



A just weight
and balance

are the
LORD'S:

Thus saith the Lord...

- The book of **Acts** **is the action book of the New Testament,**

and it constitutes therefore one of the most exciting books of the Bible.

- The full name of it is, **"The Acts Of The Apostles,"** but there are **not** many apostles mentioned in it.

- **James, John, Peter, and Paul** are the few who appear in any prominence.

- **Acts** is a book revealing how God **is at work through Christians.**

- There is intense conflict throughout the book, but a conflict met by daring confidence.
- It is a record of conviction exercised in the midst of persecution.

- It is an account of life and spiritual health pouring from a living Christ into a sick society.
- A society that gets sicker by the day.

- **We could never understand the New Testament if**
we did not have
the book of Acts,
 - **For it fills the gap**
that would exist
between the **Gospels**
and the book of **Romans**,
which follows.

- **At the end of the Gospels**
we find a handful of Jews
gathered in Jerusalem
talking about a
kingdom to come
**that would encompass
the whole world.**
- They had been given
orders by Jesus to
“go into all the world”.
(Matthew 28:19-20)
- **A seemingly impossible task.**

- In the book of Romans
we find an apostle
who is not even mentioned
in the Gospels,
 - Who was not
one of the twelve,
- Writing to fellow believer
about going to
the ends of the earth.
 - The book of Acts
tells us
how this happened.

- **The first fourteen verses**
of chapter one
constitute an introduction
to the book of Acts,
 - These verses give us
the key to the book.
 - Here we have revealed
the essential strategy
by which Jesus Christ
proposes to change the world.

- I strongly suspect that most Christians suffer from a terrible inferiority complex when we confront the world around us.
- We have bought the idea of many, that the church is quite irrelevant, a not at all important segment of society.
- That view is absolutely false.

- The church is the most important body in the world today.
- And every day the Lord added to their group those who were being saved.
(Acts 2:47)
- There are believers and Christians.
 - Believers are not Christians.
 - Only Christians are Christians.
 - We will see that point develop throughout the book of Acts.

- Luke gives us the great strategy by which the Lord works among mankind.

- He says,
"In the first book,
I have dealt with all that
Jesus began
to do and teach..."

- The Gospel of Luke
is the record of
the incarnation of
the Son of God.

- In John's word the Word became flesh, who came and dwelt among us, (John 1:14).

- Jesus, the man,
came to begin something,

He had a mission

"to do and to teach,"

- And the record of that
beginning

is in the Gospels of

Matthew, Mark, Luke, John.

- **The book of Acts** is **the continuation** of what Jesus began to do.
- In a very real sense, **Acts** is the **continuing acts of Jesus.**

- It is an account of what Jesus continues to do and to teach.
- In the Gospels he did it in his physical body of flesh.
 - In the book of Acts he is doing it through Christian men and women.
 - Thus, whether in the Gospels or in Acts, incarnation is the secret strategy by which God changes the world.

- The book of Acts therefore is an unfinished book.
- It is still being written.
- The book abruptly closes with an account of Paul in the city of Rome, living in his own hired house.

- **It just ends there**
as though you might
turn over the next page
and begin the next adventure.
- **Acts is Volume 1,**
and we are writing
Volume 21 now.
- **It may well be**
the last volume
in the series.

- **The key ingredients** of this strategy of incarnation are set before us in this introduction.

- That is what **any good introduction is for**, to tell us what the book is all about.

- **To them**
[to the apostles]
he presented himself alive
after his passion
by many proofs,
appearing to them
during forty days,
and speaking of
the kingdom of God...
(Acts 1:3-4)

- Luke

stresses for us

the great and central fact
of Christian faith:

- Jesus alive!
- He has risen
from the dead.

- It is the basis of our “hope”.

- 1 Corinthians 15:19

If our hope in Christ
is good for this life only
and no more,

- then we deserve more
pity than anyone else in
all the world. (GNB)

- Acts 1:3

“many infallible proofs”

- The Greek word for

"proof"

{G_5039}

is a word that includes
the idea of being convincing

- “Infallible proofs”

as the King James Version
has it.

- Luke gives us three categories of these proofs.
- He does not give us the detail which you will find in other places,
- But he lists the three categories of proof that Jesus Christ was and is alive.

- Over the centuries we have accounts of the enemies of Christ telling us that the appearances of Jesus were really nothing but hallucinations,

- But, says Luke, let me show you

the three categories of proof that he was risen:

- # 1 he appeared to them
”during forty days”.

(Acts 1:3)

- The word here is one from which we get our word, ophthalmia,
{G_3700}
i.e., the word for the eye,
or literally,
the eyeball.

- They saw him again and again, not merely once, but many times during this period.
- Each time he looked exactly the same.
 - It is hard for an hallucination to accomplish that.

- Then, second, he spoke to them:
"speaking of the kingdom of God."
- Luke says, we even remember
his subject matter.
 - We saw him
and
heard him,
 - Confirming to us that this
was no fantasy,
no hallucination.

- Finally, third,
the ultimate proof was,
"Come and dine".
(John 21:13)
- "He ate with us,"
says Luke,
and those who were there
saw him eat.
- It is surely hard
to get an hallucination
to eat!

- This marvelous fact of the resurrection of Jesus is the bedrock upon which all Christian faith ultimately rests.
- Anytime you are troubled with doubts, or are under attack for your faith, come right back to this fundamental fact.

- The Apostle Paul says to the enemies of Christianity,
"If you want to destroy our faith then disprove this fact.
- It all rests on this.
- **If Christ be not risen, then our faith is in vain,**
(1 Corinthians 15:17).

- Throughout the centuries many attempts have been made to disprove the resurrection of Jesus, but none has ever been successful.
- In fact, oftentimes the ones attempting this have themselves becomes convinced by the evidence and have become Christians.
- It is fact Number 1 upon which the strategy of incarnation rests.

- **Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven.**
- **And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in his own language.**
 - **And they were amazed and wondered, saying, "Are not all these who are speaking Galilaeans?"**

- **(Acts 2:5-13 RSV)**

- **And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language?**
- **.... we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God."**
- **And all were amazed and wondered, saying to one another,**
 - **"What does this mean?"**
 - **But others mocking said, "They are filled with new wine."**
(Acts 2:5-13 RSV)

- Here we have two words that indicate puzzlement: (Acts 2:7)
 - They wondered, and they were amazed.
- Those are suggestive words.
 - "Wondered" means they sought for a solution.
- They began to ask themselves, what is behind all this.
- They began to think through, why does this occur?

- To
“wondered”
means literally,
“various thoughts
running through their minds.”

- That in turn gave way
to two expressions
that are recorded
which are very
interesting to note.

- They indicate the two divisions that always occur when the human mind is confronted with the new thing it reacts in one of two ways.

- **# 1** They said to one another, **"What does this mean?"**
- What is the **purpose** of it?
 - That represents the **group of open minds** that are always ready to investigate further before coming to a conclusion.

- **# 2** There was another group who immediately dismissed the phenomenon with the infantile reaction of mockery, ridicule.
- They looked at the disciples and said, **"Yes, they're drunk! That explains it. They've been getting into the new wine."**
 - Thus they dismissed it with ridicule.

- All this sets the stage
for Peter's explanation,
and, in the next few verses,
we have a life changing message
delivered by the apostle
on this occasion.
- Some will chose salvation.
- Others will choose damnation.
 - The choice is theirs.

**But Peter, standing with the eleven,
lifted up his voice and addressed
them,**

**"Men of Judea and all who dwell in
Jerusalem, let this be known to
you, and give ear to my words.**

**For these men are not drunk,
as you suppose, since it is only
the third hour of the day;
but this is what was spoken
by the prophet Joel:"**

(Acts 2:14-16 RSV)

- Acts 2:16

But this is that
which was spoken
by the prophet Joel;

- (Written about 800 years previously.)

- "I will pour out
my Spirit
upon all flesh."

- Gentiles as well as Jew.

- Up to this point it had been **confined to the Jewish nation.**
- Jesus had said more than once, **"I have come only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."**
(Matthew 10:6, 15:24).
- **But he had also said,**
"Other sheep have I
which are not of this fold;
these also I must bring
that there may be one flock."
(John 10:16).

- Now Peter announces that the time has come when God would pour out his Spirit upon all flesh, Jews and Gentiles alike.
 - But let us not get ahead of ourselves.
- There is much confusion regarding this prediction by Joel.

- **Acts 2:38**

Then Peter said unto them,

- Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ
 - for the remission of sins,
 - and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

- **Acts 2:39**

For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, [even] as many as the Lord our God shall call.

- In this reading there are two words that are critically important:

- V. 38

“gift”

- V. 39

“promise” .

- The “gift” was the Holy Spirit
 - But it was limitedas a study of the scriptures will prove.
 - The “promise” was the promise given to Abraham in Genesis 12.
- Combining them as one and the same leads to confusion and a false hope.
- Many people today are led into error by “twisting the scriptures” (2 Peter 3:16).

- **What was the significance of the outpouring?**

- It was **proclaimed** by John the Baptizer...

- **Matthew 3:11**

I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear:

- **he shall baptize you with**
- **the Holy Ghost, and with fire:**

- That outpouring would separate the wheat from chaff,
- Saving the one
- Burning the other.
- Matthew 3:12

Whose fan is in his hand,
and he will thoroughly purge his floor,
and gather his wheat into the garner;
but he will burn up the chaff
with unquenchable fire.

- It was **foretold** by Jesus...
 - Jesus told His apostles this would happen.
(Acts 1:4-5)
 - **It would empower them** to be His witnesses.
(Acts 1:8)
- **But when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, you will be filled with power, and you will be witnesses for me in Jerusalem, in all of Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.**

- It was explained by peter...
 - The events were prophesied by Joel
(Acts 2:16; Joel 2:28-32)
 - In a time of judgment.
 - But also a time of salvation
(Acts 2:19-21; Matthew 3:11-12)

- It was mentioned by Paul...

- 1Corinthians 6:9

Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,

- 6:10 **Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.**
- 6:11 **And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.**

- **With many other words he gave his witness and he urged them,**
- **"Save yourselves from this crooked generation."**
- **So they accepted his word and were baptized and on that day there were added to them about three thousand people.**
 - This passage shows with crystal clarity **the effect of the Cross.**
- When men realized just what they had done in crucifying Jesus their hearts were broken.
 - **"I," said Jesus,**
"when I am lifted up from the earth will draw all men to myself"
(John 12:32).

- What does **repentance** mean?
 - The word originally meant **”an afterthought”**.
 - **A second thought shows that the first thought was wrong**;
 - So the word came to mean **a change of mind**.
 - But, if one is honest, **a change of mind demands a change of action**.

- Repentance must involve both change of mind and change of action.
- A man may change his mind and come to see that his actions were wrong but be so much in love with his old ways that he will not change them.
- A man may change his ways but his mind remains the same,
 - Changing only because of fear or circumstances.

- **True repentance**
involves
a change of mind
and
a change of action.
- Which will result in
salvation
or
damnation.

- When repentance comes something happens to the past.

- There is God's forgiveness for what lies behind.

- Let it be quite clear that the consequences of sins are not wiped out.

- Not even God can do that.

- Forgiveness
does not abolish the consequences
of what we have done
but it puts us right with God.

- Micah 7:19

He will again have compassion on us;

- **He will vanquish our iniquities.**
- You will cast all our sins
into the depths of the sea.

- **We close with two thoughts:**

- **# 1 Acts 2:41**

Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

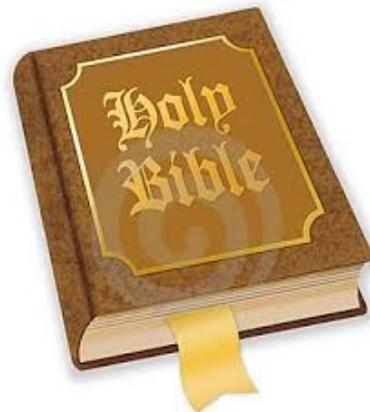
- **# 2 Acts 2:47**

And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

**The doors of the church
are open.**

**The Spirit and the Bride
Say
“Come”.**

Revelation 22:17



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