

Dr. Craig Keener, Acts, Lecture 3, Luke's Historiography

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This is Dr. Craig Keener in his teaching on the book of Acts. This is session number 3, Luke's Historiography.

In much of the first two sessions, I was addressing a lot of material from antiquity that was outside the Bible, and my PhD students, when I teach Acts as a doctoral level course, I often give them assignments so that each one of them is to study some ancient historian.

One person will have Thucydides, Polybius, Tacitus, Suetonius, Dio Cassius, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Theodorus Siculus, Appian, and so on. And then they bring their insights from their respective historians and give a brief report on each of the historians. So, you can be glad if you didn't like that, that you are now going to be getting into the text a little bit.

So, Luke 1:1-4 tells us much about the sources that were available to Luke. I mentioned before written sources and oral sources, Luke confirming this with his own investigations or somehow achieving thorough knowledge, and that the material was already widely known in the early church. Luke probably wrote as we mentioned before, somewhere between 62 and 90, perhaps in the early 70s, although there are a number of people now who do take a later date.

But I've given you my reasons for arguing for the 70s. By the time that Luke writes, many people have already written Luke 1:1. It's not just one person who's written. We know he used Mark.

It's not just two people who've written. We know he shared some material in common with Matthew. But many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us.

Now are the events, say, four and a half decades before us, shrouded in amnesia? Some of us actually are old enough to remember events four and a half decades ago. But for those who aren't, certainly, you know some people who were around four and a half decades ago. And if significant events from that period, significant events from their lives, details here and there, memories are not perfect, but if significant events, especially if it's something where multiple people knew about it and are in contact with each other and can talk about it, and especially if it's things that they may have talked about regularly since then, which would be the case with Jesus' disciples, or probably Luke himself with the things that he experienced.

In such cases, four and a half decades is not that long that we would expect everything to be shrouded in amnesia, which is the approach that some scholars have taken. Luke mentions that he has oral sources. Luke 1.2, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the Word.

Well, paradidomy can mean a lot of different things in different contexts, but this term handed down in the context of talking about oral tradition, normally it was a technical term for very careful oral tradition, where students would receive information from their teachers and they would pass it on. How accurate could this be? Well, I think of a neighbor of mine who's 96 years old, Anna Gulick, and Anna, was around before American culture moved to dependence on radio, dependence on television, and now dependence on the Internet. If you want to look something up, you go to Wikipedia or whatever, which may or may not be correct, but at least somebody, depending on how many times the article's been edited and whatever else.

But people, they go to that for information. They get things in sound bytes and video bytes. But when she was growing up, even in U.S. culture, people would sit on the front porch and they would pass on stories from their parents' generation, from their parent's generation, and so on.

And Anna was able to recount to me stories from her family going back to the 1700s. And some of these stories, the information was information that could be a matter of public record. I went and checked it, and sure enough, she had the stories correct.

This is information that was passed on for a couple hundred years and that she still remembers in her old age. There are some other parts of her that are not as strong as they were, but her memory remains quite sharp. That is even more true in many other societies, many traditional societies.

My wife, who is from Africa, has a Ph.D. in history from France, from the University of Paris VII. My wife says that a lot of the oral history is being lost now with the younger generation, but it was passed on for generations. And so, she's been very careful with family history to interview people, write the things down, lest they be lost in the transition to modernity or post-modernity or whatever period we're in, post-modernity.

In any case, how accurate was oral tradition? Well, some of the points that we need to consider are memorization in antiquity, I'll spend the most time on that, notes, sayings, collections, in the Gospels, evidence for Aramaic rhythm, and the prominence of eyewitnesses in the Church. In terms of memory and antiquity, you often had storytellers who would tell stories for hours on end. Now some people say, oh, that was only the educated people who had these really strong memories.

That's not true. You had traveling bards who were virtually illiterate, and yet they could repeat the entire Iliad and Odyssey from heart. So, books, not too thick, but still, I mean two full books.

By ancient standards, these were like 48 books, 24 books each. So storytellers were able to repeat these stories for hours. One of the five basic tasks of oratory for professional public speakers or politicians or anybody who had been trained in oratory, one of the five basic tasks was memoria, memorizing the speech in advance in preparation to give it.

And then when you would give it, you could add some other things in. But these were often speeches that could be a couple of hours in length. I'm cheating, I'm looking at my notes sometimes, but they didn't need to look at their notes because they had things memorized.

Elementary education, the most basic feature of elementary education was memorizing, often memorizing the sayings of famous teachers. So, if somebody had that elementary education, they'd know how to do that. If they didn't have that elementary education, they'd have heard enough people talk that they would still value that and learn many sayings like that.

Disciples of teachers, this was advanced education. The tertiary form of education where you had disciples of teachers, in Greek schools this would be focusing on philosophy or more often because it was considered more practical for many people rhetoric, speaking, or oratory. And of course, for Jewish people, it was the study of the Torah.

A person often began this in their mid-teens. Typically, they began this in their mid-teens. Jesus' disciples were probably on average in their mid-teens when they followed Jesus.

Peter who was married may have been a little bit older, but he may not have even been 20 yet when they started. In any case, the primary responsibility of disciples of teachers was to remember what their teacher taught, and insofar as they remained part of that school of thought, they were to pass on accurately what their teacher taught them. If they were philosophic disciples, they would continue to propagate that.

Many founders of philosophic schools, many sages, their teachings became canonical for their communities. They usually left them out of publication to their followers, but going back to the 5th century BC, they often would write what their teachers taught them. But this was a primary responsibility that disciples had.

Now if you turned out not to agree with your teacher, well that was allowed. I mean nobody could make you agree with your teacher, but still, you owed them the respect of accurately representing what they said. You could disagree with them respectfully, but you didn't make up words and put them in their mouth.

There's no reason to think that Jesus' disciples would have done that either. The example that is most dramatic is the example sometimes given by the Pythagoreans. Pythagorean disciples were not allowed to get out of bed in the morning without repeating back everything they heard the day before.

So, I could test you tomorrow morning, but I'm not a morning person so we'll let that go. But Pythagoreans weren't the only ones who did this. We read in a 2nd-century work of Lucan, he's talking about some philosophers and they're repeating back everything that they heard the day before.

People would learn the deeds of their teacher as well as their teachings. I mean teachings would be a little bit more precise. You didn't have to get the exact wording even in that case.

Paraphrase was a standard exercise. But you would learn the teachings, but you'd also learn from their deeds. So, for example, in the case of later rabbis, these rabbis would learn the deeds of earlier rabbis and sometimes use them as legal precedents.

Well, this can't be against the Torah because Rabbi so-and-so did this. And they would cite that as an argument. There's one hyperbolic story, extreme story, probably, well I don't know if it's a true story or not, but it's said that one rabbi was getting ready to, he was in his bedroom, he was getting ready to spend some time alone with his wife when he found a disciple under his bed and startled, he exclaimed, what are you doing under my bed? To which the disciple replied, it is said that we must learn everything from the example of our teachers.

If I find any of you in my bedroom, you will flunk this course. There are no grades for my lecture that I know of unless somebody is grading you, but I will see to it that you will flunk anyway. But in any case, disciples of teachers had to learn from what their teachers did and taught.

And often these were gathered into lives and sayings collections afterward. Now in terms of taking notes, in Jewish tradition, it was mainly oral, so far as we can tell from the later rabbis. But they mainly memorized.

But sometimes they did take notes to help them remember larger blocks of material. The rabbis often spoke in easily memorizable form so that the disciples could remember it more easily. One rabbi praised his student as being like a cistern, a water tank that never loses a single drop of water.

Now that's just one example. I found that in rabbinic literature and I found other people cite that from rabbinic literature and we're all citing the same example. So, it's just one example, but it is an illustration of the broader principle of how seriously this was taken.

Now rabbinic literature is preserved over many generations. So, over the course of many generations, some of the oral traditions will get mixed up and so on. But we're not talking about that in the case of what we have with the Jesus tradition, because Mark is writing within a generation after Jesus' public ministry.

And if he gets it from Peter, as Papias said in the early second century, then the material goes way back to the beginning. And actually just one more thought on that. I went back and paralleled different ancient biographies of common figures and the degree of overlap is so substantial that it suggests that even when you've got different writers, when they're writing about somebody just a generation or even two generations before, we're not talking about them doing fabrication.

We're talking about them having a whole lot of material in front of them and they have their own perspectives on it. Sometimes they misunderstand it, but for the most part, the substance of it is quite accurate. Now, the rabbi's disciples could take some notes, but mainly they worked orally.

Well, some people say you can't depend on what the rabbis said because they were so interested in orality that this stuff didn't begin to be written down until the early third century, around the year 220 or 225. That may be true, but Josephus is writing in the first century. He also talks about the practice of memorization and Jews orally memorizing the Torah.

So, these memory skills were very widely valued in antiquity to a degree with which many Westerners feel uncomfortable. We feel astonished. It was a culture where mnemonic skills were highly valued.

If I can give just a few more examples of that. I gave an example from illiterate Bards. Seneca the Elder was quite literate, but he provides just a stark and very graphic example of how far memory could go and how people value memory.

He says that when he was younger, he could hear 2,000 names and then repeat them back in exactly the sequence in which he just heard them. He could be given 200 lines of verse and he could repeat them back in reverse order. That's a remarkable memory.

He says, well now I'm old. I don't remember things as well. My memory is not so good.

And after he lowers your expectations, he proceeds in his work, the *Controversiae*, to recount sections of over a hundred declamations. These were practice speeches in oratory school. From over a hundred speeches, practice speeches of his colleagues in oratory school.

Now I had homiletics and I remember from my first homiletics class, no it was my second, see I'm already forgetting. My second homiletics class, I remember the text and the general subject from my first sermon. But I couldn't give you anything verbatim.

I could probably reconstruct the kind of thing I might have said. And I have no recollection of what anybody else in the room preached. We didn't have nearly a hundred students in the room.

So, Seneca had this remarkable memory. But Seneca was not alone in that. You have another example of a person who went to an auction and listened all day, took no notes.

At the end of the day, could tell you every item that was sold, the person to whom it was sold, and the price for which it was sold. Someone else who went to a poetry reading and heard the poem read and after hearing it read, got up and said, that's plagiarism. You stole that poem.

I wrote that poem and I can prove it. And recited it from memory. The person up front was horrified because he couldn't repeat it from memory.

And then the person in the back said, no, just joking. I just wanted to show you how good my memory skills were. I memorized it while you were reading it.

Well, memories could be quite accurate. I would not say ordinary people could do that. But because the culture valued memory so much, and some people have said, well, not illiterates.

Well, we have the bards. Also, in many cultures, memory skills are inversely proportional to literacy. I mean, when you can look things up, you don't have to remember them quite as well.

You have, in some cultures today, students in some Quranic schools who can repeat back large amounts or even the entire Quran from memory in Arabic. Sometimes they don't even know Arabic. So, memory can be disciplined.

I like to remind my students of that before the midterms and the finals. But in any case, sometimes students took notes. This was more common among Greeks, but

Hellenistic culture had long been established in Galilee and Judea as well, especially in certain circles and certain areas.

Greek disciples' notes could be quite accurate. You find this both in philosophic schools and in oratorical schools. I'll give you one example from an oratorical school.

Quintilian was a professor of rhetoric in Rome. His students were boys, and they took such copious and careful notes on his lectures, and then they could collaborate afterward with those notes, that they went out and published a book in his name, to which he responded, you know, they were very accurate, but I wish they would have run it by me first because I could have corrected certain infelicities of grammar and so forth. In other words, they corrected even my mistakes, and I wish they could have corrected them.

So, if you are taking notes and plan to publish a book in my name, go ahead and make yourself a co-author so that I won't be responsible for any mistakes. But in any case, I've already published most of this in my Acts commentary and other works. But all that to say notes were sometimes taken.

Among Jesus' disciples, well, we have one, at least, Matthew, a tax collector who followed Jesus, or Levi, the tax collector who followed Jesus, would certainly have had the skills to take some basic notes. And probably soon after the resurrection, if he hadn't taken them before, he'd probably take them soon after. That's early Christian tradition.

I think Papias says that also, although I think that Papias was probably referring to Jesus' teachings, not our current Gospel of Matthew, or he may have had them mixed up. But in any case, note-taking was possible, and I've suggested that in the case of the Book of Acts with Luke having a travel journal, probably Luke took some notes as well. Well, in the Gospels, we often have an Aramaic rhythm.

Jesus probably was bilingual, given what we know of Lower Galilee. He probably sometimes spoke Greek, at least, in Jerusalem. But he probably often spoke Aramaic, especially in the Galilean countryside, lecturing to Galilean farmers, for whom Aramaic was their mother tongue and their primary language.

Probably fairly early, because of the Hellenists in the Jerusalem church, you have a transition to Greek as the one shared language that everybody in Jerusalem understood, at least somewhat. So, the sayings were probably translated pretty early, and probably translated in more than one way by different people. People who are bilingual, well, there are jokes about people in my country, at least Anglos in my country, being monolingual, but those jokes aside.

My wife from Congo, speaks five languages, and she'll get on the phone with one person, and she'll be speaking Mnutetuba, switch to Kitsangi, switch to French. She could have used Langala, but usually, there's nobody on the phone she's talking with who speaks Langala. I'll say something to her, and she'll answer me in English.

She switches back and forth among these languages. And so, when she translates, yes, sometimes there are figures of speech from one language that come into another, but basically, you know, she's just got these different tracks in her mind, and she's able to juggle them even simultaneously. People can do that, who are skilled in that.

And so, it's very likely that many of these things were translated into Greek very early. Nevertheless, we often have Aramaic figures of speech. For example, in Jesus' speech, we often read about the Son of the Man, literally in Greek, which makes about as much sense in Greek as it does in English.

Really, that's a Semitism. It makes sense in Hebrew, Ben Adam, and Aramaic, Bar Anish, but it's not something that made sense in Greek. But it was translated into Greek with that idiom.

And so, we have a number of cases where we can reconstruct the Aramaic rhythm, and what that suggests to us is that, yeah, a lot of things were carefully preserved. And I won't go into it here. I went into it in my Matthew course, but a lot of Jesus' sayings reflect Judean and Galilean customs, Judean and Galilean figures of speech, sayings, ideas, and even his form of story parables.

These are not things that were followed by the later church. These are not things that were used in Greek in the diaspora, in the Eastern Mediterranean world. I mean, most Greeks outside of Judea and Galilee in the Mediterranean world spoke Greek.

So, we have a number of features that show that Luke, yes, accurately preserved information that was available to him, even though he often cleaned it up in better Greek as well. Further, eyewitnesses remain prominent in the early church. We know from Galatians 2 and 1 Corinthians 15, which virtually all scholars agree are authentically written by Paul, and of course they agree with that because the details in those works would have made no sense other than being addressed to genuine local congregations.

So, everybody agrees that these are authentic, but they mention the leaders in the church up until the mid-first century. In the fifties of the first century, you've got Peter, Jesus' key disciple. Paul actually calls him by his Aramaic name, Kepha, transliterated into Greek, say Kephas.

But Peter, John, also a close disciple, and then James, the brother of the Lord. So, somebody within the family would have known some things about the family. Well, these were leaders in the Jerusalem church.

They're known and respected even in the diaspora churches, the churches elsewhere in the Mediterranean world. In Greece and in Asia Minor, these eyewitnesses remain prominent in the early church. They remained a major source for information about Jesus.

People in antiquity, just like people today, if you study ancient historians at all, understood, like we understand today, if you want to get the best information, you go to the eyewitnesses. Also, that would deal with some of the material about Jesus. When you deal with the material in Acts, you're getting even closer to the author's own time.

So, the span of time between the events and the recording of the events by Luke is even less. And we could make some other arguments about these things. Clearly, the early apostles were people of integrity.

They weren't just making these things up. They were prepared to die for the truth of their claims. People die for falsehoods, yes, but they don't ordinarily die for things that they know to be false, and especially not a whole group of them.

So, if they claim to have seen things, chances are that's what they saw. Luke, like the other gospels, cites women in the resurrection, despite the fact that the testimony of women was often looked down upon, and actually in Jewish law and in Roman law. Josephus says that the testimony of a woman should not be accepted because of the levity and temerity of their gender.

Luke also had thorough knowledge, as we see in chapter 1 and verse 3 of Luke's gospel. Some translations say, I carefully investigated. You could also translate it, I had thorough knowledge.

Well, when could Luke have acquired this thorough knowledge, or when could he have investigated? The best Hellenistic historians actually did like to investigate things. They did like to go to the scenes where things took place. I don't think that Luke probably went into many parts of Galilee.

That probably would not have been safe in the 60s of the first century for him if he were a Gentile, and maybe not even if he were an exclusively Greek-speaking diaspora Jew who couldn't prove that he was fully Jewish. But in any case, Luke does appear to have gone to many of the other places and to have at least gathered information from the people who were there. So how do we know that? Well, how

about Luke? When could he have checked out those sources? Well, remember the We narrative.

There's a lot of the We in chapters 16 through 28. And part of the We narrative, we've already talked about the evidence for the We narrative, going back to an eyewitness. But the We narrative includes up to two years spent with Paul in Judea.

24:27 says that Paul was kept in Roman custody in Caesarea for up to two years. And when the We had already been with him, and when Paul leaves in Acts 27, 1 and 2 to go to Rome, the We is still with him. So, what that suggests to us is that Luke had a great deal of time in Judea.

Probably most of it was spent in Caesarea on the Judean coast, but there was a large Jewish population there, a large Jewish Christian population there. He met with Manassin, an old disciple who went back to early times. He was hosted by Philip the Evangelist, who had been a believer since early times in the church.

He met James, the brother of the Lord. And as for the stories about Paul, he was there for up to two years. I mean, he's been with Paul quite a lot.

People in prison were allowed visitors. In fact, well, sometimes they had to pay bribes. But in this case, in Acts chapter 24, even Felix, this corrupt governor, gave orders that people could visit him as much as they wanted and bring things to him, and take care of him.

So, Luke had plenty of time with Paul to hear these stories, if he had any interest in them at all. And he would know Paul's stories pretty well. And then for the last quarter of the book of Acts, he's actually there for most of the things.

Finally, Luke appeals to what was already common knowledge in the church. Verse 4, so that you may know the certainty of the things that you have been taught. Well, you probably remember that in the previous session of this video, I was lecturing on paleobotany.

No, actually you wouldn't remember that, because that's not what I was doing. Normally you don't make up things that contradict what your hearers already know and then appeal to their knowledge of it. So, 2,000 years later, we can't go back and interview Luke.

We certainly can't interview the people that Luke interviewed. We can only be grateful that Luke interviewed them, giving this material for my witnesses. But what we can be grateful for is that Luke appealed to Theophilus' knowledge of this.

And therefore, Luke sees his job as confirming something that was already known. This was information that was known before Luke wrote. It's the same as Paul cites his audience's knowledge of the miracles that were done through him, 2 Corinthians 12.

He says, you know, you saw the signs of an apostle when I was among you. Chances are that means that they actually had seen them or he wouldn't be able to appeal to that. There's other evidence regarding the Gospels.

Later debates central to the church are missing in the Gospels. Luke loves to parallel Luke's Gospel and Acts. Well, a big issue in Acts chapter 15, somewhere around the year 50, around the mid-first century, a big divisive issue is whether or not Gentiles have to be circumcised.

And yet we don't find Luke reading that back into the Gospel where Jesus has any sayings about whether or not they need to be circumcised. I mean, you would have thought that if people were just randomly making up sayings for Jesus, you'd have people saying Jesus said to be circumcised, Gentiles, or Jesus saying Gentiles don't have to be circumcised. But you don't have any of that, and you don't have any of that in Luke.

Paul, the earliest New Testament writer, at least according to the usual dating that most of us use at this time in history, Paul, the earliest New Testament writer, sometimes attests to what we have in the synoptics, including in Luke's Gospel. The resurrection tradition and its witnesses, the Lord's Supper being passed on, well, it's very similar in Luke 22 and in Mark 14 and 1 Corinthians 11. The substance of it certainly agrees.

The divorce saying, 1 Corinthians 7, where Paul specifically distinguishes what he says and what Jesus said, not disagreeing with Jesus, just qualifying it for a new situation, but he doesn't invent something for Jesus for that situation. Paul's end-time teachings very much echo Jesus' end-time teachings, and I've argued that in more detail in print elsewhere. I won't go into that here.

Possibly some of Jesus' ethics also. If writers were freely inventing stories, we wouldn't have synoptic Gospels. We wouldn't have the degree of overlap we have, although Luke uses multiple sources, not just the ones that we still have preserved for us today, which is only a minute portion of the many that he mentions.

Well, I'm going to look now specifically at Acts. Remember I said Acts has many more correspondences with external history than what you find in a novel. There's no novel that has anything comparable to this, and this has been pointed out by Charles Talbert and others.

Acts' correspondences with external history in Acts 13-28, when I say no novel, no ancient novel. You have attestation of the Sergii Polii, the family of Sergius Paulus is known, and Luke would have had to have had a lot of audacity to make up the name of the governor anyway. Iconium was ethnically Phrygian, in 1406.

Unlike most towns, Lystra preserved its local language, 1411. Zeus and Hermes were paired in local inscriptions, just as people thought Barnabas and Paul were Zeus and Hermes in that same area, 1412. From the south, you come to Derbe before Lystra, 1601.

Anything about the interior of Asia Minor, the only way you'd know much about that was if you went there. And Luke probably didn't go there himself, but he had a source that did. Thessalonica, they were a free city, and therefore their populace is called the Deimos.

And their officials, as elsewhere in Macedonia, but only in Macedonia pretty much, were called Polyarchs. He gets that right in Chapter 17. Chapter 18, in verse 2, speaking of Claudius' expulsion, well, it fits the known time of Claudius' expulsion.

The majority of scholars think, and I wrote on this for Burrell's encyclopedia, one of their works, that the date is around the year 49. There's some debate about it, but that's the majority view. Colin Hemer actually has like 100, 200 pages of this material.

I'm just giving you a short summary of the kinds of correspondences that are available. In chapter 19, in verse 35, the title for the chief officer locally in Ephesus was the Gromatus. Well, in a village, you know, come a Gromatus, that's just a village scribe who executes documents.

But in Ephesus, it's the city clerk who there was the chief officer. Now, Artemis was a goddess, said to be a goddess. And so normally you would speak of her as he-the-ah, the goddess.

If it were a male deity like Apollo, you would say he-the-as, the god that they were talking about. But sometimes in the inscriptions locally from Ephesus, it speaks of the Ephesian Artemis as he-the-as. And that local usage is found in Acts 19 at times, which sounds like the report comes from somebody who was there in Ephesus.

Well, that's not quite as big a deal because a lot of people travel to Ephesus, but still we don't find it much outside of Ephesus. 1938, the custom of the governor holding courts in various districts in Roman Asia. In chapter 20 in verse 4, the form of Berea's name, Bereas, the form fits local inscriptions.

Chapter 21, verses 31, 35, and 40, archaeology confirms Luke's topography of the temple in terms of the people from the Porta Centonia, the soldiers rushing down the stairs and pulling Paul out of the crowd in the outer court. Claudius Lysias, well Luke doesn't make a point of this, but Lysias, he's a Greek, but he acquired Roman citizenship and he has taken the name of the previous Roman emperor, the Roman emperor under whom he received citizenship. Well, that fits recent citizenship acquisition.

It also fits the fact that Claudius was selling Roman citizenship quite a bit during his reign. Citizenship was also cheaper toward the end of his reign, which may be why this Claudius Lysias says to Paul, well, I paid a great deal for my citizenship. Like, how much did you pay for yours? And then Paul says, I was born a citizen.

Ananias is the correct high priest at the time. Felix's tenure fits the narrative date. Also, Felix had three different wives over the course of time, but the wife that he had at this time was Drusilla, a Jewish princess.

She was the sister of Agrippa II and Bernice. She was the one who was married to Felix at this time. Again, this is not something that a novelist would go back and research.

Antipatris is the right stop between Jerusalem and Caesarea. Archaeologists have now uncovered the road there. It's also the right place among the Gentiles to relieve the infantry and send them back while the cavalry go on to Caesarea.

When Paul gets before the governor of Judea, Felix, Felix asks what province he's from. Well, he's from Cilicia. And that's when Felix says, okay, well, I better try this case myself.

I'm not going to refer to this because I would be bothering my own superior who would rather me take care of this myself. The province of Syria during this time had been joined and just for a period of time had been joined with Cilicia. So that means that the governor of Cilicia, the direct superior of Felix, was also the one who governed Cilicia.

So, he didn't send Paul back to his own area to be tried. Also, the arrival of Porcius Festus in 2427. Well, it came at just the time that Acts depicts.

Porcius Festus actually probably wasn't in office very long, but he acts in character. The way he appears in Acts is the way he appears in Josephus. I've argued that Agrippa I acts the same way in Acts as he does in Josephus.

And Agrippa II and Bernice don't get any speaking parts, but pretty much they act in conjunction with the way we see they act in Josephus. Bernice was with Agrippa II,

her brother, at precisely this time. Now Bernice was married at some point, but her marriage broke up and she went back to stay with her brother.

It was at this time that she was with her brother. I mean, a novelist wouldn't get this down to the precise years of these things. Also, Agrippa and Bernice were known to visit new officials, so it's not surprising that they came to visit Festus so soon after he received his office, and well, assumed his duties of his office.

In Acts 27.1 through 28.15, Paul's voyage to Rome, the itinerary, the weather conditions, and the sailors' actions, are often correct down to minute details, including exactly where the ship was being blown, how many days it took to get there, and so on. This was studied in the 19th century by a mariner who was in some of these kinds of storms. Adolf von Harnack, known as a liberal scholar in the early 20th century, Adolf von Harnack says that Paul's letters corroborate Acts.

He was highly impressed with Acts, except for the miracles, because he didn't believe in miracles. That's another story. But Paul's letters corroborate Acts, and he gives 39 examples of that.

Here are just some of them. Jerusalem is the starting place for the gospel. Paul corroborates that.

The persecution of the Judean churches by other Judeans, you have in 1 Thessalonians 2. The Judean churches kept the law, Galatians 2, verse 12. Paul wondered how the Jerusalem church would accept him when he was going to be going back to Jerusalem. He talks about that in Romans 15.31. The twelve led the Jerusalem church, Galatians 1, 1 Corinthians 15.

Barnabas was an apostle, but not one of the twelve, 1 Corinthians 9 and then 15. Among the twelve, Peter and John were especially leaders. You see that in Galatians 2.9, just like you see it in the book of Acts.

Peter is the chief leader. You see that in Galatians, as you see it in Acts. Peter made journeys.

You see that in Galatians, as you see it in Acts. The Lord's brothers, don't belong to the twelve, but they are prominent in the early church. You see that in 1 Corinthians 9. James heads the group of the Lord's brothers and is an important leader, 1 Corinthians 15 and Galatians 2. Barnabas was Paul's chief co-worker in his earliest mission.

You see that in Galatians 2 and 1 Corinthians 9. It was known in those communities. He had apparently talked about him, so not surprising Luke would know about him too. Mark was closely connected with Barnabas.

We find out in the Pauline correspondence that actually Mark was a relative of Barnabas. No wonder he would stick up for him. Silas was Paul's companion and Timothy was also his companion in the later mission as they were moving in the Aegean realm.

There, Timothy is a subordinate. Silas seems more like a colleague. Timothy is a subordinate, although Paul is the main leader of the group.

You have many members of Jerusalem, the Jerusalem church at an early period where over 500 had seen Jesus alive at once. So he had a pretty good start for the church, although a lot of those were Galileans and would have gone back. Baptism is being used for initiation, you have that in both.

You have signs and wonders being associated with apostles. That's in both. You have Paul admitting that he persecuted Christians, Galatians 1, 1 Corinthians 15, Philippians 3. Paul is on a par with or analogous to Peter in Galatians 2. Paul is converted near Damascus by the revelation of the Lord, Galatians 1, 1 Corinthians 15.

Paul escaping Damascus in a basket from the wall, 2 Corinthians 11. Paul went to Jerusalem afterward, Galatians 1. Paul ministered in Jerusalem, Romans 15. Cities of Paul's ministry in Acts 13 and 14 fit what we have in 2 Timothy 3.11. Also, if you take the South Galatian theory, which the majority of scholars do, contrary to what some other scholars say, but I've worked through the materials, the majority of scholars and also the strong majority of classicists who work on Asia Minor agree that Paul ministered in South Galatia so that Galatians fits in with Acts as well.

Acts 13:38, and 39 fit Paul's teaching about justification by faith. Well, Harnack pointed out these kinds of things, but it's not just Harnack. Thomas Campbell in a JBL article noted that the chronology of Paul that we get from his letters fits very much the chronology, the sequence that we have in the book of Acts.

Now, some of these things are just common sense because if you're traveling, you don't jump to Rome and then come back to a city in between them. Normally, you go in sequence, but the correspondence is really remarkable. Persecution, Galatians 1. Conversion, Galatians 1. Paul goes to Arabia.

That part's not in Acts, although the Nabataeans were in the area around there, and we know that he did have some conflict with Nabataeans because of what he says in 2 Corinthians 11 with the Ethnarch of Damascus, but we don't have that in Acts. He goes to Damascus. He goes to Jerusalem.

He goes to Syria and Cilicia next. He came back to Jerusalem again 14 years later. He goes to Antioch.

He goes to Philippi. He goes to Thessalonica. He goes to Athens.

It's mentioned in 1 Thessalonians 3. He goes to Corinth. He goes to Ephesus. He goes to Troas.

He goes to Macedonia. He comes back to Corinth. He goes to Jerusalem, and he goes to Rome.

Now, we can't expect everything that happens in one source to be attested in another. Paul's letters are occasional letters. He's not giving a biography of his life, but the correspondences are all the more remarkable for that reason.

Now, the objection that's been raised, Fielhauer critiques Luke's non-Pauline theology. Well, everybody agrees that Luke wrote up the speeches in his own words. Luke has some Pauline phrases, but for the most part, Luke's writing in his own words.

Actually, as we'll see later, some of the speeches actually are closer, probably, to Paul's own words, like in Acts 20. But students' emphasis can vary from their teachers' emphasis. I mean, I always hope that my teachers, with whom I've disagreed on some points, still realize how much I respect them.

I've dedicated books to them and so on, but we don't always agree on every point. I studied with E. P. Sanders. I dedicated my historical Jesus of the Gospels to E. P. Sanders and Jim Charlesworth, but Ed knows I don't agree with him on every point.

I dedicated my John commentary to D. Moody Smith, who was my doctoral mentor in the study of the Gospel of John. We don't agree on every point. He definitely knows that I support him and appreciate him and still ask him for advice.

But in any case, students don't always agree with their teachers on everything. Certainly, their emphasis may differ from that of their teachers. Moreover, the natural theology in Acts 17 that people have tried to contrast with the natural theology in Romans 1, if you're a New Testament scholar and you're trying to nitpick slightly different emphases, yeah, great.

But if you're a classicist and you're coming at it from the standpoint of how did natural theology look in general among ancient philosophers, actually Acts 17 and Romans 1 sound fairly similar. And of course, they do fit into the broader framework of what was available at that time. Acts 9 and verse 20, speaking of Jesus as God's Son, and 13, 38, and 39, as we mentioned before, speaking of justification.

Acts 20 includes even wording that's very close to Paul's own wording. Well, why in Acts 20? Well, we was there. Luke was there when the speech was given.

The major problem that Feilhauer pinpoints is that Paul keeps the law, but that reflects Feilhauer's theological misreading of the epistles, as is often noted now. E.P. Sanders and others have brought that out, but not just E.P. Sanders. I mean, the people would disagree with him.

Most scholars today agree that Paul was not against the law in the way that Feilhauer would have thought. Also 1 Corinthians 9, 19 to 23, Paul says that he became all things to all people. He became as not under the law to those who weren't under the law, but he himself was subject to God's law.

And he said, I became as a Greek to the Greeks, but as a Jew to the Jew. Well, that was easy enough for him. That was his own culture.

So, it shouldn't be surprising if Paul sometimes would accommodate his culture, like circumcising Timothy in Acts chapter 16, or shaving his head because of a vow in Acts 18.18, and so forth. In fact, Paul in his own writings sometimes accommodated things in ways that Luke doesn't even describe. Paul talks about it a number of times, being beaten with 39 lashes.

Well, if he had chosen to withdraw from the synagogue, he could have said, well, I'm a Roman citizen. I don't have to submit to this. I just repudiated my Jewish connections, and they couldn't have beaten him.

But Paul didn't do that. He identified with his people, and so I think Luke's depiction of this fits. Some observation on Lukan historiography.

Now, this is not speaking just from my standpoint. This is a general standpoint of where probably the majority of scholars on Luke-Acts stand. The challenges to Luke's accuracy come up among scholars where we would most expect them.

A speech behind closed doors in Acts 5.36 and 37 is one of the major places where people raise questions. You also have a speech behind closed doors in Acts chapter 25, verses 13 and following. But he's most accurate where we can test him, where we would expect for an ancient historian.

Accurate and detailed in the wee narratives. Fits the chronological sequence whenever it's available in Paul's letters. Preserves the substance of Mark and the shared material with Matthew in the Gospel.

So, it fits. Where the questions have been raised the most have been in the speeches. About one-quarter of the book's content, scholars differ on the precise

percentage for the speeches because it depends on whether you include the narrative context and whether you include other conversations and so on.

But it's somewhere around one-quarter of the book's content. Many of the speeches are apologetic speeches. They're defending the faith.

Answering Jewish charges in Acts chapter 7. Paul's defense speeches in Acts 22 before a crowd and Acts 24, 25 briefly, and 26 before governors. Others are evangelistic like the synagogue sermon in Acts 13 where Paul appeals to scripture or Paul appeals to nature when he's speaking to farmers in Acts 14, verses 15 through 17 or Paul appeals to Greek poets and uses some motifs that were shared between Old Testament theology and Greek philosophers in his speech in Acts 17:22 to 31. Those are evangelistic speeches.

Well, historians often used speeches as we mentioned before. They often used them to summarize likely speech events. If a speech were known to have been given on an occasion or surely a speech was given on an occasion, then a historian would compose a speech that would come as close as possible to what they thought would have been delivered on that occasion except sometimes Josephus wanting to show off.

But normally that's what they did. To communicate different points of view, sometimes they would practice what was called *prosopopoeia* where you would, and again I'm not explaining my own view here, I'm just giving you the general views that scholars have articulated. *Prosopopoeia* where you would write a speech in character.

Okay, well here's somebody writing about opposing generals. They may have known a lot of what a particular Roman general said, but the Roman general was going up against a Carthaginian general. No surviving eyewitnesses to that, that Roman historians have access to.

So, one Roman historian says, well what would he have said given what we know about him, given what we know about the situation? And so, tries to supply that. And then that way you have contrasting speeches. It was a way that the historians tried to fill things out, the details, and flesh out the narratives as historically accurately as they could.

But they had more freedom in the speeches where they often worked from inference. It was to provide a perspective on events. Well, how accurate were the speeches? That depends on who wrote them and how much information they had.

Josephus on the speech in Masada is often cited as a case in point of a made-up speech. Because Josephus reports a speech where the leader of the group of the

Sicarii, Eleazar, says let's not be humiliated and let the Romans conquer us. Let's just slay ourselves.

And so, they all slay themselves, slay themselves. And the next day the Romans come in and find them all dead. Well, what's Josephus' source for this speech? There were a couple of women who did survive by going into hiding.

Josephus doesn't give us any clue that they were the source for the speech. And I suspect that they weren't. Because I mean this is a speech where this radical nationalist is talking about the immortality of the soul in language something like it's derived from Plato.

And these women, given what we know of the level of women's education usually in those kinds of circles, probably wouldn't have been able to have reproduced that speech even if Eleazar had been able to give it, which he probably wasn't. So, Josephus was probably showing off his rhetorical skills in composing that speech, and probably all of his audience knew that that's what he was doing. No secret there.

But normally when historians had access to the substance of a speech, they'd use it. And it was considered best to make it as much like the person and character as possible. Thucydides says that he usually followed the basic thrust when it was available.

But he also is quite clear he couldn't do it verbatim. That simply wasn't available. That wasn't part of ancient historiography.

And again, paraphrase was a standard practice even if they did have access to it verbatim. But later historians often simply rewrote earlier historian speeches. Once it was in the history, it was a source.

So, they just put the substance in a new way. So, the question is, did the first historian to write about it have information about this? And often the first did because they could interview people who were there, at least remember the substance of the speech, because speeches were considered historical events. But not always did they have access to it.

So, it depends on the historian. It depends on the particular circumstances. Debelius, an early 20th-century Acts scholar, argued that historians rhetorically composed speeches.

And that's true depending on how you define the word composed. It doesn't mean that they didn't use sources when they had sources available. Even Livy, who's again not the most careful of ancient historians, follows the basic substance of Polybius'

speeches where he has them available in Polybius and where the material is excellent and we can check both.

So, the truth is probably somewhere in between those who say, you know, speeches were preserved very accurately and speeches were just made up. Sometimes notes were taken. The ideal was to get the gist right when that was available.

Also, when you were filling in you'd use prosopopoeia when available, trying to use what you knew of the speechmaker's style and proper speech-making technique. You would work for historical verisimilitude. You'd get it as close as possible.

So, authenticity, keep in mind, that ancient historiography is not the same genre as modern historiography. So, if we're judging it by the standards of its own genre and not by some standards that are artificially imposed on it, then authenticity means something different than the way a modern historian might do it. Well, what's the case in the book of Acts? Well, probably Luke still is the same historian as he was when he wrote the Gospel of Luke.

If you compare Jesus' sayings in Luke, oh we have the same sources that we have in the other Gospels. I mean, especially when he's using the same sources. He does have some additional ones.

They have some that he doesn't and so on. But so much of it, Luke has authentic sources and where we can compare them. You know, he may clean up Mark's grammar, but it's the same saying and so on.

Also, with regard to the speeches in Acts, Luke should have had access to at least the substance of many of these speeches. I mean, Peter's speech on the Day of Pentecost would have been a big deal. People would have remembered the kind of thing that he talked about.

Maybe not the details, but certainly the kind of thing that he talked about. And the same on many of the other occasions and certainly the ones where he was present. Now, some of these we can argue, okay, well this is the kind of thing that they spoke.

That would be within the genre of ancient historiography. If you don't know all that Peter spoke on an occasion, but you know that this is what the Jerusalem Apostles spoke about, you could use that kind of material in a speech. But the speeches themselves were considered historical events worthy of memory and there would be reason to think that much of this would have been preserved.

Rhetorical historians liked to elaborate, like Josephus does, but many of these elite historians elaborated. But look at the speeches in Acts. Are they elaborated? Are they lengthy? What we have in Acts are speech summaries.

These are very shortened speeches. Even Acts 2, I mean, you think the speech may be long, but it doesn't take very long to read the entire speech. In chapter 2 and verse 40, Luke says, and with many other words, Peter exhorted them.

So, it's a speech summary. Luke isn't out to show off his rhetoric. Luke is out to give you what he has.

He does edit to bring out consistent themes, but as C.H. Dodd pointed out a long time ago, there also probably were some fairly consistent themes, things that the Apostles often preached about. The kind of apostolic message that we have elsewhere in the New Testament, we have good reason to believe that that was at the heart of apostolic preaching, especially where we have consistency throughout much of early Christianity. So, we will talk more about this afterward, but just to say there was a range of reliability in speeches in ancient historians.

But if we're going to compare Luke with that, even on basic historiographic grounds, we have reason to respect Luke's speech writing more than we have reason to respect that of many of the other ancient historians.

This is Dr. Craig Keener in his teaching on the book of Acts. This is session number 3, Luke's Historiography.