

*The Acts of the Apostles:
Interpretation, History and
Theology*

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Osvaldo Padilla (PhD, University of Aberdeen) is associate professor of New Testament at Beeson Divinity School in Birmingham, Alabama. He is the author of *The Speeches of Outsiders in Acts: Poetics, Theology, and Historiography*. He has written articles and reviews for *Themelios*, *Bulletin for Biblical Research*, *New Testament Studies* and *Ex Auditu*. He taught New Testament at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School and served as pastor of Jesus el Buen Pastor, a Hispanic congregation in the Chicago area.

A Fresh Approach to Questions About Acts

The Acts of the Apostles provides an advanced introduction to the study of Acts, covering important questions such as

- Who wrote Acts?
- How important is it to know the identity of the author to interpret Acts?
- What kind of book did the author write?
- How do we classify its genre? Why is this significant?
- Is Acts *genuine* history? Is it true?
- Do we believe that the speeches in Acts are true because we can prove their reliability? Or do we believe their veracity because, as part of Holy Scripture, they must in some sense be true?
- How do Acts and postliberal theologians, respectively, defend before the public the truth-claim that Jesus Christ is the crucified and raised Messiah who will judge the living and the dead?

Osvaldo Padilla explores fresh avenues of understanding by examining the text in light of the most recent research on the book of Acts itself, philosophical hermeneutics, genre theory and historiography. In addition, Padilla opens a conversation between the text of Acts and postliberal theology, seeking a fully-orbed engagement with Acts that is equally attuned to questions of interpretation, history and theology.

Padilla writes: "This work is an attempt to do for a new generation of Acts students what Howard Marshall's *Luke: Historian and Theologian* did for a previous generation. As such, it is an 'advanced' introduction (paradox noted) in which a number of prolegomena to Acts are presented (e.g., authorship, genre, etc.) as well as subjects that go beyond introductory necessities."

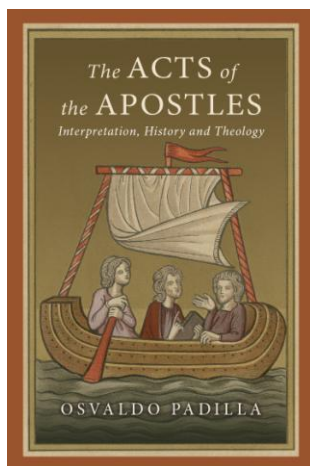
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“A Superbly Informed and Trustworthy Guide”

“Osvaldo Padilla has put students and professors in his debt with this lucid and wide-ranging ‘advanced introduction’ to Acts. He shows a fine grasp of Acts itself and the extensive scholarly discussion over the last two hundred years. He identifies the key points at issue in the debates and provides accessible and well-thought-out assessments that guide readers clearly through the forest of opinions. He addresses issues that particularly concern readers who hold a ‘high view’ of Scripture and want to relate historical claims to faith. His concluding chapter, engaging with the justification of truth claims as expounded in post-liberalism, is fresh and provocative, showing a thoughtful and nuanced understanding of the claims that Acts makes as part of Christian Scripture. A valuable and helpful book.”

—Steve Walton, St. Mary’s University, Twickenham, London

“It is rare to find a work that blends epistemological, hermeneutical and historiographic sophistication with mature handling of the extensive primary and secondary literature, but this is such a work. Padilla’s introduction to questions of the authorship and genre of Acts and the character of its speeches is a superbly informed and trustworthy guide.”

—Craig Keener, F. M. and Ada Thompson Professor of Biblical Studies, Asbury Theological Seminary

“This study of the book of Acts presents Luke not only as author but also as exemplary historian, storyteller and theologian. Luke’s three-stranded cord of authorial discourse is on conspicuous display in his composition of Peter’s, Stephen’s, Philip’s and Paul’s speeches. Where other textbooks often focus on the narratives in Acts (e.g., Pentecost) and the practices of the early church, Padilla highlights the speeches in Acts and their continuing significance, going beyond the call of New Testament duty by dialoguing with postliberal theologians and asking whether they can do justice to the speeches in Acts and in particular their truth claims. The result is an introductory text that not only illumines the book of Acts, but also encourages Christians today to ‘act out the acts of the apostles’ (John Donne), to speak out their speech acts.”

—Kevin J. Vanhoozer, research professor of systematic theology, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School

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