

## **Is the Book of Acts Descriptive or Prescriptive?**

### Introduction

Is there a case for recommending the descriptive accounts of the Book of Acts as normative for contemporary churches and missions?

### The Situation

There are few scriptures that prescribe ministry and missionary methods which must be followed in all cultures, and little done in Christian ministry flows from prescriptive scripture.

Ministry efforts modeled on descriptive scripture normally prove fruitful.

Thus, efforts within a culture that emulate descriptive scriptures, in obedience to prescriptive ones, remain as valid as any other method drawn from tradition, culture or preference.

Many churches and missions who love the Lord enough to obey him, also seek to honor scripture by following its descriptive examples.

### The Book of Acts

Accounts in the Book of Acts stand as descriptions of proven actions that the Holy Spirit has blessed in fulfilling Jesus' prescriptions.

The Book of Acts describes how the Holy Spirit directed churches and missionaries in obedience to general commands of the Lord Jesus.

Texts such as 2 Timothy 2:2 and 3:16 prescribe following the methods of Paul which are described in the Book of Acts.

Thus the Book of Acts stands, not as formally prescriptive, but as normative for churches and missionaries.

### Alternatives to the Book of Acts

The Law? By works of the law, shall no flesh be justified.

The Gospels? The prescriptions of Jesus for mission work were followed by his apostles as described in the Book of Acts.

The Epistles? The workers and churches to whom the epistles prescribe actions, were planted and trained by the methods described in the Book of Acts.

The Revelation? "Let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

### Conclusion

There are no other scriptures that replace the Book of Acts as normative for churches and missions.