



NT 710 *Advanced Biblical Study in Greek – Acts* (3)

Fall 2007

Instructor: R. R. Remin

Contacting the Instructor

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Class Location: 701

Course Description

An advanced study of Greek grammar for the purpose of gaining insight in the meaning of the New Testament text. This study will enable the student to understand a text in more detail as well as how the grammatical structures of Greek may have lent themselves to different interpretations. May be repeated for credit depending on the biblical books selected for study. *Prerequisite: BL522.*

This year the Greek reading will be primarily the speeches in the *Acts of the Apostles*. The Attic style of Acts is somewhat distinctive in the New Testament and serves as a good place for Greek students to practice their skills and develop their understanding of Greek syntax. The speeches have been chosen because in ancient historiography author's used speeches as a vehicle for the characters to express their points of view and values which in the case of *Acts* would be their theology.

Student Outcomes

1. The student will prepare before class and read and discuss in class as many of the speeches of *Acts* in Greek as the students' abilities and the limitations of the academic semester allow.
2. Each student will improve their understanding of Greek grammatical structures *per se* and how these structures relate to exegesis. The professor will work with each student in order to assist the student in setting goals for themselves in their development of their knowledge and abilities in Greek.
3. Each student will learn the text critical, exegetical, and hermeneutical issues of *Acts* and the implications for preaching and teaching *Acts*.
4. Each student will read more of *Acts* in Greek and English than is actually dealt with in class.

Required Texts

1. The fourth edition of the United Bible Society's Greek New Testament.

2. Danker, Frederick William. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (3rd ed., revised and edited by F.W. Danker, University of Chicago Press, 2000).¹

Note: You now need to know the Hebrew alphabet in order to count in the subsections.

Note 2: As with all the best books, the colour of this edition is burgundy. First English edition was blue; the second was green.

3. Wallace, Daniel B. *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics, An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Zondervan, 1996).
4. A list of commentaries and monographs for *Acts* will be distributed and discussed in class. Students are encouraged to read extensively from the better ones.

Course Schedule

This course meets on Thursdays from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. in one of the class rooms of Ambrose Seminary.

Special dates to remember are:

October 8 (Monday)

December 10 (Monday)

December 19

Thanksgiving Day (no classes)

Last Lectures and final day to hand in assignments

The Day beyond which no professor can grant an extension for incomplete work. This is *the Day* by which you must apply to the Dean and/or Registrar's Office for an extension beyond this *the Day*!

Course Requirements

Note: All assignments must be submitted in electronic form via email. These assignments must be MS Word format and must use Greek and/or Hebrew fonts. The fonts will be made available to students.

1. Attend all scheduled sessions of this course. In a course of this nature attendance in class is mandatory because of the interaction which takes place over the text.
2. Read *Acts* in Greek as directed for class sessions. The class sessions will be taken with discussion of Greek grammatical structures, discussions of implications of grammatical structures for translation and interpretation. If students are finding a particular text difficult, students need to prepare the text by forming and articulating

¹ Previous edition was Bauer, W., Gingrich, F., and Danker, F. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (2nd Eng. ed. revised and augmented by F.W. Gingrich and F.W. Danker incorporating the additions and corrections of the 5th German ed., Chicago, 1979).

their questions. The professor will also systematically teach grammar as the need arises.

3. Read in the various reference works available to students. Keep a record of this reading. Demonstrate initiative.
 - Use and read entries in Danker's NT Greek-English lexicon as part of preparing for class and/or as directed by the professor. Students are expected to demonstrate some initiative in the use of Danker.
 - Read in Greek grammars sections relevant to the Greek text being read. The professor will regularly identify relevant sections. Students should take the initiative to identify the relevant sections in grammars by using the indices of the grammars and Robert Hanna's *A Grammatical Aid to the Greek New Testament* (1983).
 - Read F.F. Bruce, *Peter, Stephen, James & John, Studies in Non-Pauline Christianity* (Eerdmans, 1979)
 - Read Keith Hopkins, *A World Full of Gods, The Strange Triumph of Christianity*(The Free Press, 1999).
 - Read and report on reading in commentaries and monographs on *Acts*.
 - Watch the A&E "Rome" series of videos! Easy reading and it will put *Acts* into the ancient context.
4. Read (only read) Daniel Wallace's *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*.
5. Write a series of three sermons (in outline) or lesson plans which are based three speeches from *Acts* and which reflect the message and theology of that speech. These sermons or lessons will be:
 - expository in nature (as opposed to allegorical or topical);
 - based on units of the text which are of a length realistic for teaching or preaching;
 - consistent with the message and emphasis of the whole of *Acts*;
 - relevant to a contemporary audience;
 - each sermon will be accompanied by a summary of the critical issues of the text on which that sermon is based.
 - oThe sermon outlines or lesson plans may be submitted as a completed collection or one or more at a time.

Each of the sermon outlines or lesson plans must include the following:

- a. a bibliography of items read relating to the passage,
- b. a one page, single spaced and typed, summary of the more technical aspects of the identified unit of Greek text, such as significant points of grammar, interpretation, etc.
- c. a sermon outline or lesson plan of two pages length. The sermon or lesson plan must begin with a clear statement of the purpose of the sermon or the lesson. This statement is not to be part of the sermon or lesson.

6. Research any two (2) of the following critical issues relating to *Acts* and write a concise summary of your findings. All topics must be approved by the professor but here are a few examples.

6.1 Recreating the NT (*Acts*) in the twenty-first century. Describe and evaluate the hermeneutic behind this use of *Acts*. In other words is *Acts* descriptive or prescriptive. Here are some aspects of the topic.

- Compare *salafism* in Islam (which also advocates inerrancy) and Christian *fundamentalism* with this interpretation of Acts. For *salafism* and *fundamentalism*, see some discussions such as Norman Cohen (*ed.*), *The Fundamentalist Phenomenon* (1990) and especially chapter one by Jaroslav Pelikan.
- This approach to Acts as a characteristic of fundamentalism (*salafism* also holds a literalistic interpretation of an inerrant *Koran*).
- Does this interpretation of *Acts* work for the same reasons in Christianity as in Islam, especially among European Muslims?
 - the younger generation
 - rejecting their parents abuses
 - frustration with their lot in life both socially, religiously, economically
 - feeling of righteousness
- In as much as this movement among conservative Christians in NA is a reaction to the diversity and lack of unity among the same, always remember this – an abundant and immanent presence of HS does not guarantee absence of disagreement or controversy!
- Develop the details of the hermeneutic:
 - Arguments from silence, *e.g.* non-use of musical instruments.
 - Implication that there is a canon within the canon. (Acts absence of musical instruments trumps any other references to instruments.)
 - Accept no more and no less than the explicit (*cf.* *salafism*).
- The irony of course is that among North American Christian *salafists*, they want it all from Acts but not common property nor the speaking in tongues, etc. VERY SELECTIVE!
- See some of the published reflections on the use of Acts to justify the charismatic/ Pentecostal phenomena of the twentieth century.
- Whereas *salafism* looks back to the first three generations, the practitioners of this hermeneutic for Acts only look back to the first generation.
 - However the revival of interest in early church worship is more an interest in those first three generations; the revival of interest in the Church Fathers, *e.g.* Thomas Oden (Ask yourself what pushed Oden to this interest!).

- 6.2 The nature of the sermons (speeches) in *Acts*. Are the speeches *verbatim*, summaries or Luke's creations? Start with Ward Gasque's "The Book of Acts and History," *Unity and Diversity in New Testament Theology* (Robert Guelich, ed., Eerdmans, 1978).
- 6.3 In what sense is *Acts* "history?" Is this history descriptive or prescriptive? How then does one use this history to edify the church? Start again with Gasque as cited in 6.2 above. See some of the published reflections on the use of Acts to justify the charismatic/ Pentecostal phenomena of the twentieth century.
- 6.4 Change in Acts. Change is a theme in Acts but the word is never used
- The divine agent in change.
 - Examples of change:
 - Outpouring of HS
 - Paul's conversion reflects a change in values
 - Stephen's theology of the temple, may not be new, but certainly a change with which even some Christians felt uncertain
 - Peter and the sheet from heaven (kosher as a symbol of traditional Jewish and early Christian *sharia*')
 - Council of Jerusalem
- 6.5 Spirituality in Acts
- In contrast to Pauline epistles there is not much of the *greater jihad* (spiritual warfare) in Acts.
 - The *lesser jihad* is limited to Paul's persecution of the first Christians but in a sense also a *jihad* against the Roman system or at least a use of the *pax Romana*
 - Abundant and immanent presence of HS does not guarantee absence of disagreement or controversy!
- 6.6 Thesis: Authority in the early church rested with the believers as guided by the Holy Spirit and thus the church as opposed to the apostles as the church.
- E.g. Who appoints Judas' successor? (*Acts* 1.15-26)
 - Check out how other decisions were arrived at in Acts.
 - Who are the "they"? The apostles (apostolic tradition, clericism, Catholicism) or the believers, *i.e.* the church?
 - Now read the text and don't let your Catholicism or magisterial Protestantism slip in here!
 - The councils also make decisions
 - In short is the church functioning as a democracy, an oligarchy, an aristocracy or a monarchy. The role of the Holy Spirit is a given in all of these.
- 6.7 Holy Spirit in the Book of Acts
- Biblical theology requires you to pay attention to Acts 2, Joel, and Exodus.

Mastery of Greek	20%
Reading Wallace's grammar	10%
Critical Issues in <i>Acts</i> papers	20%
Three Semon or lesson plans	30%

Important Notes

1. Students will not use interlinear editions (including that by Fribergs') of the Greek NT in class. This rule is absolute. Do not insult the professor or yourself by bringing these to class.
2. All assignments must be submitted in hard copy. These assignments must use Greek and/or Hebrew fonts. The fonts will be made available to students.
3. By means of a written examination students may challenge the grade assigned for in class demonstration of preparation of Greek text and reading of the scholarly materials.
4. As the need may arise minor modifications to this syllabus and the class schedule may adopted from time to time.
5. You may contact your professor by various means.
 - a. Office Hours on campus:
 - i. Tuesday Between morning classes or in the afternoon
 - ii. Wednesday By Appointment Only
 - iii. Thursday When not in class. Over lunch.
 - iv. Friday Between morning classes or in the afternoon
 - b. Email in the office: rremin@ambrose.edu
 - c. Voice in the office: 410-2000 ext 7906
 - d. Voice at home: 946-4635
6. Absences are intolerable because of the nature of the subject being learned and the manner in which this course is taught, namely the inductive method. If you must miss a class please work through the lesson(s) missed and then come to the instructor with any problems or questions. In the event you cannot be prepared, you are better being in class unprepared than not in class at all.
7. The instructor shall comply with all academic regulations as printed in the current *Catalogue* and *Student Handbook*, and it is the student's responsibility to be familiar with these regulations. The following academic policies are particularly relevant.
 - a. **Add/Drop Policy:** Students wishing to add a course should refer to the current academic calendar for the last day to officially enter the class. Students intending to withdraw from a course must complete the relevant Registration Revision form. The dates by which students may voluntarily withdraw from a course without penalty are contained in the academic calendar.

b. Course Extensions or Alternative Examination Requests: Students may not turn in course work after the date of the scheduled final examination for the course unless they have received permission for a “Course Extension.” Alternative times for final examinations cannot be scheduled without prior approval. Requests for course extensions or alternative examination times must be submitted to the Registrar’s Office two weeks prior to examination week (noted as the “Last Day for Alternative Exam or Course Extension Requests” on the academic calendar). Course extensions are only granted for serious issues that arise “due to circumstances beyond the student’s control.”

c. Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty. The seminary maintains a zero tolerant policy on plagiarism and academic dishonesty. Plagiarism and academic dishonesty can result in a failing grade for an assignment for the course, or immediate dismissal from the seminary. Even unintentional plagiarism is to be avoided at all costs. Students are expected to be familiar with the policy statements in the current academic calendar and the student handbook that deal with plagiarism, academic dishonesty (cheating), and the penalties and procedures for dealing with these matters. All cases of academic dishonesty are reported to the Academic Dean.

Readings in Acts for 2007:

Focus is on the speeches:

Acts 1.1-2.42	Introduction, two of Peter's speeches
Acts 3.12-16	Peter again in Solomon's portico
Acts 4.6-20	Peter before the leaders
Acts 4.24-4.31	A prayer
Acts 5.27-5.39	Peter, Gamaliel
Acts 7.2-7.60	Stephen's speech
Acts 10.34-43	Peter in Cornelius' house
Acts 11.4-17	Peter's accounting to the circumcised
Acts 13.16-41(-51)	Paul in synagogue in Antioch (interesting statements about devout women, destined Gentiles and blaspheming Jews.
Acts 14.15-17.1	Paul and Barnabus to the people and priest of Zeus who want to sacrifice.
Acts 15.5(1-2)-21	Peter in Jerusalem on Moses and the requirements of the law
Acts 17.19-34	Paul on the Areopagus

Very Select Bibliography

F.F Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles, Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary* (3rd and enlarged ed., Eerdmans, 1990). Good on the Greek text and the historical and geographical details.

Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Anchor Books 1998).

Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Liturgical Press 1992).

Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Eerdmans 1997).

Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity* (3rd ed., Eerdmans 2003).

Howard Marshal and David Peterson (eds.), *Witness to the Gospel: The Theology of Acts* (Eerdmans, 1998). 626 pages.

Reta Halteman Finger, *Of Widows and Meals: Communal Meals in the Book of Acts* (Eerdmans, 2007). 336 pages.

Brian Rapske, *The Book of Acts and Paul in Roman Custody (The Book of Acts in its First-Century Setting*, Eerdmans, 2004). 520 pages

Bruce W. Winter and Andrew D. Clarke (eds.), *The Book of Acts in Its Ancient Literary Setting (The Book of Acts in its First-Century Setting*, Eerdmans, 1993). 491 pages

Irina Levinskaya, *The Book of Acts in Its Diaspora Setting (The Book of Acts in its First-Century Setting*, Eerdmans, 1996). 299 pages

David W.J. Gill, *The Book of Acts in Its Graeco-Roman Setting (The Book of Acts in its First-Century Setting*, Eerdmans, 1994). 641 pages

Richard Bauckham (ed.), *The Book of Acts in Its Palestinian Setting (The Book of Acts in its First-Century Setting*, Eerdmans, 1995). 540 pages

Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Eerdmans, 1997). 923 pages.

David W. Kling, "Filled with the Holy Spirit": The Roots of Pentecostalism," *The Bible in History, How the Tests Have Shaped the Times* (Oxford,

www.agts.edu/faculty/faculty_publications/articles/aker_acts2.pdf

