

# *Acts of the Apostles*

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Slide set 8 of 12 slide sets

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# Luke's 2nd book, the "Acts of the Apostles" leads into the Gospel of John

No. 137.

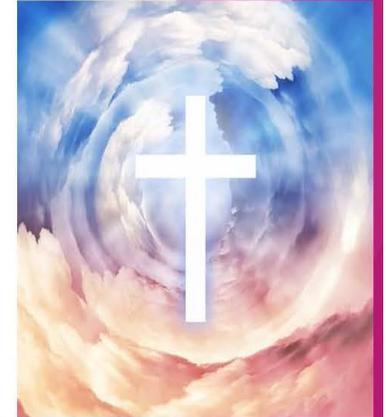
What about Luke's second book called "the Acts of the Apostles"?

- ▶ Luke's *Acts of the Apostles* shows the struggle of the emerging Church against both narrowness and the loud voice.

It also helps to prepare for an understanding of how Jesus continues to exist

within time  
and  
within place

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No. 139

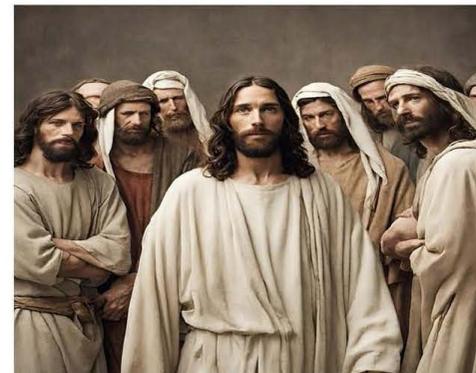
How does "the Acts" do this?

It "paves the way" for a sense of "the living authority" and "the living voice" that is revealed in the gospel of John.



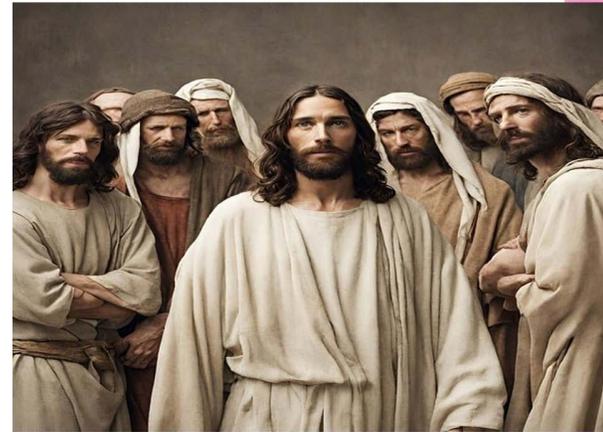
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What is the Story in the Acts of the Apostles?



and further thoughts on

How does Luke's "Acts of the Apostles" lead into the gospel of John?



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*Acts of the Apostles*

*The story of the beginning of the international, multi-ethnic Church*

- ▶ *The Acts of the Apostles* was the 2<sup>nd</sup> part of Luke's gospel, written in about 85CE.
- ▶ The story is about the early Church.
- ▶ It's 2<sup>nd</sup> half deals with the gradual journey of Paul to Rome, the heart of the Roman Empire (and the known world)



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## Also, a sociological, semiotic analysis of *The Acts* [www.realitysearch.com.au](http://www.realitysearch.com.au)

- ▶ shows how this book introduces and develops ideas that are a prelude to the Gospel of John written around 100 CE.



- ▶ Consider

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- ▶ As **Section A** develops, details reach backwards into Luke's gospel, showing links to this first book while describing the immediate establishment of the church after the resurrection of Jesus.



- ▶ **Section B** shows how, from the beginning, Church members recognized authenticity in people outside the community (and Judaism)
- ▶ **Section C** shows the struggle of the community against the narrowness of the Jews (including Jewish Christians).

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An analysis outline (cf. [www.realitysearch.com.au](http://www.realitysearch.com.au)) is as follows:

- Section A Intro to Identity and the Re-tracing of steps
- Section B Recognise Outside autonomy
- Section C Cope with opposition to outreach
- Section D Heed multiple voices and the living word
- Section E Recognise authority in the range of figures
- Section F Challenge the Social Centre of the World

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**Section D** includes a vast number of words relating to speech. While doing this the paragraphs give a description of **“the Word”**.



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The paragraphs in Section D appear to be organized around the word “Word”, that is, except the second last paragraph.

This particular paragraph describes a riot in which people were shouting and protesting about Paul. An inference here is that “the loud voice” and “the word” do not co-exist. The paragraph therefore appears to be defined by its mention of “the way”.

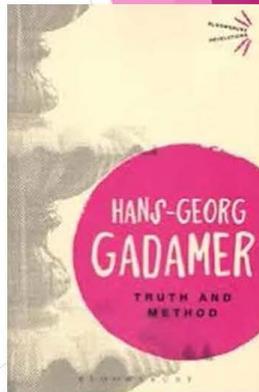
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As regards this section D in Luke’s *Acts*, there are some interesting parallels here, with a C20th philosopher named Gadamer.

*This has relevance to Luke’s presentation of the Word*

Gadamer wrote in opposition to the philosophers of the Enlightenment.

Rather than follow them, he based his approach on that of Heidegger and Heidegger’s emphasis on time (cf. “Being is time”)



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Consider descriptions of “the Word”:

- The “word” is taught and preached by many
- The “word” continues to live on with those who ‘have’ it
- Speaking the “word” is permitted by the Ultimate Spirit
- The “word” is spoken to those ready to believe
- The “word” is received by those who include the wealthy
- The “word” has opponents
- The “word” urges proclamation
- Teaching the “word” is commanded by the Final “I AM”
- The “word” expects attention
- The “word” is increased and strengthened by the “I AM”
- The “word” is linked in with “the way”
- The “word” continues the work of “I AM”

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In his book *Truth and Method* Gadamer starts by pointing out how the portrait and the play as such, are in a sense, a subject.

This is because they take the observer and the participant out of themselves and they show them new dimensions of reality.



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No. 154

Gadamer also said that all language is interconnected

He pointed out that language is constantly changing its meaning.

In doing this, it enables people to see reality more clearly.

Also, in doing this, language as well, is **acting as a subject**.

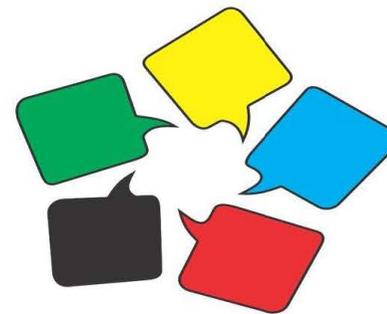
This compares with Luke's paragraphs in *Acts* e.g. *The "word" continues the work of "I AM" (God)*

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Thus, by the end of Section **D** in *Acts* we have the sense of language as such, that is, "the Word" acting as a **subject** and showing us dimensions of reality.

Is there a connection here with the sense of place??

Because language is interconnected everywhere, and the spoken word happens in the "now" (like music), the living word is especially associated with place.



# A "corporate will" can act as a "subject"

(Does this link in with complaints we hear about the "culture" of an organisation?)

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What about Luke's Section E  
in Acts?

A semiotic analysis shows this is  
about supportive action taken by  
people of good will

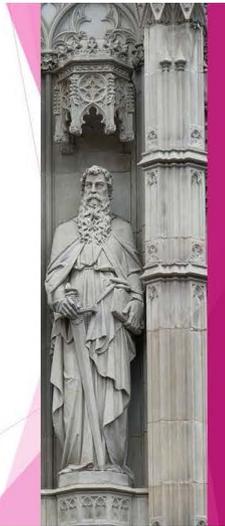
The analysis shows a range of people  
providing Paul with a range of supports.



▶ Consider Section E:

- ▶ Disciples accompanied Paul
- ▶ Prophets warned him
- ▶ Church leadership required purification
- ▶ Law enforcers protected him
- ▶ State Law imposed respect

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No. 159

- ▶ Religious leadership provided a forum
- ▶ Kith and kin gave secret help
- ▶ the Governor gave on-going protection
- ▶ The Successor weighed up his case
- ▶ the Emperor provided a base for world outreach
- ▶ the Monarchy gave a hearing.



- ▶ In doing the above these people helped to protect Paul as he prepared for his journey to Rome.
- ▶ Insofar as they were all doing the will of God, they were acting with "authority" and with a "communal intentionality", even if they did so independently of each other.



# The significance of "what happened" is better understood after the passage of time

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Again, there are some parallels here with the philosopher Gadamer. He made reference to the influence over time by the "anonymous intentionality" of people.

He said that in accord with Aristotle's view, such intentionality forms a communal life-world, which connects the moral and historical life of humankind with the cosmos.

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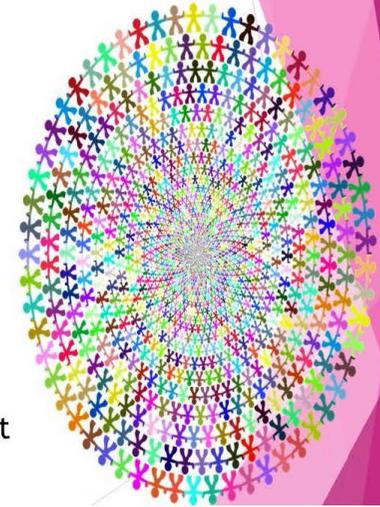
By the end of Section **E** we have the sense of a "corporate will" which is also acting as a **subject** and is shaping the development of history. .

Is there a connection here with the sense of time??

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Such an "anonymous will" acting within and upon history is also, in a sense, a subject.

One is reminded here of the "Body of Christ" that the apostle Paul taught about

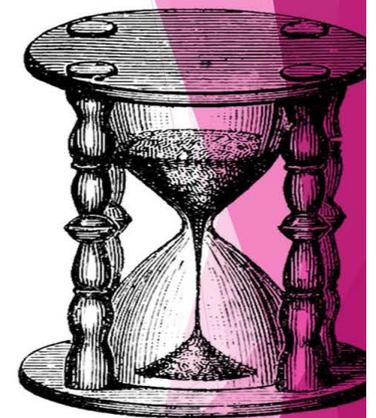


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Gadamer said a person cannot fully understand history by only looking at the immediate historical period.

This is because the significance of what was going on, at any one period, can only be understood with the passage of time.

This would also apply to the impact of action, happening over time



**The "Word" acting as a subject and a "corporate will" acting as a subject remind us of**

**the "Body of Christ" as described by St Paul**

**To what extent are you aware of Church teaching about "the Body of Christ"?**

**What is your own understanding about this?**

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A sense of  
"the Word"  
acting as a subject over place  
and a sense of  
a "corporate will"  
acting as a subject over time  
leads into the

Gospel of John.



Did John also show a focus on  
Time and Place??

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