

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for the *Journal of Theological Studies* (old series) can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_jts-os_01.php

pdfs are named: [Volume]_[1st page of article]

leader? In the first of our test-cases (*Opusc.* ii § 12) he quotes all three texts of Scripture, viz. Rom. viii 16, 2 Cor. x 18, Joan. v 44. He had before him the fuller text of the *Epistle*. In the second test-case he employs the striking phrase, peculiar to the *Epistle* ὁ τοῦ πονηροῦ θάνατος (*Opusc.* ii § 13). Our third test-case is equally decisive. He gives an eloquent rhetorical expression to the doctrine common to the *Epistle* and the *De Instituto*,¹ but is careful to prefix to it the words ἐσθίοντας ἢ πίνοντας peculiar to the *Epistle*. The conclusion therefore is inevitable, that in the latter part of his tractate (§§ 7-15, 17) Symeon Metaphrastes had before him the *Epistle* of Macarius of Egypt addressed to his abbot-friend in Mesopotamia. In short, while in the former part of his Tractate (§§ 1-6) he draws from a *réchauffeur* of Macarius, in the latter portion he fills his bucket from the spring of Macarius himself. The remarkable beauty of the Tractates of Symeon has long fascinated Patristic students owing to their combination of deep spiritual experience with a flowing rhetorical style. We now know a little more of the pains which this literary man took to use the original sources, instead of contenting himself with the secondary and derivative material which lay ready to hand.

G. L. MARRIOTT.

THE CHRONOLOGICAL DIVISIONS OF ACTS.

It is a fact quite familiar to students of the New Testament that there are seven short passages placed at intervals throughout the book of Acts which summarize in rather similar terms the progress and happy estate of the Church. These passages are:—

(1) Acts ii 47 b (concluding a summary description of general conditions in the Church immediately after the first Pentecost): 'And the Lord daily added to their number those that were being saved.'

(2) Acts vi 7 (between the appointment of the Seven and the trial of Stephen): 'And the word of God increased, and the number of the disciples in Jerusalem multiplied greatly, and a large company of the priests became obedient to the faith.'

(3) Acts ix 31 (between Paul's departure from Jerusalem after his conversion, and Peter's visits to Lydda and Joppa): 'So the Church throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria had peace. Being built

¹ See *Opusc.* ii § 14 εὐπετὴ δὲ ἡμῖν καὶ ῥᾶδια πάντα τὰ τῶν ἐντολῶν ἔσται, τῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ ἀγάπης αὐτὰ διευμαρζούσης, καὶ τὸ ἐπίπονον αὐτῶν ἐκλυούσης ἅπαν.

up and walking by the fear of the Lord and by the invocation of the Holy Spirit, it was multiplied.'

(4) Acts xii 24 (between the death of Herod and the return of Paul and Barnabas to Antioch after the famine-visit to Jerusalem): 'But the word of the Lord increased and multiplied.'

(5) Acts xvi 5 (between Paul's arrival at Lystra [? or Iconium] on his Third Missionary Journey, and his passage through [the remainder of] 'the Phrygian and Galatic region', and on to Troas): 'So the Churches were strengthened in the faith and increased in number(s) daily.'

(6) Acts xix 20 (during Paul's stay at Ephesus on his Third Missionary Journey): 'Thus by the strength of the Lord the word increased and grew strong.'

(7) Acts xxviii 31 (Paul lived for two years at Rome): 'proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with entire freedom of speech and unmolestedly.' With this the book concludes.

It is the purpose of this paper to investigate the principle or principles on which these recurring refrains were placed by Luke at the particular points in his book where they now stand. Any series of points in a narrative, which on the whole follows the chronological sequence of events, must of course mark stages in the development of the story; and the general fact that the Lucan refrains in some way serve this purpose is sufficiently obvious at the outset. But on what principle was one stage of the story marked off from the next?

We can dismiss the idea that the dividing lines were drawn on the mechanical plan of splitting up the book into sections of equal length. The first division is only about two-thirds and the last nearly three times the average length of the intermediate sections, and the equality of these latter is only very approximate.¹ The disproportionate length of the last section indicates that, although the author in the main body of his work made his divisions of roughly equal size, he did not by any means feel himself tied to a merely formal symmetry of this particular kind.

A more feasible explanation is that the divisions are meant to mark stages in the *territorial expansion* of Christianity. Thus Dr Moffatt (*INT* 284 f.) says: 'The scope and aim of the book is the triumphant extension of the Christian faith from Jerusalem to Rome, through Judaea and Samaria (1st). The first part (1st-6th) describes the origin of the Church at Jerusalem, the second (6th-9th) its diffusion throughout Palestine, including Samaria, the third (9th-12th) its expansion from Judaea to Antioch, the fourth its spread throughout Asia Minor

¹ The sections measure respectively 201, 294, 353, 291, 327, 317, and 881 lines of Nestle's text.

(12²⁶-16⁴), the fifth its extension to Europe or Macedonia and Achaia (16⁶-19¹⁹), culminating in the arrival of Paul as the representative of the Gentile Christian gospel at Rome (= *the uttermost parts of the earth*, 1⁸, . . .). Each section is summarized (6⁷, 9³¹, 12²⁴, 16⁵, 19²⁰, and 28³¹) by a rubric of progress.⁷ Now the extension of Christianity from one country to another was, of course, a matter of great interest to Luke; and it is clear that each of his *main*¹ divisions except the first and the sixth record the establishment of the Gospel in some place or places not previously evangelized, and that the sixth division brings the Apostle to the Gentiles for the first time to Rome. But does this give us the real key to Luke's method of grouping his material? Granting that successive sections of a historical work on the apostolic age must inevitably have recorded steps in the territorial aggrandizement of the Gospel, can we say that Luke's primary interest in the articulation of his material was the spatial enlargement of the evangelized area? Several features in the book go to shew that this supposition is inadequate. For instance, the author leaves us to infer that Christianity already existed at Damascus (ix 10 ff), Ephesus (xviii 19 f, xix 1 f), Puteoli (xxviii 13 f), Rome (xviii 2 f, xxviii 14 f: cf. Milligan in *HDB* i 129), and apparently Alexandria (xviii 24 f: cf. the reading of D²), at the time when he first has occasion to mention these places in his narrative; that is to say, he passes over in silence the first establishment of the Gospel in them³—a proceeding which does not harmonize with the view that his *main* concern was to trace the spread of the Gospel from one spot to another. Again, alongside a certain amount of information as to the breaking of new ground, most of the sections of the book devote much space to narrating what happened in places, the evangelization of which has already been explicitly recorded. Thus the second main section commences not with any description of the spread of the Gospel to new lands, but with occurrences at Lydda, Joppa, Caesarea, and Jerusalem (ix 32-xi 18): we find ourselves two-thirds of the way through the section before any new territorial conquest is mentioned. Note also the space given to events which happened at Antioch (xi 27-30, xv 1 f, 30-39, Jerusalem (vi 8-viii 3,⁴ ix 26-29, xi 1-18, xii 1-19, xv 2-29, xxi 17-xxiii 30), Caesarea (x, xii 19-23, xxi 8-15, xxiii 32-xxvii 2), and Ephesus (xix, cf. xx 17-38), long after they had first received the Gospel. From the point where the so-called First

¹ I regard the section down to ii 47 as introductory.

² Οὗτος ἦν καθηγημένος ἐν τῇ πατρίδι τὸν λόγον τοῦ Κυρίου (v. 25).

³ We might add Lydda (ix 32) and Joppa (ix 36-38) to the list, but the evangelization of these places is probably covered by viii 1, 40 (cf. xi 19).

⁴ I omit the first section (down to vi 7), as that is naturally occupied with the early days of the Jerusalem Church.

Missionary Journey of Paul begins, right on to the end of the book, the author is concerned far more to describe the work and experiences of the apostle and his movements from place to place, over old ground as well as over new, than to trace simply the forward march of the Christian gospel, even of that 'Gentile Christian gospel' of which Paul was the special representative. Most remarkable is the setting of xvi 5:— xvi 1 takes Paul to Derbe and Lystra; v. 4 speaks of him as 'going through the cities', presumably those just mentioned, perhaps including Iconium in view of v. 2. In v. 6 he passes through τὴν Φρυγίαν καὶ Γαλατικὴν χώραν, which, on the widely accepted South Galatian hypothesis, meant the region of the province of Galatia which was ethnographically Phrygian and contained the cities of Iconium and Antioch. That is to say, the 'rubric of progress' here comes right in the middle of Paul's visit to the various cities he had already evangelized on his First Missionary Journey. It immediately precedes not the Apostle's departure into 'fresh woods and pastures new', but his visit to Iconium and Antioch, in other words, the completion of his survey of one of his former mission-fields.¹

The foregoing considerations prompt us to look for some other explanation of the scheme of 'rubrics' than the division of the material either into convenient sections of approximately equal length or into stages marking the territorial expansion of the Gospel, though in the nature of the case the author had some regard to both these considerations. It is natural to ask the question, whether the divisions may not be chronological. Mr C. H. Turner, in his careful and thorough article on 'The Chronology of the New Testament' in Hastings's *Dictionary of the Bible* definitely treats the divisions of Acts as *periods* (*HDB* i 421 b), and, after determining by independent investigation the dates of certain points in the story, remarks: 'It remains only to adjust, by the help of these points, the division into periods (see p. 421^b), which is the single hint at a chronology supplied by St. Luke in the earlier part of his work. . . . That the chronology here adopted results in a more or less even division of periods—i. from A. D. 29; ii. from A. D. 35; iii. from A. D. 39–40; iv. from A. D. 45–46; v. from A. D. 50; vi. from A. D. 55 (to A. D. 61)—such as St. Luke seems to be contemplating, must be considered a slight step towards its verification' (*ibid.* 424).

Now none of the 'summaries' can be said exactly to mark important

¹ It is therefore not strictly accurate to say: 'the interpolation at this point of the fourth period-summary in 16⁵, though no doubt primarily intended to emphasize the great step forward into Europe which follows, marks also a beating of time between the old work and the new' (C. H. Turner in *HDB* i 422 a). The refrain marks the division between Lycaonian and Phrygian Galatia (both old fields), rather than that between Galatia and the as yet untrodden regions beyond.

turning-points or dividing-lines in the development of the narrative. The passage which immediately follows each of them is not as a rule distinguished in a specially striking way from what immediately precedes it. This fact not only strongly confirms the supposition that the landmarks are chronological, but even suggests that the chronological basis is meant to be more than merely approximate. The strange position of xvi 5—to which attention has just been drawn—lends weight to the hypothesis that the author was attempting to cut up his story into exactly equal periods. The assumption that such is the case must not of course be made to govern investigations into the chronology of the Apostolic Age; but if that assumption is confirmed at several points by independent investigation of the chronology, then its aid may reasonably be invoked to determine other points for which more direct evidence fails us.

With Mr Turner's list of dates it is not possible to get beyond 'a more or less even division of periods'. But his calculations, besides resting on a minute and scholarly investigation of the various lines of evidence, involve one or two assumptions on certain controversial points in regard to which still more accurate determinations seem now to be within our reach.

1. Mr Turner makes no use of the Delphian inscription by which the commencement of Gallio's proconsulship in Achaia is fixed for Midsummer A. D. 51.¹ As Paul had then been at Corinth eighteen months (Acts xviii 11), he must have arrived there at the beginning of A. D. 50, not October 50, as Mr Turner suggests (*HDB* i 422 b). The commencement of the Second Missionary Journey must therefore be thrown back to immediately after the Council at Jerusalem, which Mr Turner calculates may have happened at Passover A. D. 49 (though he prefers Pentecost and makes the journey begin September 1, 49).

2. Mr Turner, like many other scholars, identifies the events of Gal. ii with those of Acts xv and (regarding the fourteen years of Gal. ii 1 as including the three of Gal. i 18) arrives at 35–36 as the date of Paul's conversion, and 38 as that of his first visit to Jerusalem. The great objections to this reconstruction are the difficulty of explaining why Paul in Gal. ii omitted all reference to his famine-visit to Jerusalem (Acts xi 30, xii 25), when his argument made it desirable, if not imperative, that his enumeration of visits to Jerusalem should be exhaustive,² why he makes no reference in the Epistle to the Apostolic Decree of Acts xv, which would have been a powerful support to his

¹ Deissmann *St Paul* p. 255.

² Authors who differ from one another so widely as Schmiedel, McGiffert, and Ramsay, all agree that Paul's enumeration of visits to Jerusalem in Galatians must be exhaustive. Others think differently.

main plea, and how the private conference of Gal. ii 2 is to be harmonized with the public conference of Acts xv. The features of Galatians are more simply accounted for by identifying the visit of Gal. ii with the famine-visit, and placing the composition of the Epistle on the eve of the Council of Acts xv, instead of after it. Two main objections have been urged against this view: first, that there could not have been *two* important discussions at Jerusalem of the question of circumcising Gentile converts, and that the narratives of Acts xv and Gal. ii must therefore refer to the same events; and secondly, that it is impossible that Paul should have circumcised Timothy (Acts xvi 3) *after* writing as he did in Gal. v 2.¹ But the former objection is an *a priori* assumption: as Emmet says ('*The Epistle to the Galatians*', *The Reader's Commentary*, p. xvii): 'As soon as ever wandering evangelists left Jewish soil, and addressed themselves to Gentile hearers, the 'Gentile question' was bound to arise. . . . And the sort of discussion implied in Gal. ii is exactly what we should expect at this early stage.' In regard to the latter objection, the statement that Paul circumcised Timothy is a difficulty² whatever date we give to the act; but if it is to be accepted as historical, there is no greater difficulty in putting it after the writing of Gal. v 2 than there is in putting it after the occurrence of the events narrated in Gal. ii and Acts xv. Moreover, the view here advocated, which not only has in one important respect the powerful support of Ramsay, but has been adopted by a number of recent critics like Weber, Round, Kirsopp Lake, and Emmet, possesses the additional advantages of enabling us to regard the order of events in Gal. ii 1 ff, 11 ff, as chronological,³ without supposing that James, Peter, and Barnabas were all unfaithful to the agreement arrived at in Acts xv, and to identify the poor-relief mentioned in Gal. ii 10 with the object of the famine-visit, and the 'certain from James' of Gal. ii 12 with the 'certain from Judea' of Acts xv 1.

Now Mr Turner (*op. cit.* 417a) proves that the famine occurred certainly not earlier than 46 and possibly in 47. If we place Paul's famine-visit to Jerusalem early in 47,⁴ and reckon the fourteen years of Gal. ii 1 not from his first visit but from his conversion,⁵ this latter

¹ Moffatt (*INT* 92) pronounces this an 'incredible idea'.

² McGiffert doubts it, and suggests that Timothy was one of those who had received circumcision at the instigation of the Judaizers (*Apostolic Age* p. 233 f).

³ Turner (*HDB* i 424a) thinks the dispute with Peter at Antioch *preceded* the discussion at Jerusalem.

⁴ Mr. Turner adopts 46 in his summary of results (424b), but, from the details he gives, early in 47 seems equally likely. Time would be spent at Antioch in collecting the supplies to be sent.

⁵ All agree that the Greek *permits* of this construction, and Ramsay (*Paul the*

event will fall in the latter part of A. D. 34. As the début of Stephen as an apologist, his trial, and martyrdom, seem to have preceded the conversion of Paul by a few months only, we are led to the middle or early part of A. D. 34 as the latest possible date for Luke's second periodical summary (vi 7). That it might be assignable to an earlier date is conceivable, but unlikely, for probably no long interval is to be understood as having elapsed between Stephen's appointment as almoner (which immediately precedes the summary) and his public discussions (which immediately follow it).

The third periodical summary falls between the departure of Paul from Jerusalem (three years after his conversion, Gal. i 18-24, Acts ix 30), i. e. A. D. 36¹ and before Peter's visits to Lydda, Joppa, and Caesarea. We do not know the dates of these visits, or of the evangelization of Gentiles at Antioch, or of the mission of Barnabas to that city, which are the next events recorded (Acts xi 19-24). Neither do we know how long Barnabas had been working there before he fetched Paul from Tarsus (Acts xi 25), but we are told that they were both guests of the church of Antioch 'for a whole year' (Acts xi 26). If, as seems probable, this year immediately preceded the famine-visit to Jerusalem, Paul's arrival at Antioch would fall at the beginning of 46. But this reckoning has, strangely enough, already taken us beyond the last event immediately preceding the next periodical summary—viz. the death of Herod (Acts xii 20-24), which is fixed for A. D. 44 (after Nisan 1).² The martyrdom of James and the imprisonment of Peter narrated in Acts xii 1 f are probably to be placed about Passover (see *vv.* 3 f) A. D. 41, only a few months after the new Emperor Claudius had invested Herod with the sovereignty of Judaea and Samaria, and just within the twelve years from the resurrection of Jesus during which the Apostles were traditionally supposed to have remained in Jerusalem.³ What has happened in Acts xi f seems to be this. Barnabas's mission from Jerusalem to Antioch clearly took place some time before the martyrdom of James; but as Luke is now speaking of Antioch, he goes on to complete his account of doings there—regardless of his chrono-

Traveller p. 382) gives reasons for preferring it. Paul was naturally disposed to make the interval look as long as possible.

¹ The mention of Aretas in 2 Cor. xi 32 does not compel us to put Paul's escape from Damascus after the death of Tiberius, even on Mr Turner's own showing (416 a); for, as Von Soden (*EB* 296) says, for all we know, Tiberius may have made Damascus over to Aretas in A. D. 34. But it appears that there may quite well have been an ethnarch of Aretas at Damascus while imperial coins were being struck in the city (Kirsopp Lake *Earlier Epistles of St Paul* pp. 322 f.), i. e. prior to A. D. 34.

² Turner *op. cit.* 416 b.

³ Harnack *Chronologie der altchr. Lit.* i 243 f.

logical dividing lines—until he reaches the point at which the stories of Antioch and Jerusalem again touch each other, i.e. the famine-visit (xi 30). He then takes up the story of events at Jerusalem after Barnabas left, and pursues the narrative of events there (and incidentally at Caesarea) down to the same point, viz. the famine-visit. It is in the course of this latter series of events that the fourth periodical summary (ignored in the former or Antiochene series) is placed. The third summary (ix 31) therefore falls between A. D. 36 and early A. D. 41; the fourth (xii 24) after Nisan 1st A. D. 44 and before the beginning of A. D. 47.

The fifth summary (xvi 5) comes shortly after the commencement of the Second Missionary Journey, which for reasons already given is placed almost immediately after Passover 49. As Paul arrived in Corinth at the beginning of 50, not more than the first few weeks of travel can be allowed to bring him to that point on his journey where the summary is inserted.

The sixth summary (xix 20) occurs during Paul's residence at Ephesus in the course of his Third Missionary Journey. This residence, according to Mr Turner, lasted from Jan. 53 to March or April 55 (*HDB* i 422 b).

The seventh and last summary (xxviii 31) can be placed any time after the commencement of Paul's residence at Rome, which began—as Mr Turner thinks (423 a)—early in A. D. 59.

Summing up we may say that, if Mr Turner's carefully constructed scheme of chronology be modified in the directions suggested by the Delphian inscription and the Epistle to Galatians, we arrive at the following results in regard to the seven refrains of Acts:—

The first falls immediately after Pentecost A. D. 29.¹

The second falls in the middle or early part of A. D. 34.

The third falls between A. D. 36 and the early months of A. D. 41.

The fourth falls after Nisan 1st A. D. 44, and before the beginning of A. D. 47.

The fifth falls a few weeks after the Passover of A. D. 49.

The sixth falls between Jan. A. D. 53 and March or April A. D. 55.

The seventh falls in the early part of A. D. 59.

Is it an over-hazardous conjecture that Luke may have intended to place his periodical summaries at quinquennial intervals reckoning from the first great Pentecost? The Pentecosts of 29, 34, 39, 44, 49, 54, and A. D. 59 are all possible—some demonstrably probable—and one certain—as points at which Luke drew his chronological dividing lines.

¹ For the probable date of the Crucifixion, see Mr Turner's exhaustive discussion in *HDB* i 410-415.

While the limits within which each summary has been placed have been fixed on independent grounds without any regard to the requirements of a hypothetical scheme such as this, it may fairly be claimed that the strikingly symmetrical result arrived at lends a little additional weight to the arguments that have led to it. Further, the acceptance of the scheme adds one more to the reasons which already are usually given for regarding the somewhat strange termination of Acts as intentional on the author's part and not accidental. It still leaves open the possibilities that Luke finished the book shortly after the termination of Paul's two years at Rome, and that he intended to write a third work recounting later events; but it excludes the theory that the original ending of Acts is lost. As the book stands, it tells the story of a period that lasted a little over thirty years—the same interval, it may be remarked, as is covered by the author's earlier work on the life of Jesus.¹

C. J. CADOUX.

'THE LORD'S COMMAND TO BAPTIZE.'

IN the JOURNAL for July 1905 (vi 480 ff) and January 1907 (viii 161 ff) Dr Chase argued very cogently for the translation rather than the transliteration of the word βαπτίζειν. He shewed that to the Jewish apostles the word 'baptize' would carry with it no such restriction in meaning as it does for us, with whom the word has no other use in the language but to denote the sacrament of baptism. It would describe the common actions of everyday life—bathing, dipping, immersing, washing, plunging, with the additional notion of purification. The Syriac and Egyptian versions translated it: so did Tertullian always (I think), and Cyprian sometimes.

In support of this contention I should like to add that even the Latin *baptizare* was sometimes used in the strict sense of immersion, e. g. in the *Egyptian Church Order*, which is now believed to reflect the use of the Roman Church in the time of Hippolytus and to belong to the early decades of the third century. The method of baptism is described (*Texts and Studies* viii 4. 185). The candidate is asked 'Dost thou believe in God the Father Almighty?' He answers 'Credo', and the presbyter immerses him once (*baptizet semel*). He is then asked 'Dost thou believe in Christ Jesus, Son of God . . .?' And answering 'Credo',

¹ Lk. iii 23, iv 19: for the view that Luke regarded the ministry of Jesus as lasting a single year, see Turner in *HDB* i 407 a.