

ACTS

Message One

**The Intrinsic Significance of the Book of Acts
and
Witnesses of the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus**

Scripture Reading: Acts 1:8-11, 14, 22;
2:24, 32-33; 4:33; 10:39-40; 26:16

I. We need to see the intrinsic significance of the book of Acts:

- A. The Acts of the Apostles is a book without an ending; this book is still being continued, because Acts is a record of the work of God, who is always advancing and never stops—28:30-31.
- B. In the book of Acts the disciples are the continuation of the Lord Jesus—1:14:
 1. The Lord brought the disciples with Him into His death and resurrection; this means that they passed through the same processes through which the Lord Jesus passed—Rom. 6:6; Eph. 2:5-6.
 2. By passing through the Lord's death and resurrection, His disciples became His continuation; this continuation is unveiled in the book of Acts—1:14.
 3. By replacing the disciples with Himself, the Lord Jesus made them His reproduction; therefore, they became His increase, development, enlargement, and continuation—the church as His extension in time and His spread in space—John 12:24; 14:19; Gal. 2:20; Acts 8:1; 9:31.
- C. The book of Acts is a record of a group of people who are resurrected and ascended with Christ, having Christ within them as their life and Christ upon them as their power and authority; they live by the Triune God within them as their life, and they act by the Triune God upon them as their strength, power, and authority—John 20:22; Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8.
- D. Acts is a record of a group of people who act and work in the Body, through the Body, and for the Body—v. 14; 13:1-4a:
 1. Acts reveals the move and activity of the Body, not of individual actions unrelated to the Body—8:1-17.
 2. Acts contains a beautiful picture of the one accord in the activities and work of the believers who moved in the Body, through the Body, and for the Body—2:44-47; 4:24, 32; 13:1-4a; 16:1-5.

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- E. The book of Acts shows us the divine stream, the unique flow; there is only one stream, one current, of the flow—Gen. 2:8-12; Rev. 22:1-2; Acts 2:33.
- F. In Acts there is a group of people who know the meaning of resurrection and ascension, who live by Christ as their life, who act by Christ as their power and authority, and who realize that they are the Body and act in the Body and for the Body in the one divine stream; this is the intrinsic significance of the book of Acts—John 20:22; Acts 1:8-11, 14; 2:1-4, 24, 32-33; 4:33.

II. The apostles and disciples were witnesses of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus—1:8, 22; 2:24, 32; 4:2, 33; 10:39-40; 17:3, 18; 23:11; 24:14-15:

- A. To carry out His heavenly ministry for the propagating of Himself so that the kingdom of God might be established for the building up of the churches as His fullness, the ascended Christ uses not a group of preachers trained by man's teaching to do a preaching work but a body of His witnesses, who bear a living testimony of the incarnated, crucified, resurrected, and ascended Christ—1:8:
 - 1. The apostles and disciples were the Lord's witnesses (lit., martyrs); all the apostles and disciples in Acts were His martyrs, His witnesses, of this kind—v. 8; 2:40; 10:39-41; 22:20; 23:11; 26:16.
 - 2. In His ascension the Lord carries out His ministry in the heavens through these martyrs, in His resurrection life and with His ascension power and authority, as recorded in Acts, to spread Himself as the development of the kingdom of God from Jerusalem unto the uttermost part of the earth—1:8.
 - 3. Testifying requires experiences of seeing and enjoyment concerning the Lord or spiritual things; it is different from merely teaching—2:40.
 - 4. Paul was appointed as a minister and a witness—26:16:
 - a. A minister is for the ministry; a witness, for the testimony.
 - b. The ministry is related mainly to the work, to what a minister does; a testimony is related to the person, to what a witness is.

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5. Luke's narration, as an account of the Lord's move on earth, stresses not doctrine but the testimony of the Lord's witnesses; hence, in his narration there are no details related to doctrine; rather, there are details regarding the things that happened to His witnesses, in order to portray the testimonies of their lives—27:21; 1:8.
- B. The Lord's resurrection was the focus of the apostles' testimony—1:22; 2:32; 3:13, 15, 26; 10:39-40; 13:33; 17:3, 18:
 1. The resurrection of the Lord Jesus points back to His incarnation, humanity, human living on the earth, and God-ordained death, and His resurrection points forward to His ascension, ministry and administration in heaven, and coming back—2:23; 1:9-11.
 2. The Lord is both God and resurrection, possessing the indestructible life—John 1:1; 11:25; Heb. 7:16; Acts 2:24:
 - a. Since He is such an ever-living One, death is not able to hold Him.
 - b. He delivered Himself to death, but death had no way to detain Him; rather, death was defeated by Him, and He rose up from it—Rev. 1:18.
 3. The apostles were witnesses of the resurrected Christ, not only in word but also by their life and action, especially bearing witness of His resurrection; bearing witness of Christ's resurrection is the crucial point, the focus, in carrying out God's New Testament economy—Acts 2:32; 4:33; 10:39-40; 17:3.
 4. God glorified His Servant Jesus through His resurrection and in His ascension—Luke 24:46; Eph. 1:20-22; Phil. 2:9-11; Acts 3:13, 15, 26; 4:10, 33; 5:30-31.
 5. Resurrection was a birth to the man Jesus—13:33:
 - a. He was begotten by God in His resurrection to be the firstborn Son of God among many brothers—Rom. 1:3-4; 8:29.
 - b. He was the only begotten Son of God from eternity; after incarnation, through resurrection He was begotten by God in His humanity to be God's firstborn Son—John 1:18; 3:16; Rom. 8:29; Heb. 1:6.
 6. We need to know the power of Christ's resurrection—Eph. 1:19; Phil. 3:10:

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- a. In His resurrection the Lord Jesus broke through all barriers, even the greatest barrier of all—death—Rom. 6:9; Rev. 1:18; Eph. 1:19-20:
 - 1) Death is the greatest limitation, but resurrection has conquered death; thus, resurrection is the greatest power of all—Acts 2:24.
 - 2) In His resurrection the Lord Jesus transcended time and space—Eph. 1:19-21.
- b. The power of resurrection, and even resurrection itself, is now in the life-giving Spirit, the Spirit of Jesus Christ—1 Cor. 15:45b; Phil. 1:19.
- c. Ephesians 1:19-20 speaks of the surpassing greatness of God's power toward us who believe; this is the resurrection power manifested by God in Christ through His raising Him from the dead.
- d. The church is the place where God demonstrates the operation of the might of His strength, according to the power which He caused to operate in Christ—vv. 19-20:
 - 1) The church is the same as the resurrected Christ not only in nature but also in power—vv. 19-22; 3:16; 6:10.
 - 2) The church is the depository and storehouse of the power of Christ's resurrection—Phil. 3:10.
 - 3) The church is the same as Christ in resurrection and should be as unlimited and victorious as Christ is—Eph. 1:19-23.
 - 4) If two or three see this revelation, touch the power of Christ's resurrection, and pray in one accord, they will shake the ends of the earth—Matt. 18:18-20; Acts 1:14; 4:23-33.