

## THE BOOK OF ACTS & YOU: PART 2 – “THIS SAME JESUS”

**AS** we saw in Part One of this series, the thrust of the Book of Acts is that the real and true people of God stepped up to the challenge before them. This was spearheaded by the chosen apostles of Jesus Christ.

I will not be giving a verse-by-verse coverage of this Book, since an abundance of material is on the Web and in commentaries. One recommended link is the Blue Letter Bible that has many commentaries that can be consulted.

What can be done of value on this site is for me to give the highlights of significant events and ways of doing things that can help us in this critical period of Church history.

In Chapter One of this book we see that the same writer that wrote the Book/Gospel of Luke is doing the writing here. In fact, later we will see him join Paul on an evangelistic journey.

Luke tells us that the disciples of Jesus still did not understand that Christ had not come to establish His physical kingdom there and then. He tells them that they must wait (KJV = tarry) in Jerusalem until they receive the power to be able to go forth with the Message from God.

How does that relate to our days? It has bearing because we find that these early disciples of Jesus, even though they had been authorized to baptize others, before being officially "ordained" – had not yet received the Holy Spirit that would enable them to go forth boldly with the Word.

In fact, if we look at the life of the disciples before Pentecost, we find them competing with each other for positions – Matthew 20:20-28. They did not understand what it is to be a true servant of Jesus Christ. Compare that attitude they had then with the later attitude of brotherly concern they had after Pentecost – Acts 2:42-47; 11:28-30.

We find them behind closed doors – HIDING – "for fear of the Jews" – John 20:19. Compare that with the BOLDNESS they exemplified after Pentecost.

Lesson for us today: Look around you. How much boldness in the faith do you see among the people of God? Are some afraid to say anything at all, if someone asks them for the reason of the hope that they hold?  
(See 1 Peter 3:15.)

During the time of apostasy in the first century we see a leader casting out the brethren – his name was Diotrephes (3 John 9). We can coin a verb from this. These brethren were "diotrephised" – excluded, disenfranchised. At least they were not put to death at this time, as shown in John 16:2, where it was prophesied that some would be put out of the assemblies and killed.

There was no hiding among these early brethren. There was no "flying under the radar" to protect themselves from undue persecution. There was no playing cute, no playing footsies or sleeping with the enemy to be able to pass censorship.

In fact, they were aware of Christ's words: "The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day. And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it. For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away? For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels." (Luke 9:22-26.)

Before Pentecost, we see Peter denying Jesus Christ. After Pentecost we observe Peter standing up boldly for his Lord and Master.

There is a generation who has been taught to remain silent. Collectively, individuals of that generation, called of God, have been taught that apostate leaders sit in the Seat of Moses and must be kow-towed to, even in spiritual matters. They have been taught to deny Christ!

But, thank God, they are beginning to wake up. For a while, they all slumbered and slept (Matt. 25). Even though this passage applies to the end-time generation, and an end-time era of God's Church, nevertheless it has application to every generation, since spiritual slumber has affected the Church from the beginning, except when some true revival caused an awakening.

We cannot be focused on Church eras so much that we cannot apply the messages Jesus Christ has for ALL the churches – Revelation 3:22.

You do not find that condition in the Book of Acts. You find disciples being respectful to the powers that be, yet carrying on the Work Christ had given them, and, when persecuted, taking the consequences cheerfully, since this was prophesied – this was "part of the program."

An example of the "Young Church in Action" in our day is the persecuted and faithful members of the Church in Angola. "The Young Church in Action" was the title of J. B. Phillips' first translation of the Book of Acts. See [Book of Acts - Part 1](#) on The Bible Fund website. Disenfranchised from the community of believers who accepted another

gospel, another spirit and another Jesus, they have held on to the truth and are fearlessly proclaiming it. They have NOT started "another church" – but are continuing with the same Church into which the Holy Spirit placed them (1 Cor. 12:18; 27-28).

In fact, the powerful words we read in Acts 1:11 – "**THIS SAME JESUS**" – the same Jesus that taught the early disciples and the same true Jesus that they watched go up into heaven has been "on the job" day and night as the Church's Intercessor, interceding for all the members all over the world, that they would step up to the plate and fulfill the Great Commission. That Commission at first was given to the twelve apostles, who fulfilled the mandate to pass it on to others, and who, in turn, started to fulfill their individual role in that Commission, as we see in Chapter 8 of this fascinating book. With some, this same Jesus remains knocking at the door, waiting for them to invite Him in (Rev. 3:20).

"This same Jesus" – the True Jesus – is still very actively leading and directing His Church.

Stay tuned for future postings which will go into the dynamic highlights of the Book of Acts – a book not meant to be taken as "just history" – but as a living example for the Church at this critical time in history.

–Joãozinho de Londrina

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