

## WOOLHAMPTON PARISH

‘THE GOD WHO SPEAKS’ – YEAR OF THE BIBLE

BRIEF GUIDE TO BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

# ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

The programme for this second volume of Luke is given by Jesus in Acts 1:8; the disciples are to bear witness to Jesus in Jerusalem, then in Judea and Samaria, then to “the ends of the earth”, a Jewish cryptogram for Rome. ***It is a story told with all the zest of a Hellenistic historian who wishes to “entertain and edify”, for there are plenty of racy tales of journeys, danger, riots, escapes, court scenes and shipwrecks.*** The



sudden intrusion of “We-passages” (“we set sail...”) suggests that the author accompanied Paul on many of his voyages. In the Hellenistic manner, the commentary is given largely by speeches that explain

what is going on (Peter at Pentecost, Stephen at the end of the Jerusalem mission; later, Peter and Paul). ***Throughout the story the reader is aware that the spread of the Church and***

***the witness of the disciples is being led by the Spirit of Christ, who inspires their life in Jerusalem and guides them about when and where they should move.***

***The disciples are carrying on the work of Jesus by their teaching, miracles, and witness even to martyrdom, so that the life of the Church is still the life of Jesus.***

In this there is a strong parallel between the apostles Peter and Paul, whose miracles and preaching show a careful balance. The Book of the Acts plays out the strong interest in the Gentiles seen already in Luke’s Gospel, for a major theme is the openness of the Roman authorities to Christianity. Any clashes that do occur, such as the trials and imprisonments of Paul, are due to hostility on the part of the Jews.

(from *The Bible – A Reader’s Guide*, by Henry Wansborough)

\*\*\*\*

***Now read Acts 10 about Peter’s visit to the Roman centurion Cornelius and the coming of the Holy Spirit on gentile converts***

*For previous leaflets visit [www.douaiparish.org.uk](http://www.douaiparish.org.uk), or contact the Parish Office.*