

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

Introduction

The Book of the Acts of the Apostles is the second part of the gospel of Luke. It is a unique work in the New Testament, of great historical value, even though we find elements typical of the time, like the discourses that are literary creation of the author, though reflecting without doubt what was said. History is also idealized: attention centers in the marvelous work of the Spirit in those communities, more than in concrete life. Nevertheless it does not hide the difficulties, and even the mistakes and wrongdoings of the apostles themselves.

Even if it appears that the main actors are the apostles, and even more, all the members of the first communities, the first part of the book centers on Peter, while the second part has Paul as the main protagonist.

This history therefore narrates the marvelous expansion of the church, not simply in its exterior, geographical dimension, but mainly in its interior dimension: how the Spirit works to make the church understand better the message of Jesus. The most salient thesis of the book has to do with one of the main concerns of the followers of Jesus at that time: if the norms of the Old Testament were still applicable or if, on the contrary, what Jesus brought was “new wine”, through which the old molds were no longer applicable. The historical circumstance that provoked this controversy was the conversion of many pagans. Paul will be the champion of the independence of Christians in relationship with the Old Law.

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