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The Mission Bible Commentary: The Gospel According to Luke and the Acts of the Apostles (The Mission Commentary of the Bible)

Paul Bruns

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The main purpose of this set of mission focused Commentaries is to fill a large gap. At least to my limited knowledge, a set of Bible Commentaries that has this same mission focus does not exist. It may be that I am uninformed since I served the Church as a foreign missionary in Nigeria my entire career from 1964-1997; and I had very little contact with developments in the field of Biblical studies during that period of time. Yet, this gap surprises me, since the entire Bible reveals, in many beautiful and carefully planned details, how God's mission-heart has always been busy carrying out his gracious mission-plan to lost mankind. I have, therefore, attempted to describe in my Commentaries some aspect of God's mission-plan in every verse of the New Testament, beginning with the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles. All of Scripture reveals the mission-heart of God and his mission-plan. God is love (1 Jn 4:16), and therefore, he has a most gracious mission-heart. And mankind is the crown of his creation and the main object of his love; therefore, he has always longed to live together with all human beings in perfect relationships in a perfect world forever (Ezek 18:32; 1 Tim 2:4). That was and still is his eternal plan. However, he also created mankind with the freedom to choose whether they would return his love or not, since it would not be true love if he forced anyone to love him. After Adam and Eve bore children, the question is: did they tell them and others about God's love for them? The Old Testament gives us only a few clues that they must have done so. In spite of the fact that the early chapters of Genesis record many, many years of human history, we read about only a few people, such as Enoch (Gen 5:24) and Noah (Gen 6:9) who loved and worshipped God—but very few indeed! Then, after many years, God continued to develop his mission-plan by calling Abraham to be the father of a new nation, the nation of Israel, whom he chose to be his special people (Deu 7:7). He graciously gave Abraham faith in himself, and blessed him and his descendants, so that they would be able to be a blessing to all other nations by telling them about God's love for them (Gen 12:1-3). Then, "when the fullness of time had come" (Gal 4:4), God revealed the very heart of his mission-plan by sending his own Son, Jesus to be born into the nation of Israel as the only true God/man, in order to rescue all of lost mankind from sin (Lk 1:31-33). And then, after Jesus' ascension, God began to carry out the final stages of his mission-plan in a new era by beginning to create a new nation of Israel, the Church. He did so by sending his Holy Spirit to empower the mission-hearts of the faithful believers on Pentecost Day (Acts 1:8). Thus, the new Israel includes both a remnant of his chosen people from the old Israel as well as Gentiles from every nation on earth who trust in Jesus as their Lord (Rom 11:25-26). Furthermore, the Holy Spirit then also continued to inspire men to write down his holy Word in the New Testament, so that he can use both the Old and the New testaments to strengthen his Church, in order to prepare them to go and tell the Gospel to the lost people of all nations (Rom 10:17; Gen 12:1-3). And this last part of his mission-plan will not be complete until the Lord Jesus returns on the Last Day. And on that Last Day, God will finally fulfill his original plan by bringing together his new nation of Israel in order to live with them in a perfect new world forever (Rev 21:1-2).

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