

## A C T S

As the earliest narrative source for the origins of Christianity, Acts is of unrivalled importance for understanding early Christianity and the mission that originally brought it from Judea and Galilee to gentiles and even the heart of the Roman Empire. This volume is an abridged version of Keener's monumental, four-volume commentary on Acts, the longest and one of the most thorough engagements with Acts in its ancient setting. Sensitive to the work's narrative unity, Keener's commentary is especially known for its direct engagement with the wide range of ancient Jewish and Greco-Roman sources. The original commentary cited some 45,000 references from ancient extrabiblical sources to shed light on the Book of Acts. This accessible edition, aimed at students, scholars, and pastors, makes more widely available the decades of research that Keener has devoted to one of the key texts of early Christianity.

Craig S. Keener is the F.M. and Ada Thompson Professor of Biblical Studies at Asbury Theological Seminary, Kentucky. He is the author of twenty-eight books, most recently *Galatians* (Cambridge University Press, 2017) and *Christobiography: Memories, History, and the Reliability of the Gospels* (2019).

Cambridge University Press  
978-1-108-47558-7 — Acts  
Craig S. Keener  
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# Acts



**Craig S. Keener**

*Asbury Theological Seminary*



**CAMBRIDGE**  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press  
978-1-108-47558-7 — Acts  
Craig S. Keener  
Frontmatter  
[More Information](#)

## CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom  
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA  
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia  
314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,  
New Delhi – 110025, India  
79 Anson Road, #06–04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)

Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9781108475587](http://www.cambridge.org/9781108475587)

DOI: 10.1017/9781108678377

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First published 2020

Printed in the United Kingdom by TJ International Ltd, Padstow Cornwall

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.*

*Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data*

NAMES: Keener, Craig S., 1960– author.

TITLE: Acts / Craig S. Keener, Asbury Theological Seminary, Kentucky.

DESCRIPTION: Cambridge, United Kingdom : Cambridge University Press, 2020. |

Series: New Cambridge Bible commentary | Includes bibliographical references and index.

IDENTIFIERS: LCCN 2019040715 (print) | LCCN 2019040716 (ebook) |

ISBN 9781108475587 (hardback) | ISBN 9781108468688 (paperback) |

ISBN 9781108678377 (epub)

SUBJECTS: LCSH: Bible. Acts—Commentaries.

CLASSIFICATION: LCC BS2625.53 .K4462 2020 (print) | LCC BS2625.53 (ebook) |

DDC 226.6/077—dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2019040715>

LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2019040716>

ISBN 978-1-108-47558-7 Hardback

ISBN 978-1-108-46868-8 Paperback

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*Dedicated to my recent and current fellow Acts commentators (Loveday Alexander, Carl Holladay, Eckhard Schnabel, Steve Walton, et al.), including the memory of Richard Pervo, always a gracious and respectful dialogue partner despite his differences from many of the rest of us.*

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## Contents



<i>Acknowledgments and Explanatory Preface</i>	<i>page xvii</i>
I INTRODUCTION	1
Proposed Genres for Acts	1
Acts as Historical Monograph	3
What Does It Mean for Acts to Be Ancient Historiography?	4
Acts and History	14
Luke's Historical Preface	17
Comparing Luke with Other Sources	19
Comparisons with Paul	22
The Final Quarter of Acts: Paul in Roman Custody	27
Speeches in Acts	29
Signs Reports and Historiography	38
Acts' Date	46
Authorship	48
Acts' Audience	51
Purposes of Acts	53
Theology and Message of Acts	59
Unity of Luke-Acts	76
II ACTS BIBLIOGRAPHY	87
More Academic Commentaries	87
Less Technical Commentaries	88
Multiauthor Volumes (Listed by Editors)	89
Sample Acts Studies	90
Other Often-Cited Studies	95
III COMMENTARY	97
1:1–2: Preface	97
1:3–8: Promise of the Holy Spirit	101
	ix

1:9–11: Jesus’s Ascension and Promise to Return	109
1:12–14: Praying Together	112
1:15–26: Restoring the Leadership	115
2:1–4: Signs of Pentecost	121
2:5–13: The Crowd’s Responses to Signs	129
2:14–21: Prophecy of Pentecost	139
2:22–36: The Risen Lord	153
2:37–41: Response and Promise	162
2:42–47: The Life of the Empowered Community	169
3:1–10: Power of Jesus’s Name	179
3:12–26: Inviting Israel’s Repentance and Salvation	185
4:1–7: The Authorities Arrest God’s Servants	189
4:8–12: Salvation in Jesus’s Name	194
4:13–22: Confounding the Authorities	196
4:23–30: Prayer for More Boldness	198
4:31–35: Second Outpouring of the Spirit	200
4:36–5:11: Positive and Negative Examples of Sharing	203
5:12–16: Apostolic Signs and Honor	207
5:17–28: Arrest, Release, Rearrest	209
5:29–33: Obeying God Rather than the Elite	212
5:34–40a: Gamaliel’s Defense	213
5:40b–42: Continued Obedience	216
6:1–7: The Hellenist Leaders	217
6:8–7:1: Ministry and Opposition	228
7:2–8: Abraham the Alien	234
7:9–16: Joseph the Rejected, Alienated Deliverer	241
7:17–28: Moses the Rejected Deliverer	244
7:29–34: Moses the Alien	246
7:35–43: Moses, Prototype of the Rejected Deliverer	247
7:44–50: God Needs No Temple	250
7:51–53: Returning the Charge: Undermining the Law	251
7:54–8:1a: Stephen Follows His Martyred Lord	252
8:1b–4: Persecution Disperses Jerusalem’s Church	258
8:5–13: Philip’s versus Simon’s Signs	260
8:14–17: The Samaritans’ Conversion Confirmed	265
8:18–25: Confronting Simon’s Syncretism	266
8:26–33: Divinely Arranged Encounter	267
8:34–40: Eagerly Embracing the Message	273
9:1–9: Jesus’s Theophany to Saul	274
9:10–19a: Paired Visions Confirm Saul’s Call	280
9:19b–31: Saul’s First Ministry and Conflicts	282
9:32–43: Healings on the Coastal Plain	288

Contents

xi

10:1–8: A Roman Officer’s Vision	293
10:9–16: No Longer Unclean: Peter’s Vision	298
10:17–33: Apostle and Occupier Meet	300
10:34–43: Peter Recounts Jesus’s Story	302
10:44–48: The Spirit Confirms the Gentiles’ Acceptance	305
11:1–18: Peter Defends Welcoming Gentiles	306
11:19–30: Antioch Serves Gentiles and Jerusalem	309
12:1–5: Herod’s Persecution	314
12:6–11: God’s Angel Releases Peter	317
12:12–17: Visiting the Prayer Meeting	319
12:18–24: The Proud King’s Death	322
12:25–13:3: Consecrated for the New Mission	326
13:4–12: Mission in Cyprus	331
13:13–15: Journey and Setting	336
13:16b–22: <i>Proem</i> and <i>Biblical Narratio</i>	338
13:23–31: Narration about Jesus	340
13:32–41: Proofs and <i>Peroratio</i>	342
13:42–52: Response	344
14:1–7: Mixed Results in Iconium	349
14:8–13: Lystra Misunderstands a Healing	350
14:14–20: Rejected for Rejecting Deification	353
14:21–28: Completing This Mission Journey	357
15:1–5: Conflict over Circumcising Gentiles	358
15:6–12: Appealing to God’s Confirmations	364
15:13–21: James’s Biblical Proposal	366
15:22–29: The Consensus Decree	371
15:30–35: Delivering the Message in Antioch	374
15:36–41: Conflict with Barnabas over Mark	375
16:1–5: Revisiting Churches	377
16:6–10: God’s Leading to Macedonia	379
16:11–15: Lydia and Her House Church	385
16:16–18: Exorcism of a Powerful Spirit	394
16:19–24: Beaten and Imprisoned	402
16:25–34: Deliverance and Jailer’s Conversion	408
16:35–40: Paul and Silas Vindicated	413
17:1–9: Ministry in Thessalonica	418
17:10–14: Ministry in Berea	426
17:15–21: Beginning Ministry in Athens	427
17:22–31: Paul’s Philosophic Discourse	438
17:32–34: Response to Paul’s Speech	448
18:1–11: Ministry in Corinth	449
18:12–17: Gallio Refuses Paul’s Case	460

18:18–23: Prelude to Ephesus	464
18:24–28: Priscilla and Aquila Help Apollos	467
19:1–7: John’s Disciples Need the Spirit	469
19:8–12: Teaching and Signs in Ephesus	471
19:13–20: Magic Inferior to Paul’s Signs	473
19:21–22: Plans for Jerusalem and Rome	478
19:23–34: Riot in Ephesus	479
19:35–41: The City Clerk Defends Paul	488
20:1–6: On the Move Again	493
20:7–12: Eutychus Raised	497
20:13–16: Further Travel, Avoiding Ephesus	499
20:17–27: Farewell to Ephesian Elders	500
20:28–35: Beware of Greedy Preachers	504
20:36–38: Tearful Parting	508
21:1–14: Prophetic Warnings en Route to Jerusalem	510
21:15–26: The Jerusalem Church’s Concerns	514
21:27–30: Ephesian Jews Incite a Riot against Paul	519
21:31–40: Paul Enters Roman Custody	522
22:1–21: Paul’s Defense in the Temple	530
22:22–29: Discovering Paul’s Citizenship	539
22:30–23:10: The Divided Council	543
23:11–22: Leaking a Plot	548
23:23–30: Sending Paul to Felix	551
23:31–35: Military Escort	554
24:1–9: Charges against Paul	556
24:10–21: Impressive Defense	561
24:22–27: Felix’s Procrastination	566
25:1–5: Jerusalem Authorities Denounce Paul	570
25:6–9: Defense before Festus	573
25:10–12: Appeal to Caesar	574
25:13–22: Discussing Paul with Agrippa	576
25:23–26:1: Paul’s Royal Audience	579
26:2–23: Paul Recounts His Experience	581
26:24–29: Prophetic versus Manic Inspiration	587
26:30–32: Royal Verdict	591
27:1–8: The Voyage Begins	592
27:9–13: Ignoring Paul’s Warning	598
27:14–20: Disaster at Sea	601
27:21–26: The Angel’s Promise	604
27:27–38: Paul’s Leadership Approaching Land	605
27:39–44: Reaching Land Safely	609
28:1–6: Snakebite in Malta	611

<i>Contents</i>	xiii
28:7–10: Healings and Hospitality in Malta	614
28:11–15: Final Voyage, to Rome	616
28:16–22: Paul Meets Jewish Leaders in Rome	620
28:23–28: Recalcitrance Prophesied	627
28:30–31: Ministry Bold and Unhindered	630
<i>Index of Authors</i>	637
<i>Index of Ancient Sources</i>	647

Cambridge University Press  
978-1-108-47558-7 — Acts  
Craig S. Keener  
Frontmatter  
[More Information](#)

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## Supplementary Sections



A Closer Look: Ascension Narratives	<i>page</i> 109
A Closer Look: Tongues	125
A Closer Look: The Peoples of Acts 2:9–11	131
Bridging Horizons: Pentecost and Global Christianity	134
A Closer Look: Alcohol in Mediterranean Antiquity	138
Bridging Horizons: Prophesying Daughters (Acts 2:17–18)	147
A Closer Look: The Revival of Prophecy	149
Bridging Horizons: Repentance (Acts 2:38)	168
Bridging Horizons: The New Community (Acts 2:42–47)	173
Bridging Horizons: Sharing Possessions (Acts 2:44–45)	176
A Closer Look: The Power Groups in 4:1, 5–6	189
Bridging Horizons: Holiness	207
A Closer Look: Hebrews and Hellenists	221
Bridging Horizons: Minority Voices	227
A Closer Look: Synagogues	229
A Closer Look: Precedents and Narrative Typology	241
A Closer Look: Stephen’s Burial	259
A Closer Look: Samaritans	262
A Closer Look: Narrative Patterns in Acts 8:26–40	268
A Closer Look: Africa	270
A Closer Look: Conversion and/or Call	278
A Closer Look: Gal 1:17–2:1 and Acts 9	283
A Closer Look: Gal 1:18–19 and Acts 9:26–30	286
A Closer Look: Caesarea and Soldiers	295
Bridging Horizons: Divided Loyalties	309
A Closer Look: Antioch	310
A Closer Look: “Christians”	312
A Closer Look: House Churches	319
A Closer Look: Paul’s Mission in Acts 12:25–19:41	328
Bridging Horizons: Outreach	331

A Closer Look: Travel in Antiquity	332
A Closer Look: Elders	357
A Closer Look: The Jerusalem Council and Galatians?	360
A Closer Look: Circumcision	362
A Closer Look: The Decree's Prohibitions	369
Bridging Horizons: Finding Common Ground	374
A Closer Look: The Troad and Asia	381
A Closer Look: Luke's "We" Material	383
A Closer Look: Women and Prayer	388
A Closer Look: Purple	391
A Closer Look: Hospitality	393
A Closer Look: Pythoness Spirits	396
A Closer Look: Spirit-Possession Reports	398
A Closer Look: Anti-Judaism	404
A Closer Look: Ancient Suicide	410
A Closer Look: Paul's Roman Citizenship	415
A Closer Look: 1 Thessalonians and Acts 17:1–9	424
A Closer Look: Epicureans and Stoics	430
A Closer Look: Corinth	451
A Closer Look: Claudius's Expulsion	452
A Closer Look: Paul's Work	454
Bridging Horizons: Nonsupernatural Christianity?	477
A Closer Look: Asiarchs' "Friendship"	485
A Closer Look: Historical Information in Acts 19:23–41	487
A Closer Look: Temple Robbers (19:37)	490
A Closer Look: Paul in Roman Custody	529
Bridging Horizons: Ethnic Conflict	531
A Closer Look: Paul's Defense Speeches	532
A Closer Look: Gamaliel	535
A Closer Look: Paul and Riots	559
A Closer Look: Trials of Jesus and Paul	572
A Closer Look: Agrippa II and Bernice	577
A Closer Look: Positive Madness	588
A Closer Look: Alexandrian Grain Ships (27:6; 28:11)	596
A Closer Look: Luke's Conclusion (28:16–31)	620
A Closer Look: Rome's Elite Guard	623
A Closer Look: Rome's Jewish Community	624
A Closer Look: Rejecting Israel?	629
A Closer Look: Release or Execution?	630
Bridging Horizons: What Became of Luke's Gentile Mission?	635



## Acknowledgments and Explanatory Preface



With the publishers' kind permission, this commentary mostly condenses (by roughly 91 percent) my larger, 4,500-page commentary on Acts, published by Baker Academic in 2012–15. I am grateful to both Baker and Cambridge for making this shorter and slightly updated version available. Thanks in this volume to my editors Ben Witherington and Beatrice Rehl, to Judith Odor for the index, and to Vinithan Sethumadhavan, Penny Harper, and the rest of Cambridge's team.

The larger, original commentary cites some 45,000 extrabiblical ancient references and more than 10,000 secondary sources. Needless to say, this present commentary, while more accessible and more portable, must omit most discussions, surveys of views, alternate positions, major outlines, and the vast majority of documentation found there. (Here I have also taken the liberty of eliminating translators and some subtitles and series references to preserve space.) Least of all can I afford space to address frequent scholarly arguments from silence based on what Luke omits. Thus readers, reviewers, and dissertation writers needing further documentation, explanation, or details should turn instead to my fuller work, the final volume of which precedes the writing of this one by just four years.

Instead of dividing Acts into its major sections, which would create excessively large and unwieldy blocks, I have chosen to break many narratives into smaller units, simply introducing the larger sections in those units where they begin. My Galatians commentary in this series is 332 pages for six chapters, but Acts is twenty-eight chapters. Especially after the first two chapters of Acts, therefore, some units will receive brief comment, simply for lack of space.

Like other commentaries in the series, this volume is geared to the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) text, and therefore includes comments

explaining Greek wordplays that translations such as the NRSV sometimes obscure. To stay within this volume's assigned word count, however, at the final stage we reluctantly omitted the translation itself (10 percent of this volume's original length), to which most readers have ready access.