

## Lecture 7 – The Speeches in Acts: An Overview

“We are witnesses of everything he [Jesus] did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem.” Acts 10:39

### Key Terms

Anticipation, context related, similarities, particularities

### Objectives

- \*Summarize the basic teaching of Acts regarding the Holy Spirit.
- \*Explain what the function of the speeches in Acts is.
- \*Critique the statement, ‘Because the speeches seem to be abbreviated, they are not trustworthy’.
- \*List the common elements of the speeches in Acts.
- \*Defend the statement, ‘The fact that the speeches share common elements does not mean that they are written by Luke himself.’

### The Speeches in Acts: An Overview

#### I. Summary Concerning the Work of the Holy Spirit in the Book of Acts

- A. The Spirit of God has worked on people’s hearts in the OT as well. Necessary since the fall, because people are not naturally inclined to worship God. Example: Ps. 51:10-11
- B. The Spirit’s coming and His promised presence in the lives of the believers is something anticipated.
  1. Basis: John 14, John 16, Rom. 8:9, Gal. 3: 14 and Acts 2:38
  2. Restoration factor
  3. It marks an indiscriminate (i.e. Jews and Gentiles) deepening of God’s presence by means of His Spirit. Does not necessarily have to be miraculous
  4. Anticipation of Emmanuel: God with us
- C. There is no exegetical ground to postulate a doctrine of the second blessing as distinct from receiving the Spirit of God.
  1. There is one work of the Spirit: The work of regeneration and the resting of the Spirit upon believers as a seal.

#### II. The Speeches in Acts

- A. Number of speeches in Acts
  1. There is a greater amount of speech material in Acts as compared to other ancient narratives.
  2. Acts: 1/3 speeches; 2/3 narratives.
  3. 24 speeches: \_\_ of Peter, \_\_ of Paul, \_\_ of Stephen, \_\_ of James and 5 others.
- B. Function and trustworthiness of speeches
  1. Speeches tell us a lot about the inner life of the early church.
    - a. They are the best way to understand the teaching of the apostles.
- C. Excursus
  1. Questions regarding the trustworthiness of speeches
    - a. Some say: speeches invented by the author, Luke
    - b. Discussion of speeches in Acts begins with Thucydides, who wrote a history of the Peloponnesian War, with a chapter on the method of history writing
    - c. There were both high standards and low standards of historiography.
    - d. In whose company is Luke best seen?
    - e. What standards does he follow?
    - f. Question you really need to ask: \_\_\_\_\_?
    - g. Thucydides’ writing somewhat echoes what we hear in the prologue of Luke.

- D. F.F. Bruce's observations regarding the speeches in Acts
1. Speeches do not attempt rhetorical elegance.
  2. The speeches contain basic elements of the Gospel.
    - a. Peter's speech to Cornelius
  3. The speeches fit into their context very well.
    - a. But also: They always go beyond the confines of the situation.
    - b. Only one longer speech addressed to Christians, Acts 20
    - c. Displays many parallels with Pauline epistles
- E. G.H.R. Horsley's study of speeches
1. Hints in Acts that the speeches are often interrupted or abbreviated  
That is Luke's attempt to communicate to us that he is not claiming to give us every single word in the speeches.
  2. Examples: Acts 2:40; Acts 4:1-3, Acts 7:57, Acts 10:44, Acts 17:32, and Acts 24:22  
Exceptions: Acts 20:36, Acts 13:42.
  3. Conclusion: The speeches are not exhaustive presentations of what the speakers said, but that does not mean Luke's reports are not accurate.
- F. The distinctiveness of the speeches
1. There is a certain similarity, particularly in Acts 2 (Peter), 3 (Peter), 5 (Peter), 10 (Peter), 13 (Paul). Similarity in sequences of what is being said
    - a. Introduction: Captures the benevolence of the audience
    - b. Testimony concerning Jesus
    - c. The disciples as witnesses
    - d. References to OT
    - e. Call to repentance
  2. Some say on the basis of these similarities that it is Luke who wrote these speeches.
    - a. Problem with this argument: OT genre of repentance speeches
    - b. People who used this format:
    - c. Format:
      - 1) God's faithfulness and loyalty towards His people. "Remember...."
      - 2) God's present \_\_\_\_\_
      - 3) Rebellion \_\_\_\_\_
      - 4) Call to \_\_\_\_\_
    - d. Bipartite structure:
      - 1) \_\_\_\_\_
      - 2) \_\_\_\_\_
    - e. Shows connection and context of apostolic ministry with prophetic ministry
  3. Ulrich Wilckens
    - a. Luke authorship of all mission speeches
    - b. Arguments against him:
      - 1) There are particularities in the speeches. Example: Acts 13:30-31—Paul 'But God raised him from the death and for many days he was seen by [one would expect: by "us", but it says:] those who had traveled with him from Galilee to Jerusalem. They are now his witnesses to our people'.
        - a) Contrary to the Petrine speeches in Acts 2 and 3, where the apostles say, "We are witnesses," Paul does not claim to be a witness of the earthly work of Jesus.
      - 2) The OT genre of repentance speeches speaks against Wilckens.
  4. Setting of speeches
    - a. Only one speech addressed to insiders
    - b. Rest of speeches outward bound

- c. Missiological explanation for similarity of speeches
- 5. Speech in Acts 10: Origin of the Gospel structure