

**part of
this ministry
and
apostleship**

Acts 1:3 – 26

~ Are you furthering the cause of Christ in this world by advancing the Gospel through a witness comprised of sound doctrine and competent Bible teaching? I don't mean posting religiously themed philosophies and random Bible verses on some social media landfill garbage dump of human thought and emotion; stuff designed only to cause strife and division. See, that isn't a witness for Christ. It's apostasy. Are you a missionary who is actually capable of teaching the Word of God properly, correctly and completely? Are you personally involved in somehow supporting the man who IS able to teach in a sincere and systematic manner, and who IS doing everything he possibly can to take the entire Word of God to the entire world in the sound doctrine of the apostles?

Well, If you deign call yourself a Christian, then those things will be all-important in your life. If they aren't - or if you don't agree, then you just don't believe the Bible is the Word of God - because that's what God says, my beloved. I consider this rinky-dink little missionary ministry my life's work. Is this Spiritual Safari important to you? Do these reports bless your heart or do you forget all about them after mindlessly patting me on the back and saying "good job?" Well, maybe God really does want you to do something. Have you ever prayerfully considered supporting a ministry? Praying for the effort of taking the Word of God out and then supporting it as you are able is a Godly appointment. Doing otherwise is hypocrisy. If you have even bothered reading this paragraph – God has chosen you and is calling you to do just that.

In our previous report, I explained my understanding of exactly how the book of Acts begins and continues where each of the four Gospel accounts concluded. The most remarkable aspect is discovering how each of the Gospel's conclusions are inextricably intertwined with this first chapter. If you haven't read our last report, I highly suggest you go back and do so

before continuing on safari. All four of the Gospel records are summed up as a beginning in and of itself in the first chapter of Acts. This is done in preparation for the coming of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. The first four opening verses of Acts are a periodic sentence, which means one long statement similar to the beginning of the Gospel of Luke....

3 To whom also he shewed himself alive, after his suffering and death, by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:

4 And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me.

5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence.

~ The entire earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ pales in comparison to the importance of the forty days in which He appeared and showed Himself alive to His apostles after His crucifixion and burial. Jesus now commands His own to wait in Jerusalem for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit; and it is very important to see and understand the instructions Jesus gave them at this time. The next event to take place in this process will be the apostles baptized in the Spirit of God.

The promise of the Father to the church is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit; and two baptisms are spoken of. Water baptism was the ritualistic and outward showing of faith and identification with the Lord Jesus Christ in His death, burial and resurrection – and they had all received that from John Baptist. I believe in water baptism not as a matter of salvation, but as a matter of Christian profession and identification. Only the baptism of the Holy Spirit is salvific baptism. When we get to chapter two and the Day of Pentecost, we find there is no mention of baptism at all. The only thing we find on the Day of Pentecost is that they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. That is the important thing. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is not relegated to an experience; it is what places you in the body of believers – as in, placing you in the church. In order for these men to serve God, they had to

receive the indwelling baptism that can only happen by the work of the Holy Spirit. I cannot stress this fact enough; and I suggest you read the Bible text very carefully after praying for wisdom, judgment and discernment to succinctly understand what this really means to you....

6 When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?

~ I have noticed most Bible commentators rebuke the apostles for asking this question because they, apparently, feel a mistake was made by them doing so. The answer God gave very definitely indicates this is a legitimate, fair, natural and sincere question, and not a mistake. Jesus didn't rebuke them at this time. You must remember, the apostles were brought up and schooled ONLY in the Old Testament. They have been told repeatedly by the prophets the Messiah was coming and He would be the One to establish the Kingdom again here on earth! That was their earthly hope, and it is still an earthly hope. God isn't through with the nation Israel by any means. God doesn't intend to sweep the earth under the rug like yesterday's dust. We certainly are a spec of dust small enough to have that happen; but the eternal plan and purpose is the re-establishment of the house of David and for all things to be made new again. That was the topic of discussion during the forty-day period we are examining.

Jesus Himself is the One Who told them this was not the time for the kingdom to be re-established. I'm not sure how so many churches today miss that. Jesus is telling them He is going to call out a people to His Name – the church. When we get to the first council in chapter fifteen, we see James reiterating that AFTER THIS Christ would return and re-build the House of David which had fallen down. Today, Christ is visiting the Gentiles to take out a people unto His Name. Calling those people out of the world is what He is accomplishing now; and, when they are called, they are baptized into the body of believers – the church....

7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.

~ Jesus tells them very clearly the Kingdom is NOT the subject of discussion at the time we are studying; and, my friends, it is NOT the topic of discussion for believers today. Some people seem to think the Lord will be coming soon; but that "soon" has been two thousand plus years as I type this report and as you read it. We may have very different conceptions of exactly what "soon" really means. Now, to be sure, I privately believe the Lord Jesus WILL be coming soon; but Christ Himself is saying – "you don't know and it's none of your business!" We have no right to run around telling people Jesus is coming soon....

8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

~ Verse eight is the key to Acts; and this commission holds good for all of us. This is not directed at the church body of worship and praise, though; that is not the function. This charge is being given to the apostles personally, privately and immediately before the Holy Spirit indwelt them and formed the church. Safari readers, understanding your Bible properly, correctly and completely is critical beyond statement if you say you are a believer. You must understand and grow in what you believe. If you don't get it straight in your thinking, you CAN NOT KNOW if you believe the Bible is the Word of God. If you neglect to study it, then I suggest you do not believe it; because that would indicate you do not love it. If you love God, you are going to desire to hear Him speak to your heart - and the Bible is the only place He does that.

So, this is a personal command for each and every individual believer right up to right now. But Jesus never told your church to go out to the ends of the earth. In fact, your church was never even instructed to preach the Gospel in your community. I know that sounds unfamiliar and even strange to most of you readers, but the only person Jesus ever said these things to is YOU – and me. Our business is ONLY to get the Word of God out. The business of the church is corporate worship. Preaching may and probably should be done through the church, but you cannot go to the church you serve and say ".... look what great things I have done!" My question is: are YOU going to the ends of the earth with a genuine and credible witness?

Many people want to talk about times and seasons and the bad things happening around us, but they don't seem interested in supporting an effort that actually teaches the Bible to the entire world properly, correctly and completely. That just happens to be what Jesus is talking about here to these men, and He is STILL talking about it to you and me today. If the Lord Jesus came into this room where I am writing right now, He wouldn't talk to me about the bad things happening around the world; and I don't want to talk to Him about that, either. All I care is that Jesus sees me getting this report finished so His Gospel is presented to the world per His command.

Well, we need power to do this, and Jesus said He will supply that power. We all know there is no power in us – at least, I hope we do. If you don't, I doubt you are still reading this report. The church is absolutely powerless, too. What that really means is we need the leading of the Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit is the only power we will ever know. Is the Spirit of God living through YOU? Are you resisting obedience and doing whatever you want to do; thereby preventing God from using you for His service? Those are seriously profound questions for this hour, friends. I have never felt the leading of God as I have since I began publishing this Spiritual Safari. At no point in my life have I ever felt the direct leading of the Holy Spirit as I do now. Only when we get to that point can we be truly effective witnesses unto Christ!

When Jesus said “in Jerusalem,” that meant in their hometown and neighborhood. Judaea is the equivalent of your community and Samaria is the wrong side of the tracks. Jesus definitely tells you to go to the people you don't normally associate with. He did NOT say go associate with them; but to take the Gospel to them in fulfillment of His commandments. I realize there are many people who don't want to associate with me – they simply don't want me around – and I don't want to be around them, quite frankly. I'm sure I crimp the style of most saints. Nonetheless, I have a responsibility of getting these reports out to the world; I hope I have made that point more than abundantly clear, because I could fill up a hundred more reports explaining it. We can never lose sight of this from Jesus, Who said, “if you love Me keep My commands!” This is so personal; it's a calling

that cannot be shirked if we are sincere with the Lord. What are you doing to support a sincere and educated Bible teaching ministry? ~

9 And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.

~ Jesus' ascension back to Heaven is another essential component to be presented when furthering the cause of Christ. Apparently, traveling in space isn't anything new. Jesus took off with no rocket and no space suit. The cloud we see is the Shekinah Glory that led Israel through the wilderness. This is also the cloud that filled the tabernacle; and Jesus referred to it in the Gospel of John when He said, "Father glorify Me with Thy glory that I had with Thee before the foundation of the world." Mary wrapped the baby Jesus in swaddling clothes; but when Jesus left this earth, God wrapped Him in glory's clouds....

10 And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;

11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

12 Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a Sabbath day's journey.

13 And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James.

14 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

15 And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty,)

16 Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus.

17 For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry.

18 Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out.

19 And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, Aceldama, that is to say, The field of blood.

20 For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishoprick let another take.

21 Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us,

22 Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.

23 And they appointed two; Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias.

24 And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen,

25 That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.

26 And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

~ This type of oneness and apostolic fellowship cannot be duplicated today. You must remember, the time in which we are studying is a specific

period of time between Christ's ascension and the coming of the Holy Spirit. We are not in that period today as the Holy Spirit is upon us. The only question I have is: what about Judas? The apostolic lottery being conducted by Simon Peter to appoint a successor to Judas Iscariot is being conducted WITHOUT the presence and leading guidance of the Holy Spirit. I do not think Mathias is the one to replace Judas – because the record says “.... they gave forth their lots” – I just don't see the leading of God in that. God wouldn't have had them cast lots, friends – you may be sure. In our next report, we will consider further the matter of whether Mathias really took Judas' place ~
