

Acts

Introduction

In the Bible, the Gospels come before the Book of Acts. The world however is more interested in our Acts than in our Gospel. It was the acts of Jesus that gave Him credibility. People watched Him and how He acted. They watched Him come. They watched Him go. They watched Him care. They watched His kindness. They watched Him cry outside the tomb of Lazarus. They watched Him call the dead to life. They watched Him stand as a sheep before His shearers. They watched Him die, and many stayed around long enough to watch Him rise from the dead: next to the cross, His greatest act.

How we live is a New Testament that demonstrates to the world that we live by faith and grace. While the world cannot actually see our faith, it can see our grace. This faith and grace was demonstrated in the Book of Acts by men like Stephen, who would rather die under a bombardment of stones, than to throw one. He died with blessing on his lips not cursing.

In the Book of Acts, we find faith and grace demonstrated by acts of courage, acts of sacrifice, and acts of charity. The facts of Christ are rooted in the acts of Christ. The Bible says “*He went about doing good*” Acts 10:38. The Book of Acts is more than a history of the church. It is the continuation of the story of God at work. It is His story continued in the lives of men and women who not only believed in Him, but allowed Him to be the central figure in every stage of their life.

When the curtain comes up in Act One. Christ is in the upper room teaching and showing His disciples the “*many infallible proofs*” that would be necessary if they hoped to act properly in this world while on their way to the next. In Act One the church is given authority. It was this authority that gave her her boldness. In Act Two the church learns the importance of integrity. Without it, she would be merely a bunch of two-bit actors (or worse, hypocrites, which is the Greek word of actors) pretending on stage. Act Three begins and ends with freedom and is all about liberty. From the liberation of Saul to the angel opening the door through which Peter walked free, God demonstrated that nothing can contain the holy tide begun at Pentecost. Act Four shows missionary activity, Act Five community, and Act Six captivity. The final act, Act Seven, never really ends, but invites us up on stage to continue the longest running performance and to act in such a way that shows the world and angels that Jesus Christ is Lord and the only light and star in our story. It could be said the Jesus described the role of each disciple long before the Book of Acts was published. He gave His followers good direction, telling them how to act and behave in this world: “that men might see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”

Our life is simply the record of our actions and reactions. As we continue as a cast member in the continuing story of Jesus Christ, nothing is more important than how we act.

