

THE FLORAL HEIGHTS INFORMER

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The Book of Acts

The prophets of old had foretold of the last days when the Christ would come into the world, establish the Lord's kingdom, and reign as king. Matthew seemed to be obsessed with the idea of the kingdom of God and its beginnings in the book that bears his name. Though Christ came into the world, as was prophesied, his kingdom had not been established at the point of his death, burial, resurrection, and ascension into heaven (see Acts 1:6ff). The book of Acts fills in all the details regarding God's promise to establish his kingdom and forgive man of their sins.

History revealed God's promises to mankind through his beloved Son Jesus Christ. The proof of Jesus being the Christ is overwhelming. When the gospel of Christ was preached some believed some disbelieved. Those who believed were added to the kingdom of God and through time God's kingdom grew larger and larger. Today the same kingdom and gospel continues to be presented to man and we are all left with the decision to accept or reject the Christ. Jesus summarized the contents of the book of Acts when he said, "*Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world*" (Matthew 28:19-20). This article shall thereby examine the main object of Acts which is to illustrate that after the kingdom was established and the gospel preached to the world there were varying responses.

Proving that Jesus is the Christ

One universal fact among religious Jews was that they looked, searched, and longed for the day when Christ would come into the world and fulfill God's promises. The Apostle Paul, while giving a defense to king Agrippa, said that he was being accused of misdeeds by his enemies because of "*the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers; unto which promise our twelve tribes, earnestly serving God night and day, hope to attain*" (Acts 26:6-7). Though the Jews served God night and day in hopes of seeing the Christ they amazingly did not recognize him once he came into the world. Jesus did not meet their expectations of a king that would free them from Roman oppression (see Matt. 11:16-17; 13:57-58). Jesus astounded and offended them by identifying their sin and demanding repentance (Matt. 15:12; Jn. 7:7). These Jews knew that accepting Jesus as the Christ meant

Local News:

Welcome to all our visitors:

We pray that you will be edified by our service and that you will ask questions if things are not as you are accustomed to seeing. Please do come back at your every opportunity!

Announcements:

Baptism!

We joyously report that **Madeline Cronin** was baptized into Christ this past Sunday evening. May the Lord bless her life and service in the kingdom of God from this point forward.

Nell Hulsey received good news regarding the MRI test she had last week. Nothing of concern showed up in the test and for this we are thankful to God. Nell continues to struggle from day to day with dizzy spells and overall weakness though. Continue to keep her in your daily prayers.

Continue to pray for our shut-ins:

Stella Davidson
696-1030 (Home)

Calvin York
692-0489 (Home).

giving up their worldly ambitions and they had no desire to do so (Jn. 12:37ff). Jesus (Matt. 21:42) and Peter (Acts 4:11) quote from Psalms 118:22 to illustrate that God had always known that many would reject the Christ.

All who reject Christ must know that they reject the most glaring facts revealed by the prophets and fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Every prophecy ever written about the Messiah in the Old Testament is fulfilled in the man Jesus Christ (see Acts 3:24ff; 13:29-33; 26:21-33). Not only did the birth, life, death, and burial prove Jesus to be the Christ by there were many witnesses of his resurrection from the dead (see Acts 2:31-32; I Cor. 15:6). To reject Jesus was and is to reject the obvious!

Consider these varying responses to the Gospel Message

When the gospel was preached there were varying responses. Some mocked (Acts 2:12-13; 17:32) while others showed a genuine interest (Acts 2:12-13; 13:42-43) in the message of salvation. The gospel caused some to be sore troubled (Acts 4:2) and jealous (Acts 13:45). The consequences of the gospel message upon the messenger often had horrid results too. Stephen was murdered because of his preaching (Acts 7:54-56). Paul was imprisoned for five years (two years in Caesarea and three years while traveling to Rome and in Rome as a prisoner). One thing that rises out of the depths of rejection, jealousy, murder, and people being sore troubled over the gospel message was that no matter how angry the gospel caused some it's progress would in no way be impeded (see Acts 26:14).

Many heard the gospel and did "**believe**" (see Acts 4:4; 8:12; 13:48; 17:34; 18:8). When the Philippian jailor asked Paul what he needed to do to be saved Paul answered saying, "**Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house**" (Acts 16:31) and so he did. What is fascinating about the book of Acts is that it sets out early to document the requirements of salvation. Acts 2:38 stands as a thesis statement of the book in relation to salvation. Men heard, believed, confessed, repented, were baptized, and encouraged to live faithfully all the days of their lives. Each case of conversion, after the initial sermon at Pentecost in Acts 2, must take into account the words of Peter. The book of Acts proves that "believing" is more than just making a mental decision to accept that Jesus is the Christ. Believing involves the hearing, confessing, repenting, being baptized, and purposing to live faithfully. The Apostle Paul, while preaching to those of Antioch, **connects** "**belief**" with "**justification and the forgiveness of sins**" (see Acts 13:38-39). To believe is thereby to be justified of sins. Man is justified, According to Peter's sermon, by being baptized into Christ.

The book of Acts is a clear and concise work that exposes the reality of Christ, the existence of the kingdom of God (the church), and detailed instructions regarding what one must do to be added to this kingdom. Some accepted the gospel message and the terms of admission into the kingdom of God but many did not. Though majority of people throughout history, including today, reject Christ his kingdom continues to grow. How will you respond to the gospel message of salvation?

My Responsibility to Other Christians

Introduction:

Christians have a unique relationship that those of the world do not share nor understand. We are **united** together as one in the gospel of Jesus Christ (Jn. 17:20-21; Rom. 15:5-6; Phil. 2:2). We are identified as “**brothers and sisters**” in Christ (I Cor. 1:1; II Cor. 1:1; I Thess. 3:2). We, together, are a royal **priesthood** (I Pet. 2:9) and fellow **saints** in Christ Jesus (I Cor. 1:2). We are **sanctified** through the precious blood of Jesus Christ. Seeing that we have all spiritual things in common we ought to care for each other. This lesson shall examine the Christian’s relationship to other Christians.

I. Christians ought to **LOVE** one another (Rom. 12:10; I Thess. 3:11-12; 4:9; I Pet. 1:22; I Jn. 3:11; 4:7-12)

- A. Forbearing one another in love (Eph. 4:2)
- B. Tender hearted toward one another (Eph. 4:32).
 - 1. Hatred toward each other (Titus 3:3)?
 - 2. Devouring each other (Gal. 5:13-15)
 - 3. Gossiping about each other (James 4:11-12; 5:9)
 - 4. Seeking revenge (I Pet. 3:8-9).
- C. Forgive each other (Col. 3:12-15).
- D. Pray for each other (James 5:16).
- E. Be at peace among yourselves (I Thess. 5:13).

II. Christians should **SERVE** one another (Gal. 5:13):

- A. Christians are to be in subjection to each other (Eph. 5:21).
- B. Service and subjection to others takes humility (Phil. 2:1-3).

III. Christians are to **ADMONISH** one another (Col. 3:16):

- A. Christians are to “exhort” one another (I Thess. 5:11; Heb. 3:12-13).
- B. Edify one another (Eph. 4:11-16).
- C. Bear each other’s burdens (Gal. 6:2).

Conclusion:

The Bible paints a clear picture of what the Christians relationship is to be. Christians are to love, serve, and admonish each other in a spirit of love. Sometimes Christians get too lackadaisical in their service to God and a loving brother must reorient a brother or sister in truth by a gentle admonition. Other times some brethren may identify themselves with extremist who bind things in God’s word that God does not bind and these too need to be lovingly put back on the right path. Above all things the Christian is to exercise love and service to fellow Christians.