
 - Christian Ethics – How we should live
 - Christian Practice – What we should do

ACTS – DOCTRINAL STATEMENTS

- Primary Statements

- What Scripture *intends* to teach
- God is One, God is love, all have sinned, saved by grace, divinity of Christ

ACTS – DOCTRINAL STATEMENTS

- Secondary Statements

- What we derive *incidentally* from Scripture
- These are the logical outflow of what is primary

ACTS – DOCTRINAL STATEMENTS

- Examples of Primary and Secondary
 - Christ is divine is primary
 - How the 2 natures (deity and humanity) exist is secondary.
 - Divine inspiration of the Word is primary
 - How this is accomplished is secondary.

ACTS – DOCTRINAL STATEMENTS

- Most of what Christians derive from Scripture is “Christian Practice”
- Most passages on “Christian Practice” are secondary

ACTS – DOCTRINAL STATEMENTS

- Secondary “Christian Practice” examples
 - How often should we celebrate Communion
 - Mode or age of baptism
 - Day of the week to gather for worship
 - Which gifts do we receive and when

ACTS – DOCTRINAL STATEMENTS

- Hermeneutical Tension
 - How to discern between what is taught and what is simply being reported?

ACTS – DOCTRINE – 3 PRINCIPLES

- Avoid analogizing biblical precedent
 - Gideon's fleece
 - Christ's baptism experience (baptismal regeneration or baptism of the Spirit)
 - Taking up the Cross

ACTS – DOCTRINE – 3 PRINCIPLES

- Biblical narratives do have value in patterns
 - 1 Corinthians 10:1-13 – false sense of security
 - Be careful to use biblical precedent to justify current actions.
 - Cleaning of the temple – Righteous anger

ACTS – DOCTRINE – 3 PRINCIPLES

- We must be careful when enforcing patterns
 - The patterns must be consistent and repeated in the New Testament
 - Teachings that are only seen once must be consistent with other teachings
 - Cultural issues must be ignored or the intent retained

ACTS – DOCTRINE – 3 PRINCIPLES

- Avoid analogizing biblical precedent
- Biblical narratives do have value in patterns
- We must be careful when enforcing patterns

ACTS – EXEGESIS

- 6:1-7

- 8:5-25

HOMework

- Read Chapter 7
- Focus on “Thinking Vertically”, “Thinking Horizontally”, and “Interpreting the Gospels as a Whole”