

Out of the Shadows

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I. Introduction.

- A. Text: Acts 1:1-14.
- B. Acts is the action book of the New Testament.
- C. There is an intense conflict met by confidence—power is exercised in persecution.
- D. This fills the generation gap between the Gospels and the book of Romans.
- E. The introduction of Acts gives the key to the book.
- F. The church is the most important body in the world—its activity affects the whole world.

II. Background of Acts.

- A. It was written by Luke, a companion of Paul's.
- B. It was written to Theophilus who was probably a Christian.
- C. Luke says that in his Gospel he described what Jesus began to do and teach. By implication, the second book describes what Jesus continues to do and teach.
- D. The strategy of the book of Acts is incarnation—men and women possessed by God.
- E. Acts is an unfinished book.

III. The ingredients of the strategy of incarnation.

- A. The great and central fact of Christian faith is that Jesus is alive—risen from the dead.
 - 1. He appeared by many convincing proofs.
 - 2. Three categories of proof:
 - a. His appearance to the disciples in forty days.
 - b. He spoke to them.
 - c. He ate with them.
- B. The promise of the Father—the baptism of the Holy Spirit.
 - 1. One must operate in the power of the Spirit to be an effective Christian.
 - 2. The Spirit's coming would be reality—the Spirit would live in believers. (Genesis 12)

3. The Old Testament believers were taught indirectly by the Spirit unlike the New Testament believers who have the Spirit indwelling them.
4. The Spirit is the means by which the risen life of Jesus becomes available to us.
5. It is not the church's task to program the work of God—the Father holds it in His own authority.
6. The Spirit brings resurrection power.
 - a. It is not demonstrative or loud, but it is unstoppable.
 - b. It changes lives from within and not from without.
 - c. It focuses on the Lord's work.
7. The promise will not be restricted to Jerusalem—it will involve the whole world.

C. Jesus' departure for the sending of the Spirit.

1. This invisible life of Jesus is manifest to us through the Spirit.
2. Though Jesus is to be removed, His return is certain.
3. When Jesus returns He will reveal the Father's plan for a completely new humanity.

D. Prayer is the one result of the people of God.

Application questions:

1. What does incarnation mean? How can it be a strategy?

2. What is the difference between the work of the Spirit in the Old Testament and New Testament times? How should this impact the church today?

3. Why is the Spirit so central to the speaker's message on the strategy for mission? How have you depended upon the Spirit to witness, or how will you do so more in the future?
