

The Accuracy of the Book of Acts

Liberal critics of the Bible have frequently alleged that Acts is not a reliable document from the standpoint of history. F.C. Baur (1792-1860) of Germany popularized this view more than a century ago. This notion, however, has been thoroughly discredited.

Sir William Ramsay (1851-1939), a British scholar, initially questioned the historicity of Acts, but after years of literally digging up the evidence in archaeological explorations, Ramsay became convinced that Acts was so remarkably accurate in its details that the whole of it must be considered trustworthy. He wrote:

"I had read a good deal of modern criticism about the book, and dutifully accepted the current opinion that it was written during the second half of the second century by an author who wished to influence the minds of people in his own time by a highly wrought and imaginative description of the early Church. His object was not to present a trustworthy picture of facts in the period about A.D. 50, but to produce a certain effect on his own time by setting forth a carefully coloured account of events and persons of that older period. He wrote for his contemporaries, not for truth" (*The Bearing of Recent Discovery on the Trustworthiness of the New Testament*, pp. 37-38).

After much on-site investigation, though, Ramsay wrote:

"The present writer takes the view that Luke's history is unsurpassed in respect of its trustworthiness. At this point we are describing what reasons and arguments changed the mind of one who began under the impression that the history was written long after the events and that it was untrustworthy as a whole" (p. 81).

J.B. Lightfoot was one of the greatest scholars of his day. Fluent in seven languages, he made vast contributions to the literature of the New Testament. In one of his works defending the supernatural character of the New Testament, he said of the book of Acts:

"...no ancient work affords so many tests of veracity; for no other has such numerous points of contact in all directions with contemporary history, politics, and topography, whether Jewish, Greek, or Roman" (*Essays of the Work Entitled Supernatural Religion*, pp. 19-20).

In more recent times, Henry J. Cadbury, the liberal scholar of Harvard University, authored a volume titled, *The Book of Acts In History*, in which he introduced many examples of the amazing accuracy of Luke's second letter to Theophilus. Luke records an abundance of details, and this allows the careful student to check the ancient historian for credibility.

For instance, the physician/historian mentions thirty-two countries, fifty-four cities, and nine Mediterranean islands. In addition, he alludes to ninety-five different people, sixty-two of which are not mentioned by any other New Testament writer. Twenty-seven of these are unbelievers, chiefly civil or military officials (Bruce Metzger, *The New Testament – Its Background, Growth, and Content*, pp. 171-172). The book of Acts will definitely stand the test of historical examination.

- Did ancient readers generally read aloud (8:30)? Yes.
- Why would it take two days to sail from Troas to Neapolis, yet five days to accomplish the return trip (16:11; 20:6)? Because of prevailing winds.
- Was Sergius Paulus a "proconsul" (13:7)? Yes, though 68 years earlier the same position would have been occupied by a "propraetor."
- Did "tanners" customarily live by the seaside (10:6)? They did, because tanners used seawater in tanning hides, and the sea breezes diffused the stench of their trade.

Details in this sacred document are checkable, and they pass the test of historicity with flying colors. Acts is a marvelous example of the flawless accuracy of the Bible.

- by Wayne Jackson

Admonitions to Parents of Teens

1. Always Be Consistent with Teens.

Don't compromise your standards just because they wear you down with asking.

2. Live What You Expect of Your Teens.

Don't expect something of them you are not willing to do yourself.

3. Don't Beat Your Head Against the Wall When You Fail.

Like adults, teens can be tempted. Evil companions corrupt good morals. It takes lots of time, love and understanding to raise up a child in the way of the Lord. When you fail, pick yourself up and go on.

4. Don't Be Afraid to Say "I Was Wrong."

Oftentimes that is the hardest thing to do, but parents are human and teens will respect you for it.

5. Last, and Certainty Not Least, Pray!

What parent goes to bed without praying for his/her children? Prayer is one of the most important things to help parents make it through the teen's years.

- by David Pratt

Some Suggestions for Your Daily Routine

We all have some things that we do with great regularity. Certain activities are a part of every day - things like bathing, dressing, brushing teeth, etc. Each person will have other unique practices that are incorporated into their normal routine. And, while it is possible to "get in a rut", some of this regularity is important and helpful in making us more efficient individuals. With that idea in mind, we'd like to suggest some things that ought to become a regular part of every Christian's daily routine. Every day we should.

- **Pray.** Pray daily for your fellow Christians, especially remembering the sick, the bereaved, those who are spiritually weak, those laboring under heavy burdens, and others who have special needs. Don't let these prayers be totally "general" in nature. Think of specific individuals and mention them by name in your prayers.
- **Give Thanks.** In the course of your prayers, do not neglect to thank the Heavenly Father for all the wonderful blessings that He gives us. Again, be specific. Taking the time to "count your blessings" every day will help you to gain a greater appreciation for what God has done for you. Especially spend time contemplating the great spiritual blessings we have in Christ.
- **Study.** Find some time each day to spend in the study of God's Word. Get up a few minutes earlier each day, break away in the middle of the day, make time in the evening - but by all means study the Word. This will help you to resist temptation (Matthew 4:1-11) and prepare you to explain your faith to others (1 Peter 3:15).
- **Serve.** The Christian's life is to be a life of service (Mark 10:43,44). Instead of waiting for others to do things for you, look for some opportunity every day to do some deed of kindness for another individual. Your life will be happier if you concentrate less on self and more on others.

- by Greg Gwin