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M. Eugene Boring, *An Introduction to the New Testament: History, Literature, Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2012).

G. Roger Greene, *Ministry of Paul the Apostle: History and Redaction* (Lexington Fortress, 2019)

John Knox, *Chapters in a Life of Paul* (Rev. ed. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1987 [Abingdon, 1950]).

LUKE: Theologian and Historian

Introductory Considerations

Luke's two volumes, the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts, dominate the New Testament. The two works consist of more than 137,000 words and make up approximately 27.5% of the New Testament. Luke-Acts provides the framework for the church's liturgical calendar—only Luke-Acts has the sequence Birth/Baptism/Triumphal Entry/Good Friday/Easter/Ascension/Pentecost. Traditional Christian thinking about the story of Jesus and the story of the early church has been fitted to Luke-Acts. (See Boring, 556)

Many things favored by the Christian consciousness are to be found only in Luke-Acts: the *Magnificat*, the angels' song of *Peace on Earth*, significant parables (*Prodigal Son*, *Good Samaritan*, *Rich Man and Lazarus*, *Pharisee and the Publican*), encounter with the risen Jesus on the road to Emmaus, the Ascension. (See Boring, 556)

Luke is a creative author who composes his work to inform and to persuade (see Luke 1:1-4; Acts 1:1-5).

Luke's Gospel adopted, adapted, and expanded Mark's story of Jesus (as did Matthew, but in a different way): (1) Extensive birth narratives of John and Jesus. (2) Extensive travel narrative (Luke 9:51-19:27) in place of Mark 10), incorporating much Q and L material; (3) Extensive account of the mission of Jesus's disciples after the resurrection and ascension (the book of Acts). (Boring, 568).

And, it goes without saying, Acts is unique in the New Testament with its narrative stories and speeches/sermons of interpretation. The primary literary genre of the Bible is narrative.

Luke-Acts is a mirror of the New Testament itself (Gospel-Letters) in "narrative miniature."

Luke's Story

Acts is really not a separate "history of the early church," but the continuation of the Gospel story of Jesus. Luke-Acts should be read together. It is a well-planned work in two volumes, which would have required two complete papyrus rolls to record.

Luke presents a basic one year ministry of Jesus, as reflected in the Gospel of Mark. (There is but a single journey to Jerusalem and a single Passover, whereas John mentions several journeys to Jerusalem and three Passovers.) [Why do we say Jesus was 33 when he died? Only by combining Luke and John uncritically—"about 30" + Three Passovers. Cf. Luke 3:23].]

In the Gospel, Luke's story begins in Jerusalem, has a long "journey" section to Jerusalem, where it culminates in Jesus's passion, death, and resurrection. All of the resurrection appearances in Luke occur in or around Jerusalem—there are none in Galilee. Luke's focus is upon Jerusalem.

In the book of Acts, Luke's story begins in Jerusalem and moves steadily away from Jerusalem, until it finally ends in Rome. Paul's story is only a part of Luke's larger story. Jerusalem, historically and theologically so central, now becomes the place of "sacred memories" for Luke, in a post-70 CE world.

Luke's theological convictions influence the overall structure and content of his two-volume work.

Introductory Considerations

One needs to read Luke-Acts to gain a perspective on *Luke's* intent and purpose, not to learn the story of Paul.

The customary view of Paul is drawn from Luke's depiction in the book of Acts—a testimony as to how well Luke did his work, but not the best way to understand Paul.

The *traditional, familiar, or conventional* picture of the life of Paul is dependent upon Acts alone:

“A Jew with the Jewish name of Saul, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, educated in Jerusalem at the feet of Gamaliel, a persecutor of the church in Judea, converted to Christianity ‘on the road to Damascus,’ making three great missionary journeys which took him from Antioch in Syria to regions as far west as Macedonia and Greece, finally arrested on the last of a number of visits of Jerusalem, as a Roman citizen appealing to Caesar after several hearings before local magistrates, arriving finally in Rome for his trial and presumably his martyrdom” (Knox, 19).

Hear Knox: “Now it is interesting to observe that not one of these statements could be made on the basis of the letters, although several of them secure real support there” (Knox, 19-20).

Hear Paul, on the eve of his last journey to Jerusalem (Rom 15:19)—“from Jerusalem as far around as Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ, . . .” On which of Paul's “three journeys” did Paul reach Illyricum? If one had asked Paul, he would have replied, “I went to Illyricum, but I don't know what you are talking about when you use the expression ‘three missionary journeys.’”

If we had only Acts, we would never know Paul wrote any letters or that his second and final major campaign involved a Collection for the saints in Jerusalem. I have *never* heard mention of Paul's Collection in sermons or Sunday School lessons. Have you? Yet, the Collection was what *drove* Paul's latter ministry. I have heard mention of the incorrect “three missionary journeys” many times, but *never* the Collection.

The phraseology of “three missionary journeys” has only been around since 1742 and mostly reflects the 19th century understanding of missions reflected in the Christian West. Such a concept “does not fit the historical Paul, the chronology derived from the Pauline letters, or Luke's own theology of mission and literary structure of Acts. Luke does not understand mission as the expansion of Christendom in terms of discrete missionary journeys” (Boring, 568).

The Ministry of Paul

So, how should one understand Paul's ministry, first of all on the basis of his letters, and, secondly, on the basis of Acts? I would offer a new paradigm of two major campaigns, as referenced by Paul's own letters and the underlying source material (the STA or “Source Tradition of Acts”) used by Luke in the production of Acts. In brief, Paul's life and ministry would be as follows.

Revelation and Calling (34 CE)—(Gal 1; see Acts 9)

Early Localized Ministries (34-37 CE)—(Gal 1; see Acts 9)

Foundation Campaign (Two Phases, 38-51 CE)—2 Thessalonians; Previous Letter to Corinth (1 Cor 5:9); 1 Thessalonians (all in Phase Two, Galatia to Illyricum, back to Antioch) (See Rom 15:19; Gal 2:1-3)

Collection Campaign (52-56 CE)—Galatians; Philippians; 1 Corinthians (“The Painful Letter”); 2 Corinthians 1-13; Romans 1-15 (See 1 Cor 16:1-4; 2 Cor 8, 9; Rom 15:25-29)

Post-Collection Imprisonment and Martyrdom (56-61 CE)—Colossians; Philemon; Ephesians; Romans 16; 2 Timothy

One can not treat the life and ministry of Paul without making use of the sources we have—but the order should always be *Paul's letters first* for both his life and his theology, if we study Paul.