

## ACTS SERIES

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From Acts 1:1-11. THE DEPUTATION.

#1. It was the Almighty Himself who determined to employ men in His work of confronting the human race with revealed truth. The Lord could have appeared immediately, directly and simultaneously to all mankind, in all of our groupings and in every time reference.

#2. But He did not do so. His wisdom established *A DEPUTATION OF PEOPLE* who were and are commissioned to represent the eternal truth to others.

#3. *THIS DEPUTATION UNROLLED THROUGH THE AGES TEACHING A REVEALED MANIFOLD OF THOUGHT, SPEECH AND BEHAVIOR, NOT DEPENDENT UPON TIME AND MATERIALITY.*

#4. The purpose of THE DEPUTATION logically extends to all our relations with others: parents to children, believers to unbelievers, believers to circumstance, church to the world, fathers to sons, mothers to daughters and all others.

#5. THE DEPUTATION was included in all "that Jesus began to do and teach", v.1 and "until the day when He was taken up to heaven, after He had by the Holy Spirit given orders to the apostles whom He had chosen", v.2.

#6. Those "chosen" came with their own personal histories, limitations, range of intelligence, weaknesses, heartaches and strengths. Nonetheless each bore the yoke of THE DEPUTATION!

#7. "To those He also presented Himself (the greatest example of THE DEPUTATION) alive after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of forty days and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God", v.3.

#8. Those of THE DEPUTATION brought ideas into the world, into the minds of others, as they always must do, that reversed all known experiential rules. Death and suffering are not autonomous in the world. Resurrection is part of the future. God is the overarching reality. Men can see, by faith, beyond time, situation, historical conditions and even pain and loss. Underappreciated by the world, they are a blessing in their time to the world. Those of THE DEPUTATION are to be strong, good and steady under all conditions.

From Acts 1:1-11.THE DEPUTATION.  
PART 2.

#9. The people of THE DEPUTATION, the truth is, cannot rely upon, depend upon, stand upon their own personal strength. They will not be able to perform their DEPUTATION standing on their own. Charged with the rules of THE DEPUTATION, such people need a source of strength and enablement that much outclasses the universe of men, circumstance and things. They shall have it.

#10. "Gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, "Which", He said, 'you heard of from Me"', v.4.

#11. In other words, their limitations were to be eclipsed by the power of the Holy Spirit, v.5. Those of THE DEPUTATION are in, well over their heads. They cannot know the full end of the temporal purposes of the Lord. Jesus said to them, "...It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority", v.7, 8.

#12. The "times or epochs", being "fixed" by the Lord and on His "authority", means that in order for those of THE DEPUTATION to bear up under supernatural historical arrangements one must have supernatural help!

#13. The mission of THE DEPUTATION is to teach revealed truth. Only revelation rightly orients people in the temporal order. Apart from the word of God, emotion, experience and human wisdom will be the orientation for men in time. Disaster always follows the ways of the flesh.

"...you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth", v.8.

#14. The apostles served that end; preachers do that, parents do that, churches are to do that. It is very unpopular. Those of THE DEPUTATION stand between two dimensions:

- (1)THE INDEPENDENT world of God,
- (2)THE DEPUTATION,
- (3)THE DEPENDENT world of "times" and "epochs".

That is the structure in which we live and function. The Almighty has instituted this arrangement. We live under it.

#15. Jesus was "lifted up", "out of their sight", v.9. The apostles stood there "gazing intently into the sky" (v.10). "Two men" (v.10) "said , 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky?'"  
Get on with it!

From Acts 1:1-28:16-31. THE DEPUTATION.  
PART 3.

#1. Those of the immediate DEPUTATION were "all with one mind...continually devoting themselves to prayer", 1:14. They knew that everything absolutely rested upon the power of God.

#2. Those of THE DEPUTATION bring their listeners to a confrontation with the way things are (reality) quickly; language differences notwithstanding and without hesitation, 2:1-36.

#3. The language manifold of THE DEPUTATION was opposed by what is now called "state-sponsored terrorism", 4:1-5:42.

#4. Personal circumstances and even personal survival were brought subordinate to the purpose of THE DEPUTATION, 7:1-8:3.

#5. The revealed truth conveyed by representatives of THE DEPUTATION unquestionably altered the understanding of many. Those people were of different backgrounds, world views, cultures and personal perceptions and experience. All those held two things in common:

- (a) They were all guilty of sin, without hope in the world and
- (b) They all recognized the voice of God upon its presentation, 8:1-10:48.

#6. Some, living in the futility of the Gentile universe, heard the gospel and were saved. The church did not emerge in Antioch; it appeared! THE DEPUTATION had done its job, 11:1-30.

#7. Peter was numbered among THE DEPUTATION: Frequently in danger, but protected, 12:1-25.

#8. Those of THE DEPUTATION crossed rivers, oceans, confronted dangerous and contrarian peoples, endured hardships and cruel treatment at the hands of the ungrateful; faced down kings and rank injustice and were personally traumatized, 13:1-28:10.

#9. There is a causal relation running between THE FUNCTION OF THE DEPUTATION and the appearance, in the mind, of faith. Faith in Christ and the gospel does not emerge; it suddenly appears in the human mind and human behavior.

#10. People do not create faith in the Word of God; it is God ("Holy Spirit") who instills belief. According to the Book of Acts, faith is a spontaneous (unpremeditated) response to revealed truth. However, unbelief is a premeditated rejection of that truth. Saul of Tarsus ("Paul"), in the beginning, rejected faith in Christ because of the Resurrection; he did not trust in such impossibilities. "Why is it considered incredible among you

people if God does raise the dead?", 26:8. "So then, I thought to myself that I had to do many things hostile to the name of Jesus of Nazareth", 26:9. His unbelief was premeditated.

#11. Some, in the churches, reject many biblical teachings as relevant today. And that due to premeditated rationalistic objections. Like the Israelites of old, *spontaneous response to revelation* was lost, Numbers 13, 14; Romans 1:18-32..

From Acts 26. THE DEPUTATION.  
PART 4.

#1. Paul was allowed to make a defense "In regard to all the things of which I am accused by the Jews..., v.2.

#2. "So then, all Jews know my manner of life from my youth up, which from the beginning was spent among my own nation and at Jerusalem", v.4.

#3. Saul's training in rabbinic systematics had shaped his forms and methods of thought; being taught "as a Pharisee according to the strictest sect of our religion", v.5. He "lived" (v.5) that way.

#5. Saul thought that there had been no resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Why not?

#6. Because he founded his reasoning upon *PREMEDITATED OBJECTIONS* to the gospel. Others who turned to Christ, in the Book of Acts, had made a *SPONTANEOUS RESPONSE* to that which had been preached. The problem, Paul the apostle affirms, is not the revealed truth. Rather, it is the *PREMEDITATED OBJECTIONS* that are calculated to cloud, to obscure the Word of God.

#7. Paul makes this an issue before "Agrippa": "Why is it considered incredible among you people if God does raise the dead?", v.8. It is patently obvious in the Book of Acts that official Judaism was preoccupied with *PREMEDITATED OBJECTIONS* to the demonstrated power of God. Under the yoke of this penalty, true biblical faith could not take hold.

#8. The apostle admitted as much; "So then, I thought to myself that I had to do many things hostile to the name of Jesus of Nazareth", v.9.

#9. And that directly resulted in his behavior. Saul "lock(ed) up many of the saints in prison" and "when they were being put to death I cast my vote against them", v.10. In a frenzy of efficiency, "I tried to force them to blaspheme; and being furiously enraged at them, I kept pursuing them even to foreign cities", v.11.

#10. *PREMEDITATED OBJECTIONS* becomes a way and sometimes *the* preferred way of reading the Bible.

From Acts 26, 7. THE DEPUTATION.  
PART 5.

#1. Those of THE DEPUTATION, presumably, in every time reference, are going to be up against *PREMEDITATED OBJECTIONS*.

#2. The origin of such objections is to be found in Genesis 3. The serpent suggested to Adam and Eve the ploy of *PREMEDITATED OBJECTIONS*, v..1-5. That was a cunning satanic development. Of course, it was a maneuver to defeat *SPONTANEOUS RESPONSE* to the Word of God. That kind of response is the immediate predecessor to biblical faith.

#3. Saul was trained to consciously use *PREMEDITATED OBJECTIONS*, Acts 26:4-11. A very intelligent man and committed to what he believed; but he could not have been an independent thinker, at that time.

#4. Among other ideas, the Book of Acts gives the warning against allowing *PREMEDITATED OBJECTIONS* to constitute an entire reading of Scripture; precisely what Saul was socialized into.

#5. Surely, there are many believers who read particular portions of the Bible and immediately apply *PREMEDITATED OBJECTIONS*. True biblical faith can never, will never, formulate under that cognitive regime.

#6. Stephen (Acts 7) tracks out the history of Israel and their more than frequent preference for *PREMEDITATED OBJECTIONS*. As a member of THE DEPUTATION, Stephen ran directly into the problem.

#7. Every believer is thereby alerted to this almost habitual practice. Preachers and teachers and entire churches should be aware of this very personal way of screening out the validity of revelation. Stephen exposed the error in these words: "You men who are stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears are always resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did. Which one of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? They killed those who had previously announced the coming of the Righteous One, whose betrayers and murderers you have now become; you who received the law as ordained by angels, and yet did not keep it", 7:51-53.

From Acts 1-5. THE DEPUTATION.  
PART 6.

#1. The revealed gospel truth depends upon the power of God. All of it requires the power of God, 1:6-8. The function of THE DEPUTATION must also be supported by supernatural power.

#2. THE PREMEDITATED OBJECTIONS are always and only calculated to diminish any confidence in the power of God. Faith failure is always rooted in shattered trust in the power of God.

#3. The power of God is the absolute axis of everything and just as surely, it is and will be under determined attack by unbelievers.

#4. "Peter and John" healed a man, "lame" from birth, 3:1, 2. The Sanhedrin did not mind the miracle, but they were "proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead", 4:2.

#5. And that did "disturb(ed)" the Jews. Those men of authority determined to employ language and behavior to try and separate the power of God from the Word of God; which is the real purpose behind THE PREMEDITATED OBJECTIONS.

#6. Peter and John were "...uneducated and untrained men...", but they had "been with Jesus", 4:13. Those men had not been socialized into systematic unbelief. Their "confidence" unnerved the Sanhedrin. "For the fact that a noteworthy miracle has taken place through them is apparent to all who live in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it", 4:18.

#7. The Sanhedrin owned up to PREMEDITATED OBJECTIONS: "But so that it will not spread any further among the people, let us warn them to speak no longer to any man in this name", 4:17. Peter and John spoke to that body of men only in the terms of SPONTANEOUS RESPONSE to what they knew. "...Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge; for we cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard", 4:19, 20.

#8. All believers, in the contemporary, before and after, according to the Bible (Acts) are to read the Word, seriously study the Word, understand its terms and then SPONTANEOUSLY RESPOND in thought, speech and behavior to its truths.

#9. We dare not reduce any portion of scripture to the size of our PREMEDITATED OBJECTIONS.