

## Preface

While here on earth, Jesus Christ handpicked and for about three years personally taught His little band of disciples. Then He was executed on a cruel cross, buried in a borrowed tomb and raised on the third day as He had predicted. Judas, one of His number, had betrayed Him. The rest, eleven unlearned yet committed men, suffered defeat at His death. But then defeat soon turned to jubilant hope at His resurrection. They had witnessed His death, but then knew without doubt that He lived again in bodily form. They saw Him. They touched Him. They walked and talked with Him. They even shared a common meal with Him. There was no doubt in their minds that He was the Divine Son of God, whom He had claimed to be. When defeat turned to hope, they found reason to believe anew all of the claims and promises made by their teacher, the One who claimed to be Truth and Life, the only Way to the Father in Heaven.

Wholly committed to their Lord's cause, they waited in Jerusalem for His Holy Spirit who had been promised to guide them into all truth. With His help, they established the very first church of Jesus Christ and boldly preached to the Jews that the long awaited Messiah had come. Though it caused stiff persecution, many believed and the church grew. In answer to the opposition, the church scattered, but continued to preach salvation in Jesus Christ wherever they went. They preached to kings and the wealthy as well as to beggars and the poor, always confirming the message they brought with miraculous healing and deeds, which proved their message originated with the God of Heaven. Even some of those who at first opposed and persecuted them were converted and joined with them in furthering their work. Saul, later known as the apostle Paul, was one of those, and much of the history in the book of Acts is focused on him, his

missionary trips, his imprisonment for the Lord, and his tireless efforts to save the lost under any and all circumstances.

This book contains 263 devotional messages that walk the reader through the entire book of Acts of the Apostles, a literary journey in the first century steps of the apostles of Jesus Christ. It was written with four purposes in mind:

1. To lead non-Christians to consider and believe the testimony of early Christians – that Jesus Christ is the Savior of all mankind and, though dead, He lives,
2. To help all, believer and unbeliever alike, appreciate the true nature of the New Testament church, who established and owned her, how she was organized, and what her members did in both worship and everyday life,
3. To set forth the conversions of first century Christians as the Divine example we are to follow today, and
4. To present Bible truth as interesting and practical, easy for all to understand.

To these ends, an effort has been made to avoid complexities, to emphasize the inherent simplicity of the Bible story, and to present the author's thoughts in a conversational, easy-to-read style. A conscious effort has been made to avoid wrangling over questions which are impossible to answer with available information. Controversy for the sake of controversy has been avoided, but no effort has been made to shy from what seem to this student clear statements of truth even though controversy may result.

We have no creed to sell, nor special doctrine to espouse. Our intent is to look at the history of the early church with non-denominational eyes. Our thesis is that all one needs to know about coming to God and worshiping Him is contained in His word, the Bible, and that God spoke to every man, not just to the religious elite. It is our hope that reading through these daily messages will whet your spiritual appetite for more of the same. We hope this experience with the apostles and early Christians will be a

catalyst moving you to greater and deeper excursions into the rich, spiritual truths contained in the pages of God's book.

Perhaps a word or two about the history of these messages is in order. They were first written for a telephone call-in program in the United States. For those not familiar with this method of teaching, each lesson was recorded as a daily Bible message which callers could access by calling a telephone number advertised for that purpose. The continuous nature of the study, one lesson each day through the entire historical record in Acts, created considerable interest motivating callers to call each day and invite their friends to do so as well. Though the messages have been edited for presentation in book form, they are still suitable for use as recorded messages. Or, a single message can be read and considered as part of a daily period of study and devotion.

These messages have often been adapted for use in church bulletins. If you desire to use them in that way, the eBook version is in an easily copied digital format. For permission to republish in any form, send an email to [charlie@comcast.net](mailto:charlie@comcast.net).

Much, if not all, of the dialogue of Bible characters as given in the New American Standard text, has been quoted in these messages. While each message is designed to completely relate its story along with a present day application, using this book as a substitute for reading the Bible's account of the Acts would be a sad mistake. Each lesson quotes dialogue in the passage being considered, but not all of the Bible text is reproduced. Even if it were, there is no substitute for God's word. Read the text of His word first, and then consider the lesson of this book at hand. It is our sincere hope that this writer's feeble efforts will fan your interest in turning to God's Word, not deflect you from it.

Come with us as we seek a clearer understanding and deeper appreciation for the man, Jesus Christ, who lived twenty centuries ago, yet continues to shape our lives by His words. Consider with us the commitment of the early disciples in His cause, and learn from those divinely inspired men how we ought to work and

worship, live and love in the Way defined by the Divine Word.  
We cannot help but be inspired by those earlier disciples who, by their zeal and sacrifice, forged the beginnings of Christianity and sounded forth their message of salvation until it had reshaped the whole known world and was set on its way changing lives down through the pages of time.

May God bless and enrich your study.

Charlie Brackett  
charlie@clarionword.com