Who are the people of God? Luke’s purposes in the Acts of the Apostles are to identify the church, to establish the legitimacy of its gospel and to demonstrate that God was an active force in history. He wanted to show that the communities of Jewish and, increasingly, Gentile Christians are the true heirs of God’s promises to Israel. He gives the history of the early church from the last decades of the first century as the communities become separated from their Jewish origins, and Paul plays the lead role. Acts offers an apologetic for the mixed mission of the church: first to the Jews and then to Gentiles who are included in the chosen people. Luke was an eyewitness to some of what he reports, but his authorship and views have been questioned. This is a theological interpretation of the history of the church within history: Luke is an artist, a narrator rather than a systematic theologian, but writes about the roles of God, Christ and the Holy Spirit, and of the church.
NEW TESTAMENT THEOLOGY

General editor: James D.G. Dunn,
Lightfoot Professor of Divinity, University of Durham

THE THEOLOGY OF THE
ACTS OF THE APOSTLES
This series provides a programmatic survey of the individual writings of the New Testament. It aims to remedy the deficiency of available published material, which has tended to concentrate on historical, textual, grammatical and literary issues at the expense of the theology, or to lose distinctive emphases of individual writings in systematized studies of ‘The Theology of Paul’ and the like. New Testament specialists here write at greater length than is usually possible in the introductions to commentaries or as part of other New Testament theologies, and explore the theological themes and issues of their chosen books without being tied to a commentary format, or to a thematic structure drawn from elsewhere. When complete, the series will cover all the New Testament writings, and will thus provide an attractive and timely range of texts around which courses can be developed.
THE THEOLOGY OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

JACOB JERVELL

Emeritus Professor of New Testament Studies,
University of Oslo
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Although the New Testament is usually taught within Departments or Schools or Faculties of Theology/Divinity/Religion, theological study of the individual New Testament writings is often minimal or at best patchy. The reasons for this are not hard to discern.

For one thing, the traditional style of studying a New Testament document is by means of straight exegesis, often verse by verse. Theological concerns jostle with interesting historical, textual, grammatical and literary issues, often at the cost of the theological. Such exegesis is usually very time-consuming, so that only one or two key writings can be treated in any depth within a crowded three-year syllabus.

For another, there is a marked lack of suitable textbooks round which courses could be developed. Commentaries are likely to lose theological comment within a mass of other detail in the same way as exegetical lectures. The section on the theology of a document in the Introduction to a commentary is often very brief and may do little more than pick out elements within the writing under a sequence of headings drawn from systematic theology. Excursuses usually deal with only one or two selected topics. Likewise larger works on New Testament Theology usually treat Paul’s letters as a whole and, having devoted the great bulk of their space to Jesus, Paul and John, can spare only a few pages for others.

In consequence, there is little incentive on the part of teacher or student to engage with a particular New Testament document, and students have to be content with a general overview, at best complemented by in-depth study of (parts of) two or
three New Testament writings. A serious corollary to this is the degree to which students are thereby incapacitated in the task of integrating their New Testament study with the rest of their Theology or Religion courses, since often they are capable only of drawing on the general overview or on a sequence of particular verses treated atomistically. The growing importance of a literary-critical approach to individual documents simply highlights the present deficiencies even more. Having been given little experience in handling individual New Testament writings as such at a theological level, most students are very ill-prepared to develop a properly integrated literary and theological response to particular texts. Ordinands too need more help than they currently receive from textbooks, so that their preaching from particular passages may be better informed theologically.

There is need therefore for a series to bridge the gap between too brief an introduction and too full a commentary where theological discussion is lost among too many other concerns. It is our aim to provide such a series. That is, a series where New Testament specialists are able to write at a greater length on the theology of individual writings than is usually possible in the introductions to commentaries or as part of New Testament Theologies, and to explore the theological themes and issues of these writings without being tied to a commentary format or to a thematic structure provided from elsewhere. The volumes seek both to describe each document’s theology and to engage theologically with it, noting also its canonical context and any specific influence it may have had on the history of Christian faith and life. They are directed at those who already have one or two years of full-time New Testament and theological study behind them.

University of Durham

James D. G. Dunn
Abbreviations

AASF  Annales academicae scientiarum Fennicae
Anch.B  Anchor Bible
BETL  Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologicarum lovaniensium
BHTH  Beiträge zur historischen Theologie
BWANT  Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament
BZNW  Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft.
Clem. Al.  Clement of Alexandria
EKK  Evangelisch-Katholischer Kommentar
Ench. Bibl.  Enchiridion Biblicum
ET  Expository Times
Euseb. H.E.  Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History
EvTh  Evangelische Theologie
EWNT  Exegetisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament
FRLANT  Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
FS  Festschrift
HThK  Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
INT  Interpretation
Irenaeus A.H.  Irenaeus, Against the Heresies
JBL  Journal of Biblical Literature
List of abbreviations

KEK  *Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament*, founded by H.A.W. Meyer
LXX  Septuagint (Greek) version of the Old Testament
MS(S)  Manuscript(s)
NTD  Neue Testament Deutsch
NTS  *New Testament Studies*
NTT  New Testament Theology
OT  Old Testament
RB  *Revue biblique*
RGG  K. Galling (ed.), *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, Tübingen 1957–65
RHPHR  *Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses*
SBL  Society of Biblical Literature
SBLMS  Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
SBS  Stuttgarter Bibelstudien
SBT  Studies in Biblical Theology
SN  Studia Neotestamentica
SNTA  Studiorum Novi Testamenti Auxilia
SNTSMS  Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
SQE  K. Aland (ed.), *Synopsis Quattuor Evangeliorum*, Stuttgart 1964
StANT  Studien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
StNT  Studien zum Neuen Testament
ThHK  *Theologisches Handkommentar*
ThLZ  *Theologische Literaturzeitung*
ThWNT  G. Kittel, G. Friedrich (eds.), *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, Stuttgart 1933–
TNTG  Tyndale New Testament Commentary
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<tr>
<td>TRE</td>
<td><em>Theologische Realencyklopädie</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>TU</td>
<td>Texte und Untersuchungen</td>
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<tr>
<td>WUNT</td>
<td>Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZDPV</td>
<td>Zeitschrift des deutschen Palästina-Vereins</td>
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<td>ZNW</td>
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