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So we're back continuing our study in Acts and we're in to chapter 1 and the first 11 verses, but we're dealing with the first three verses right now and the elements associated with those to set the proper context and tone for our study of the remainder of this book. So I'm gonna read to you, you can open your Bible or whatever, I'm gonna read to you the first 11 verses again just to get it in our in our minds as to what we are looking at and then we'll get into this study. So remembering that this is Luke's second act of the historical perspective of Christ's life.

The first one was in Luke, this is the second, this was written at the same time. Luke didn't know at the time that these were going to be split into two books, but as the codifiers got through the translation and created the King James Bible, they split these out in two books. So let me read this to you.

So the first account I composed, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach 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. Okay, that is how Luke ended. Now, to these he also presented himself alive after his suffering by meeting convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of 40 days, and speaking of things concerning the kingdom of God.

This is how Acts begins. 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. So what Christ did in the upper room was to tell them that they were going to receive the Holy Spirit and that they were to remain in Jerusalem until that process is done, which would give them the power and all of the resources necessary that they would need to go forth and complete the work of Christ.

So for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now. So when they had come together, they were asking him, saying, Lord, is it at this time you are restoring the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, it is not for you to know times or epics which the Father has fixed by his own authority, but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and even to the remotest part of the earth. And after he had said these things, he was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received him out of their sight.

This was his ascension. And as they were gazing eternity intently into the skies while he was going, behold, two men, two angels in white clothing stood beside them. They also said, Men of Galilee.

Why did he call them Men of Galilee? Because they all came from Galilee. They were all Jewish. Why do you stand alone looking into the sky? This Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven will come in just the same way as you have watched him go into heaven.

So now what we have been doing is we've been learning as we have begun our study in the book of Acts is that the Lord's work of redemption, which we got in Ephesians, which we're going to pick back up in closure this Thursday night, his cross work is completed. He was given the offering that sanctifies forever those who believe. He has provided the sufficient atonement to satisfy the wrath of God.

He has done his atoning work. He was born in the body of our sins in his death, and we have died and risen in him. Okay, so Acts gives us a transitional process for our understanding the gospel that is set forth starting in Romans that we're studying in Ephesians and in relationship to our study of Revelation.

So the work of redemption has been completed on the cross as far as the sacrifice of Christ is concerned. However, the work of gathering the redeemed goes on. Remember, everybody was chosen before the foundation of the world and was given redemption.

They just have to be gathered together and be told that they're part of the redeemed, and that's what's going on. So it goes on in the first generation through the Apostles and then through the church as the Apostles established the church. So we have here in Volume 1, which is Luke, is really the first great story of the history of redemption following the finished work of Christ.

This is indeed Volume 1 of the history of the church, of the gospel in the world. The responsibility of the proclamation of the gospel and the establishment of the churches passes to these 12. Now, if you recall, these 12 were actually 150 in the upper room when the Holy Spirit came.

Then they turned into 3,000. Then they turned into thousands and thousands, and it actually processes through generations getting to us. And we're writing our own chapter of Acts of the church age of this generation.

So this is a living book, and it's continuously being updated by the historical representation of what the church has done over the years since the beginning of time of the church, which is starts in Acts. So there's actually 11 apostles until a little later in the chapter, we get this in verse 12, when the 12th is chosen to take the place of Judas. And that 12th man is called Matthias.

They needed 12 because that's what it started out. That is basically the apostolic completion. And Christ would not send the Holy Spirit until 12 were there.

So they had to go through the process of selecting the 12th man. So the 12 is sort of reconstituted, and they become the first wave of evangelists and preachers that go out together, the redeemed, and to establish the church. How we are many, many millennia later, a few thousand years plus, two millennia later, hundreds of years later, we're still engaged in the same work passed down generation to generation to generation of gathering the redeemed into the church, and even establishing churches in places where Christ is not named.

Taking the gospel to the ends of the earth, the remotest part of the earth, preaching Christ, establishing churches in places where they've never known before. So the story, this is the history of the church. And this history goes on until the last person in the economy in the plan of God is redeemed.

Okay, that's what I said. This is a living book. This establishes the gospel associated with what is to be preached, teached to the people.

It gives us the framework of establishing the church. It tells us that the gospel of Paul is the gospel to follow for this age, the church age. And this church age ends when rapture begins in Revelation.

And the church age stops at that point. So we're living in this church age, and we're writing our own history. So the church is then raptured out of the world, and that glorious era comes to its fulfillment.

So we're seeing the Lord then pass the baton in those verses that I read to his that I read to his disciples. And you can see there is that he is speaking according to verse two to the apostles whom he had chosen. He chose them even before the foundation of the world.

And we find that the apostles' names are actually written in code in Genesis 1. All right, so he did this prior to establishing anything of the world, and he created the apostles into creation itself. So that is the 11, and there will be added Matthias. Now, from a human standpoint, to give them such a massive responsibility seems like a really bad idea, especially when you look at the apostles before they got bold.

They were timid. They didn't do anything. They didn't know how to do anything.

They didn't really want to know how to do it. If you go back and really study Matthew, Mark, and Luke and John, so what you find here is this transformation in the book of Acts is actually many, many transformations. The first transformation that had to take place is the 12 apostles.

They had to go from timidness to insecurity to not knowing the Old Testament and understanding the big picture, getting all of that stuff to the fact that they had to learn all of that to give them the backbone to actually go out and finish the work of Christ. So to think that these 11 plus 1 are going to be able to take the gospel to Jerusalem alone would be a stretch at this point in time. And then to think they would build Judea and then Samaria and then to the rest of the world, that's like a pipe dream if you looked upon these 12 before the coming of the Holy Spirit.

Now, not just because it's a massive undertaking, and it is. If you've ever been in a church startup and the requirements that's necessary for the body of believers that are starting that church, it is a huge undertaking, even in a local area. If you take this and expand it across two countries and then the rest of the world, you're talking about creating a force multiplier that is huge.

These 12 had to turn into many, many, many thousands and had to have the oversight to keep them on track. Because even as we're believers today, we're still learning. So as these people were brought in the fold to create the churches in this time, they had to be taught.

So this was a massive undertaking, excuse me, for the 12. And even as they begin to teach as early as just months, some of them were put to death. So I mean, their numbers begin to dwindle pretty quick.

And it was only 30 years till they were all gone in the first place, except John. And John was exiled, as you recall, in Revelation. So for the vast amount of the period of the church, the apostles were just trying to protect themselves while trying to teach.

So you can just put your shoes on their feet and look upon what they had to do. This was a massive undertaking. It's an unthinkable thing if you were to start a business or an enterprise with a small group of people, you might not say at the very beginning, that our responsibility is to take this thing to every person on the planet.

I can tell you in my days on Wall Street, that if somebody came in and says, we're going to conquer the world, you just threw the project in the trash because they were not focused on getting it started. And you didn't want to waste time and effort in doing that. Well, that's the same thing here.

But that's exactly what they did. That would be probably beyond your most wild imagination. Just the sheer massive nature of such a task is daunting to even think about, as we talked about, let alone to be assumed by essentially socially powerless people, people who are not only powerless socially, they're virtually powerless educationally, academically and religiously.

Remember, these were fishermen. These did not go to school. These guys had no education.

Think about it. Christ took the, if we would consider the worst of the worst, off the streets and told them to go conquer the world. Think about that.

Go down to your local homeless hangout and go select the best 12 you can look for and then tell them that they're going to go help you conquer the world. Think about that. That's exactly what Christ did.

None of them is important in any of these categories. They're a bunch of just working class men. As many as seven of them may have been fishermen, which we know that from scripture.

And not only are they the most unlikely people to do this task, but beyond that, they don't seem well suited to it for a number of reasons. They have demonstrated very weak faith. Even while working with Christ, they demonstrated the weak faith.

And it would seem to me, I'd take some very strong faith to get a grip on that kind of enterprise. And Jesus repeatedly says, Oh, you have little faith. Oh, you have little faith.

Not only that, they have a track record of very sketchy, sketchy obedience. They always went off the rail. Peter did.

Peter couldn't keep his mouth shut. Peter stuck both feet in his mouth every time he opened it when he was walking with Christ. They were just what I would consider backwoods type of guys.

They just were not educated, well suited, nor were they well mannered either. Okay. So Christ said, I'm going to do this with 12 guys that nobody's ever going to think that we're going to do it.

Okay, so now you have to sit back and say, why? Who was looking over his shoulder? Satan was. And Satan knew that he didn't stop Christ's bloodline from being born. So he needed to stop Christ's messaging to do that.

And what Christ says, I'm going to just select the lousiest 12 guys and you'll leave me alone. You're going to tempt me, but you're not going to tempt them because you don't think anything about them. Really.

That's really what was going on at this point in time. So there is likely to be disobedient as obedient. In fact, when the Lord has given them specific things to do, they have failed to do them.

In the heat of the night that Jesus went into the garden to pray, he didn't ask them to do anything very difficult. He just asked them to stay awake and pray. And what did they do? They fell asleep.

And after his resurrection, he asked them to go to Galilee and wait for him. And what did they do? They went to Galilee, but they didn't wait for him. They went back to their old enterprises.

They went back to fishing. They did what they did before Christ asked them to come follow him. So they haven't proven either to be strong in him, in faith, or to be particularly effective or consistent in enduring the obedience.

And you can add to that that they're cowardly. They run. When things get rough, they scatter like roaches.

They just, they go. In fact, when Jesus was arrested in the garden, if you recall that passage, they all forsook him and fled. They denied that they even knew him.

And they fled. It's also very true that they seem to be impatient. Oh, my gosh.

That ought to ring true to a lot of us. And if you're going to take on a task that's going to end up taking the message to the ends of the earth, you're going to need a lot of patience. All right.

You saw that not demonstrated well this weekend. But they demonstrate impatience. They even demonstrate their impatience here because their question is, are you going to bring the kingdom now? They wanted Israel to become what he told them it was going to become.

But he was talking about the kingdom in the millennium, not the kingdom at this time. How long do we do that? A few days, a few weeks. And they marked with a lot of things that would make us doubt their ability to pull it off.

So we need to understand that they needed to be made ready for this. That's the first transit transformation that had to take place in the book of Acts, is that Christ had to ready his disciples. Now, I want to talk about something.

Everybody who is saved, okay, has been redeemed. Everybody who's been redeemed is a disciple of Christ. But not every disciple of Christ is an apostle.

That was their mantle. That was their mantle. So these 12 men received apostleship as their mantle to go forth and preach the gospel.

The same happened to Paul. Now, we need to sort of tie some loose ends together. You have 12 apostles and Paul as an apostle, it's 13.

So when we're taught there's only 12 apostles, that's really not true. There's 12 Jewish and one Gentile. Now, if you go into Revelation, it talks about the 12 pillars for the apostles.

And there's many scholars and theologians that wonder who make up that 12. Okay. So as we go through Revelations, we're going to bring Acts into that and discuss what from 12 plus 1 equals 12 in heaven.

Okay, we're going to discuss that because you're going to need to understand what Revelation is actually talking about. Yeah, Normandy. Maybe I missed it.

But I heard you say one Gentile and I'm not clear on who the Gentile is. It was Paul. You had 12 apostles to the Jews.

Okay. And one apostle to the Gentiles. Oh, to the Gentiles, not as a Gentile.

No. Okay. All right.

I misunderstood. I didn't say to the Gentiles. I just said as a Gentile.

So I meant focused. You had 12 focused on Jews, one focus on Gentile until Christ told Paul to go back to the 12 and teach them the gospel. And then all of them changed from Jewish focus to Gentile focus.

Okay. So that's what that is the second transformation. Well, it's more it's down the road transformation in the book of Acts.

But right now we're just dealing with the 12, not Paul. We're dealing with just the 12 focused on Jewish activities. Okay.

So we understand that they need to be made ready for this. Somehow these men are going to change the course of human history. Something has got to happen to them first.

How are they ever going to be used to do that? If you look upon them without the Holy Spirit coming and without the 40 days of teaching Christ gave to them, these 12 men or these 11 and soon to be 12 would not be able to accomplish this task. And that's where we see ourselves. We're not able to accomplish these tasks until the Holy Spirit comes inside of us at our at our conversion.

And we begin to be to sanctify ourselves in our walk with Christ so that basically he can send us where he needs to send us to accomplish his purpose. So the apostles then became the focus of the Lord in this opening section before he leaves. Okay.

He leaves right there in verse 9 to 11. So before he leaves, these opening verses, verses 1 through 8, tells us how he has tried to get them ready. So the first transition happens in chapter 1, verse 1 through 8, and it deals with the disciples turning them into apostles.

They're the ones he chose for the job. We find that in John 15, 16. You have not chosen me and I've chosen you and ordained for this.

You are the chosen ones. And at the end of verse 2, here is the final countdown to his ascension when he leaves. And he won't be back until his second coming, which is yet future today.

Our Lord then in these days that he has a 40 day period between his resurrection and his ascension. That 40 day period is all he had to teach these guys. Can you imagine the crash course they went through for 40 days? Knowing what is happening today based upon their gospel, based upon their preaching and epistles and letters and writings and so forth.

That's all happening 40 days, guys. I doubt very seriously we could go to a 40 day crash course and come out with what they learned in that 40 days. I would have liked to have been there, number one, because I would have liked to have been in that type of classroom where every word that is said, you're just waiting with bated breath to hear what it said and to try to get the understanding.

That's what's so fascinating to me that he not only gave it to him, he taught them, but he made them understand. That is significant in this. Our Lord then in these days that he was a 40 day period between his resurrection and ascension had to provide the essential tools for them to finish what he started to go out and preach the gospel and plant churches in such a way that it extends throughout all of human history and across the globe.

These provisions are laid out in these opening, essential opening eight verses and with the addition of verses 9 to 11 as well. The whole letter is written to Theophilus. Remember that? And I just want to make a comment about that, that Theophilus is a proper name.

Most likely that could be translated friend of God if you looked at Greek. Friend of God is what Theophilus is translated into. Theogod, Theophilus is friend, but it's a Gentile name.

It's a Greek name. So it's probably refers to some noble Gentile. We talked about that.

They had a title. He was a nobility. There is some history that would indicate to us that this was an influential wealthy official in the city of Antioch, perhaps well known to Luke.

He was well known to Luke because Luke wrote him a personal letter. This is a personal letter to Theophilus. Maybe that indicates that Luke was also from Antioch.

We don't know where Luke was from specifically. And this is some history that says he was a convert in Antioch of Paul and Barnabas. So Theophilus, whoever he is, and maybe those are accurate things that we just talked about, doesn't need to be identified to us readers of Acts.

Why? Because we would have to know him for us to understand who he is. We don't do that. We don't know that.

So the reason Luke doesn't tell us who he is, is because he assumes everybody knows who he is in that age, in that time. So in that time, everybody that would read this book would understand who Theophilus was, because he was a prominent figure during that time. So let's just say this, at least he is well known to the church.

And by the way, he's not just Theophilus. He gets a little more branding than that. He is, in Luke 1 and 3, most excellent Theophilus.

Now, when somebody gets to be called most excellent, you're now in the category of officials. So now we know, because the title, he's an official in the Greek Roman Empire. He's a very influential guy, some important man.

Later in the book of Acts, towards the end, we're going to run into other people like Felix and Festus. And they're going to get that title most excellent. So remember what I said, that Luke was trying to, he gave us the first tool of marketing and network marketing right here.

He was trying to reach influential guys that had a following, that he could get the gospel to teach them, and they would move it out. That's exactly what Theophilus was said to do. Here then is a very important person, a Gentile in the Roman world.

He's an official of some kind. He has come to Christ, maybe through the influence of Paul and Barnabas, maybe from the city of Antioch, and maybe Luke being from the city of Antioch. They would come to know each other.

Why would Luke send the letter to him? Just what we've talked about. Because he's a man of great influence, and he wants to put this letter in the hands of a man of great influence, so it can be distributed. Okay, their job was to take the gospel to the world.

They could not walk to every ends of the world. They had to be able to utilize people in various areas to help distribute the gospel, at least beforehand, before they got there, so that they didn't have to go from village to village to village to try to reach all these people, and then gather them together for the church. So that was the way that the gospel was typically spread in the first church, was through influential people out.

And then the apostles came in, and they gathered them. They had already been talked to. Now they're gathering them in the church for their continuous teaching.

And by the way, this is a very good for Luke to do, because Luke understands that the gospel is supposed to go ultimately to the world. So they figured out network marketing back then. All right.

So you want to put it in the hands of somebody who is outside of Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria, and is in that world, in that social setting, in that culture, you're trying to reach. And there's something else that I think that plays into this. Although all through the book of Acts, you're going to see this, that this will kind of prepare you for what's coming in the rest of the book of Acts.

Luke seems eager to find open doors with Gentiles. If you go back and look at Luke's, all of his writings and all of his focus, you're going to find that Luke only told of historical things related to Jewish leadership, but Luke took an active role in distributing the gospel to the Gentiles. And that's what begins to happen, as you know, with the ministry of Paul in chapter 13, all the way back to the end of the book.

So it's about Paul in the Gentile world. And Luke knows that Paul took the gospel to the Gentile world. He was part of that when Paul was part, he was there when Christ intercepted Paul on the road to Damascus and converted him.

He wants the Gentile world to embrace the gospel. So Luke saw it firsthand, so therefore he wants to get it to the Gentile world. The Gentile world has no experience in the gospel, so they didn't have any history associated with the baggage of old sacrificial systems.

They were starting anew, so they didn't need to go through the process of transforming their minds from Old Testament sacrificial system to a New Testament one sacrifice for all. They didn't need to do that. They just need to understand that the finished work of Christ, and they had faith and belief in that, and then they were automatically saved.

So essentially, no knowledge of the Old Testament. Totally pagan, totally alien to the Old Testament. And the church in its early years is persecuted by the Jews and persecuted by the Gentiles as well.

They had it from both sides. So I think Luke is endeavoring to do what he can do to help the gospel be acceptable in a Gentile world. Now, remember, the Gentiles thought this gospel was foolish.

1 Corinthians 1, to the Gentiles, this is foolishness. It was to them maybe more than foolishness. Some of them saw it as a threat, and some of them persecuted the believers.

In many towns, Paul was persecuted, and ultimately, he was executed at the end of the day. So I think Luke has an interest in commending Christianity to the Gentile world to help get past the persecution, to provide opportunity in the future. From a historian point of view, Luke plays a very vital role in the distribution of the gospel.

Because he was not one of them, but he was reporting like a newspaper. Think about it. He was reporting news.

He was reporting activities, what was going on. So people wanted to listen because they were curious about what was going on in other countries. Okay, just like many of you still watch mainstream media.

Okay, this is really what Luke was doing. He was doing it from a historian's perspective. How does he do it? Well, we're going to see that unfold here.

But occasionally through the Book of Acts, Luke records an incident where the Romans are kind to Paul, where, for example, in chapter 16, chapter 18, 19, and 27, the Romans are kind to Paul, which means Luke is saying to future readers, hey, they didn't see him as a threat. Now, think about the mainstream media. They tell you who's a threat, who's not a threat, that type of stuff.

This is Luke's thing here. They didn't see him as somebody they had to be afraid of. They were kind to him.

In chapter 19, a very important official in the city of Ephesus gives Christians accommodation. So here is someone else in the Gentile world saying, you don't have to fear. You don't have to be afraid of these people.

This is Luke's role. In chapter 25, Festus declares openly that Paul has done nothing worthy of death. Then you come later into chapter 25 and 26, and you come also to Festus and to Agrippa, and they both agree that Paul, if he had been released, would have every right to plead his case with Caesar.

So think about what Luke is actually doing. He is actually providing that mode of transition so people understand that what's coming to you, don't be afraid of. What's coming to you, you need to listen to.

What's coming to you is a change, but it's the correct change. So Luke at certain points just touches on the notion that Christianity has been no threat in the Gentile world to provide for future evangelists some acceptance. In the face of Christians being persecuted early on, he wants to show that they were good citizens, that they were no threat to the powers in Rome, that there were no threat to the social order, that they were not criminals, and they had proof of that by the way they conducted themselves in the ministry of Paul in particular, and the way the Romans responded.

Okay, so you can see that exactly what we talked about, about being the newspaper, the news, the world events, the things that are happening, that's Luke's job. He was a reporter. He was a historian and reporter for the world.

So Luke is taking a long range view at the great commission in the Gentile world. Now that's just a little introductory material getting us set up for this. So let's go to see the tools that he gives them in this section.

He gives them the tools that he gives them. First of all, we were told you, we told you the proper message. He had to give them that.

Verse one, Jesus began to do and teach. He began to do and teach. And we walked, we talked about the fact that Jesus began, and he will continue this work through his apostles, and through his church, and through his people until he comes again.

Okay, what he did was teach the apostles how to do this. Apostles taught the next generation, and it went from generation to generation, generation through time until he comes again. Now, it's the work of doing and the work of teaching.

We talked about the essential. If the gospel is to go to the end of the world, is that you get the gospel right, that you teach the gospel. Every one of us here are a teacher, regardless of whether you formally teach or you're an example by your life.

You are a teacher. So we're to get this gospel right, okay, which is what we've been working on for weeks. That's why the New Testament makes such an issue out of getting sound doctrine.

We read that in 1 Timothy again, avoid those people who have strange doctrine. You want the right doctrine. Find those people who have sound doctrine.

That's the reason why you don't let nonbelievers in your church and have them become part of your church. Not that they should be there and listen to the gospel, but they should not take any position in the church, because they're going to change your doctrine. So that is forbid in the Scriptures.

Avoid those who have strange doctrine. Find those who have sound doctrine. If anybody comes along, preaches any other Christ, don't listen to him.

Okay, so this is fundamental. Those of you who go to a church, have you tested that church doctrine with a doctrine of Paul? If you've not, you need to. If it's different, you need to walk away from.

Don't invite him in your house, John says. If anybody comes and preaches another gospel, let him be damned. Let him be an anathema, Paul says.

You're not to associate with nonbelievers. We've talked about that too. All right, there's probably not one business in this world that cannot operate without nonbelievers as part of their customer base.

That's what David had to experience as well. But you need to take hold to the fact that you can't, you should not, and do not associate with them. Okay, do business with them.

Pray for them when they come in. You know, you should know who they are by now, but do not associate with them. There is all through the New Testament epistles, this effort, and even through the book of Acts to protect the true message, the true gospel.

You know that through all of my teaching so far, I've done everything I can to point to you where the gospel is misrepresented, where it goes wrong, and I'll continue to do that. You might not like it, but you're going to hear it, because that is what influences your belief system. This is part of the sacred trust.

It's part of me being a watchman. I got to tell you the truth. We're stewards of the gospel in our generation to make sure it gets spread correctly and passed to the next generation without defect.

If we don't do that, we've not done our job. So to begin with, he has to give them the content of the message. So go to verse 3. We are reminded that he spent a period of 40 days speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God.

Now, it was not a non-stop 45 days. These guys slept in the garden. I bet that some of them would be sleeping in their chairs or on their bench or on their rock if they tried to go for 40 days constantly.

But during those 40 days, he appeared to them on many, many occasions with a purpose of instruction. They were to make sure that they had the right message. And may I remind you that what he said in some of our teachings, it's all about the words you use.

I've said this in your study. If you don't break down the words, you're not going to know what the scriptures are telling you. The words have to be correct.

You can't assume an English dictionary definition of those words. You're dealing with Greek translated words thousands of years ago. You need to get to the origin of that word.

It's all about the words. Whenever God discloses himself, he discloses himself in words. It's not 21st century words.

It's way back in history. And the words of divine revelation are written down. That is the Bible.

God did not give the Bible writers impressions which they turned into words. That's a big movement now attacking the validation of Scripture. Attacking the validation of Scripture by saying they use this kind of phrase.

Okay, there was a speech act. There was some kind of divine speech act in which God disclosed himself, but the writers didn't necessarily write it down without error. That is not true.

These scriptures are written by the Holy Spirit through a person over 2,000 years by 40 different authors, and every scripture ties together. That does not happen without one central point, and that point is Holy Spirit outside of time. The Bible claims for itself that every word of God is pure, every word like silver refined seven times in a furnace.

This attack is mounting right now, by the way, as we speak at this particular time. You can see this in the world today, how they're coming after what they're calling Christian nationalism. Okay, they're after us.

The attack is building right now, by the way, as we speak at this particular time in the evangelical world. There's a massive attack on the true doctrine of inerrancy, but that's not surprising because Satan wants always to attack the Word of God going back to Genesis. As God said, as God said, as God said, basically what we can get from the scripture is everything in it is true.

So we're going in the process even now as we speak of of in our teaching, planning to bring this forward to you guys in such a way that it doesn't become like a brow beating ceremony, but a disclosure so that you know what's going on around you. It's an awareness type focus that I'm going to try to do. So in John 5, John 6, and John 12, the words that I speak, the words that I speak, they are life.

They're life. They are living words. When God reveals Himself, He doesn't reveal Himself in impressions.

He reveals Himself in words, and the words are written down accurately. It doesn't mean that they understood the words necessarily. You remember in 1 Peter 1, 10-12, Peter says that the prophets of old looked at what they wrote to try to understand them.

God took hold of their hand through the Holy Spirit and wrote the words, and they didn't even understand what they wrote. But just think about that. They were true.

They came to truth. They came to pass. They got the words right, but they weren't sure what the time was or the person of the fulfillment.

You remember in 2 Peter, Peter says the things that Paul wrote are hard to understand, and some people twist them for their own benefit. But it was never a question of the words. It was a question of the interpretation.

Even today, there are some passages where we don't know what the appropriate interpretation is because we can't reconstruct all the original setting. If you can't put yourself back in context to where those scriptures were written, of history, of the events that happened, where the setting was, all that stuff, we can't, in some cases, can't interpret them correctly. We've talked about that already in our studies, but the words are essential.

So just making that little emphasis sort of on that point over the right message, Jesus wanted them to get the right message. For 40 days, He made them understand the kingdom. They understood the nature of the kingdom and how to come into the kingdom, which is the gospel way and what the gospel was.

And of course, they were not only to teach it, but to do it. That's the reason why I said we're all teachers, one way or the other. We're going to teach by our conversation, we're going to teach by our actions, but we're teachers to the gospel ministry.

Part of that was living exemplary lives to support the claims of the gospel, just like what we talked about. Secondly, proper manifestation of the proper confidence. This is the assurance of Christ.

They were going to do this job. They had to have the right message, which Christ told them what the right message was, the gospel. And they also had to have the right confidence that going forward, this is a mandate that they need to do.

They were not going to go forward unless they had some degree of confidence that what they were doing was the right thing. And what is that confidence? It is that confidence that comes to them when they see Him alive from the dead. In verse three, He presented Himself alive after His suffering by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over those 40 days and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God.

They needed to know it was Him. It was really Him. And He proved it by many, many infallible proofs, many convincing proofs.

And one of them was, and I really love this one, one of them was when He came back from the dead, He was speaking about the same subject He was speaking about before He was dead, before He killed Him. So He came out of the grave talking about the same thing that He went into the grave talking about, the kingdom of God. The subject never changed.

Same subject talking about the kingdom of God, the rule of God. And I think He probably started with the universal rule in Psalms 145 in verse 13. Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom.

God is the king of all of that He has created. God is the sovereign of the entire infinite universe and all of eternity. He probably taught them about the sovereign kingdom of God in which God rules over everything and nothing escapes His sovereign rule.

We're getting that in our weekly document review or our subject review of the sovereignty of mankind. We're seeing that unfold to us in that study. But He probably brought that down to what we could be called the meditated kingdom.

The kingdom that is meditated on earth, I'm sorry, not meditated, mediated on earth. Remember, we have life eternal. That's the life on earth.

That's the mediated kingdom on earth. And we have eternal life that which is given to us in heaven when we reach our home. That is mediated on earth that becomes the kingdom of salvation and then talked about what it meant to have God as your savior.

God is your king personally, not universally in the infinite aspects of the universe, but personally in the heart because that's where your blessings are at. Each one of us have different blessings, but they're all consistently provided to us because we get those blessings out of Christ's will to us to have all good things come to us based upon the will of the Father that was given to Christ. Okay, so we're going to get into that as the inheritance next week, not week after next, in our Ephesian study as the third element that was given to us before the foundation of the world.

Now, He taught them the gospel and the entrance into the kingdom. We looked at that a little bit just before, and we looked at the confidence they needed to go forth, the two basic foundational points to allow them to move. Now, we need to get into the other points of these tool sets.

So this brings us to the third point. They needed the right message. They needed the right confidence, the right assurance, and that was that He was indeed alive, that He had conquered death.

They also needed the proper power. If they had the right message and they had the confidence, they had to have the power to achieve the end result. That's the third element of this.

So let's get into verse four. Gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem. That's sort of putting on the brakes after telling them to go and telling them to leave Jerusalem.

He was telling them that they were going to have to fulfill the Great Commission, and we see at the end of Matthew and the end of Luke, He holds them back. He puts the reins on them a little, and He says, don't leave Jerusalem yet. Wait, wait for what the Father had promised, which He said, you heard of Me.

Wait, don't go anywhere. So they are trained at this point. They're educated from the 40 days at this point.

They went through a crash course of doctorhood of education without any foundation of elementary school, okay? He taught them 40 days. They have the right message. They have the evidence that He's alive, the confidence and assurance.

They're ready to go. They're fired up, but He says, wait, wait. Don't go anywhere.

The whole history of this next subject is not to begin yet. Wait for it. Just wait for a while.

Wait for the promise that the Father had given. What would they have thought about that, and how would they have processed that? Because they're on fire. Well, if we go back to Ezekiel 36, we get this answer.

Here's a promise from God, a familiar New Covenant promise. I will sprinkle clean water on you, verse 25. You will be clean.

I'll cleanse you from all your filthiness, that's the sin, from all your idols, that's the cause of your sin. I will give you a new heart. I'm going to make you one now with me.

I'm going to change your DNA, put a new spirit in you. That's me inside of you now. I'll remove the heart of stone from your flesh.

Remember, that's the DNA change. That's the turning, and give you a heart of flesh. I will put my spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes.

What statutes? Laws, rules, regulations, and you will be careful to observe my ordinances. Means you're going to need to be obedient. This is what the Father had promised, promised the coming of the Holy Spirit who will come and dwell in them.

That is the promise of the Father, the promise of the coming of the Holy Spirit. It's God's pledge to his people. Pledge, another term here in Joel 2. They would have known, Ezekiel 36, they would have known Joel 2. It will come, verse 28.

After this, I will pour out my spirit on all mankind. His spirit, his sovereignty over all mankind. Your sons and daughters will prophesize of old men will dream dreams.

Young men will see visions. Okay, think about this shift. Old Testament, they dream dreams.

New Testament, they have visions. See how the scriptures are tying to the Testaments. Even on the male and female servants, I will pour out my spirit in those days.

So they knew that connected with the arrival of the Messiah and the establishment of the kingdom of God and the salvation that God had promised would come the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. So that is the promise of the Father, the promise of the Holy Spirit, which he said you heard of from me, being Christ. As long as they had been with Jesus, Jesus had reiterated that promise over and over and over again.

He had reiterated that promise many times. In fact, if you go back to John 1, when John was speaking, John the Baptist testified saying, I have seen the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven and he remained on him. At the beginning of the ministry of Jesus, at his baptism, the Holy Spirit comes on him.

Now, you got to remember, Jesus came as a Jew. His focus ministry was to the Jews. In his baptism, think about this, this is a transition of Jesus from Jewish to Gentile, the whole world.

So his focus prior to his death, his baptism, death, burial, and resurrection was to the Jews. And the shift began to change to a worldly Jesus Christ as the descending of the Holy Spirit on him as a dove. When Jesus begins his ministry in the city of Nazareth, he says, I am here to fulfill the Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah, Jews.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me to preach the gospel, Jews. So in a very real sense, Jesus is the prototype of the filling of the Holy Spirit, the empowering of the Holy Spirit for his ministry. Luke 3, the Spirit comes on him.

Luke 4, 1, he goes forth to minister in the power of the Holy Spirit. So what was promised in the book of Joel, okay, prophecy, what was promised in the book of Ezekiel, prophecy, the coming of the Holy Spirit upon God's people took place first of all in Jesus Christ world, who is the prototype. He is the God-man, but he is fully man.

We're going to get more in that when we get into our prayer discussions. And he is empowered by the Holy Spirit. And we know that his whole ministry was basically operating in the power of the Holy Spirit.

What he did, what he did by the power of the Holy Spirit. So Christ, who had received the Holy Spirit at his baptism, who was empowered by the Holy Spirit, then began to promise to his disciples that they would have the same thing, that the Holy Spirit would come upon them as well. Now let's kind of track that just briefly.

John 7, 37, on the last day, this was the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles, which we'll get to know shortly. It's the great day of feast. Jesus stood and cried out saying, if anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink.

He who believes in me and the Scripture said from his innermost being will flow rivers of living water. But this he spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive. For the Spirit was not given because Jesus was not yet glorified.

Okay, Scripture tells us that Christ lives in us, right? That's what the Scripture says. Christ could not live into us until he was glorified and made Spirit. Okay, he was man.

He ascended to heaven as a God-man. When he got to heaven, he was made Spirit, and his Spirit is what lives in us. So he had to get glorified.

He had to get his new body because when he left this earth and ascended, he still had all of the things of his old body. So he could convince his disciples that he was truly Jesus Christ. So on his ascension, he got his glorified body.

He became Spirit, and 10 days later, that Spirit came down to be with, to infill with the disciples with him himself. So it is promised of the Father, but is also what Jesus promised as well. The promise of the Holy Spirit who would come after Jesus had ascended and been glorified.

He repeats this a number of times in John's Gospel, chapters 14 through 16. I will ask the Father, he will give you another comforter, another helper, that he may be with you. That is the Spirit of truth in verse 26.

The helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, my name, Christ, the Holy Spirit, he will teach you all things, bring to your remembrance all that I said to you. And again in chapter 15, verse 26, John, when the helper comes of the comforter whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, he will testify of me. Chapter 16, verse 7, all this is going on in the upper room at the Passover, the final Passover.

I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away. If I don't go away, the helper will not come. If I go, I will send him to you.

And then over in chapter 20, the most interesting gesture in verse 22, he breathed on them. Before he left, he breathed on them and he told them to receive the Holy Spirit. That was in anticipation because it didn't happen then.

It didn't happen until the day of Pentecost. So all that to say there that's what was promised by the Father and reiterated by the Lord himself. Look at Acts 2.33. This is Peter preaching on the day of Pentecost.

He says that Christ has been exalted, verse 33, to the right hand of God in his ascension, having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit. He has poured forth this which you both see in here. So what is the promise of the Father? Back to chapter 1. Back to chapter 1, verse 4. The promise of the Father is the coming of the Holy Spirit, which Jesus also spoke of, which they heard from him.

Then he goes on to verse 5. John immersed you with water, buried you in water, but you will be immersed with the Holy Spirit not many days from now. From this point forward, you should not view the word baptism with water. From this point forward, you should view the word baptism, which by definition should be immersed.

You should be immersed with the Holy Spirit. So now when you read Scripture after Acts chapter 1, now when you read Scripture from Romans to Revelation, when it talks about baptism, it's talking about the immersion of you in the Holy Spirit. This is a simple a word that means immersed, literally submerged.

You're going to be submerged with the Holy Spirit not many days from now. And of course, he was talking about the day of Pentecost, which was just a few days in the future. Matter of fact, just 10 days.

The number 10 is significant, okay? I want to mention something to you that I think is so very important. This was not a request to the apostles to somehow get baptized in the Holy Spirit. This isn't telling them to seek it, to pray for it, to plead for it.

This is a statement of fact. When you get redeemed, you get automatically fulfilled with the Holy Spirit. This is a promise of the Father, which the Lord reiterated in verse 5. John baptized with water, John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.

That's a statement of fact. It's not an opinion. It's not a subjection.

It's not something you need to do. It's a statement of fact. This is what's going to happen, and that is a statement of fact for every believer.

1 Corinthians 12, 13. All of us have been literally submerged into the Holy Spirit. It is a simple command.

It is not a condition. It is not something you look for. It is not something you hope for.

It's something that is a fact. It's unconditional to you. He gave you a new body with Him inside of you.

1 Corinthians 6. Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. You don't seek that. It's given to you.

You don't seek that. In fact, this is a gift that comes to every believer, and I love the language of 1 Corinthians 12, 13. For by one Spirit, we were all baptized into one body.

Whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free, we're all made to drink of one Spirit. We're literally engulfed in the Holy Spirit. Now, what is the purpose of this in verse 8? You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you.

This is for power. The job is too great, too formidable, too demanding to be done in human strength. We cannot do this.

Paul's language in the letter to the Corinthians, weapons of our warfare are not fleshly. We do not wrestle with flesh and blood for princes, but mighty unto God. This is the promise of the Holy Spirit.

Every believer following Pentecost receives the Holy Spirit, takes up a residence, literally a dominating forces, dominating power of our lives. John refers to the Holy Spirit as the anointing which we have from God who teaches us all things. Let's go back to Genesis.

The midst of the garden, the midst is the Holy Spirit's anointing of God's creation. Paul said in Ephesians 1, he says, we are sealed by the Spirit of promise. The Spirit protects us unto eternal glory.

We're gone through in recent teachings of the Holy Spirit. We're continuing to move through that, but the Holy Spirit renders on our behalf, and this is the important thing. Remember what we talked about prayer.

The Holy Spirit inside of you is a direct link to Jesus Christ. When we pray, we're paying to the Holy Spirit inside of us, which is the Father, and it communicates with Christ, who's our intercessory to talk to the Father. That's how this connectivity works.

Within us, he has taken up his residence, his residence. Think about that. He says, I'm sending back the Holy Spirit, but it's my residence.

Listen to the language of Ephesians 3.16. Paul is praying, and he prays that God would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with the power through his Spirit in the inner man. He's saying to those Ephesians, I want you to know the full power of the Holy Spirit, who is in your inner man, so that Christ settles down and is at home in your life. Christ settles down in the home of your life.

The Holy Spirit inside of you is Christ, the Son of Man. When you talk, you talk to the Father through Christ. What? He's your intercessory.

He's inside of you, so you talk to the Father. You pray to the Christ inside of you. He communicates to Christ in heaven, who intercedes to the Father on your behalf.

This is biological, so that you've rooted and grounded in love, so that you can comprehend all with all the saint, the breadth, the length, the height, and the depth, and can know the love of Christ, which surpasses all knowledge, and you may be filled up all the fullness of God. Okay, these are dimensions. This is growth.

This is dimensional life that you get filled. You grow. You make yourself higher dimensional by your growth.

You understand all knowledge. That knowledge turns into understanding. The understanding of the knowledge turns into the wisdom.

The wisdom from that turns into belief. That is how you grow, but you got to start from understanding. You can't do that unless you're studying God's Word.

I want you to know that the full power of the Holy Spirit shows up in increased love. What did we talk about last week? If you're not focused on the increasing of love in your life, then you're not focused on the key to your kingdom, which shows up in increased fullness. This is to say a complete consuming sense of obligation, and joy, and worship directed towards God.

Your whole focus of life is one focus. What's God's purpose? What's God's focus for me? We talked about this last week too. Who should you first talk to before you do anything? You should ask the Holy Spirit inside of you what you should be doing.

This is to say a complete consuming sense of obligation, and joy, and worship directed towards God. When that happens, he is able to do far more abundantly beyond all we can ask or think according to the power that works. There is the key inside of us.

In other words, what Paul is saying is that you would take advantage of the power, the fullness of God, the Holy Spirit that is in you. Now, how do you do that? That's the real thing. That's where the rubber meets the road.

That's what we've talked about a few times. We'll continue to talk about it a lot. Well, we see this in Galatians 3.16, which says, let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.

Act in the word of Jesus Christ, dwell in you richly if you don't study, if you do not seek his guidance, if you do not understand the words that are being used, and the message of those words that is revealed to you through Scripture. How do you do that? You don't. So the key is what? Enrich yourself through the studying of God's word.

Ephesians 5.18, be filled with the Holy Spirit. Same thing. Be dominated by the word of God because that's where the Holy Spirit's power is released.

Those of you who are Sunday morning quarterbacks who says, I'm saved, and I go to church, or I come to a discussion like this on Sunday, and then on Monday I go live my same ways. I don't study. You're not going to get anywhere, guys.

Just understand that. If that's the life you would like, that's fine, but understand what life you're going to have. That's the truth, okay? Not trying to beat anybody down, but if that's the type of life you want, then that's the truth you're going to get.

Whatever you give, you're going to receive. If you don't give your time and effort to Christ, to understand what he's trying to tell you, to obtain his blessings in all riches and glory, and live a life eternal on this earth, then you're going to have a poor life. Poor life in everything.

Spirit, financial relationships, everything. You're just going to be poor. You know the word.

You love the word. You live the word. The Spirit uses the word to empower you.

We know all these things, so I won't belabor that point, but there is a necessary power, and that is the power of the Holy Spirit. Without that, you go nowhere. We've seen that through the years, and every passage in the New Testament deals with that, and we'll see it a lot more of it when we get into chapters 13 through 16 in not only Acts, but when we get to that point in touching back bases with John in Revelation.

We'll also see more of it, and I'm going to save you some time here. We'll get to Acts 2, and the Holy Spirit actually shows up, and we see what happens. We kind of delineate more about that, but at this point, let's just say in the transition, they needed the right message.

They needed the right assurance, and they needed the right divine power, because that is not a task that can be accomplished by the strength of men. We can't do this thing called teaching and gospel spreading and church organization and faith healing. You can't do that without the power of the Holy Spirit, guys.

You just can't do it. So it brings us to the fourth element of the tool set. Our Lord identifies what we'll call the proper mystery in Acts 1, verse 6. When they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, Lord, is it at this time you are restoring a kingdom to Israel? That's the mystery, right? Because we learn later in Acts that He pulls away from the Jews, goes full force to the Gentile, creates the age of the church, and puts the Jews' activity on hold until after the rapture takes forth.

We get that in Revelation. So what they're asking Him is, is that time period now? And what He says, is it at this time you are restoring the kingdom to Israel? He says to them, it's not for you to know times or epochs. It's none of your business.

It's basically what He says. This is not what your task and what you need to be seeking out. You're to be finishing what I have taught you to finish and told you to do, which the Father has fixed by His own authority.

Now, 1 Peter 1, 10 to 12, the prophets who wrote the Old Testament didn't know what the person or what time. That's a necessary mystery. Of all the kingdom teaching that Christ had done, the part that excited them the most was that this was going to happen soon.

The earthly kingdom was going to come. He was alive from the dead. Their hopes were burning bright.

He was about to establish His kingdom. They had to be sure about it. Well, let's go back to the Emmaus Road in Luke 24, 21.

They were mourning and said, we thought He was the one. We thought He was the one. And then He disclosed Himself and their joyous and He appears to them, John 20, 19 through 20.

They see Him. He appears. And now He energizes their desire for the kingdom.

So they jump to the conclusion that this is the end. It's going to happen. They're saying, Lord, is it at this time you're restoring the kingdom of Israel? Is it now? The Old Testament age is over.

Remember, when Christ died, the Old Testament ended. The New Testament started. Messiah is here.

You don't have to dwell on, is He coming? No, He's already here. So the Old Testament is ended. He did the work of atonement.

He's alive. That is it. A few days.

Now He's saying the Holy Spirit is going to come. And Joel connects the coming of the Holy Spirit with the last days. And Ezekiel connects the coming of the Spirit with the last days.

And Peter, James, and John had seen Jesus transfigured on the mountain and seen His glory, already a glimpse of His kingdom glory. This is a natural question. When is it going to happen? When is the kingdom going to come? You say, well, wait a minute.

The kingdom already existed. Yes, in one form it did. The spiritual kingdom, He was ruling over the hearts of those who had put their faith in Him.

What did I say? We are attached to the kingdom upon salvation. That's the reason why Christ is in us and we're in Him and we have all the blessings that are in heaven because we're citizens living in a foreign land. We have all rights to what is ours in the kingdom of heaven today.

When they say to Him, is it this time you're restoring the kingdom to Israel? What were they saying? They were expecting what kind of kingdom? What kind of kingdom were they expecting? The millennial kingdom. No, that hadn't been introduced as a thousand-year kingdom until the book of Revelation. They were expecting the kingdom promised to Abraham, the kingdom promised to David, all the promises that were reiterated to the prophets and through the prophets.

They're expecting that Israel would be restored. Israel would be saved. The new covenant of Jeremiah 31 and Ezekiel 36 would be fulfilled.

Israel would be saved and Israel would be restored. The throne of David would be elevated again. That's what they're expecting.

They're expecting to stay on earth and sit on that throne for a thousand years. That's what they expected that to happen. All the kingdom promises would come to pass.

Salvation would come. They would be the dominant nation in the world. All the kingdom promises including the coming of the Holy Spirit.

In other words, they were pre-millennialists. They believed in an actual kingdom for Israel and they said, is it now? So if Jesus was a millennialist, think about this. You've got to always think about process.

If Jesus was a millennialist and there is no kingdom, this is his moment to say, oh, by the way, guys, nothing's going to happen here. What all the prophets have told you is not going to happen, not going to come to pass. It is inexplicably if there is no kingdom for Israel that Jesus didn't say that.

But rather he said, none of your business when that's going to happen. That's very different than saying that's not going to happen. The Greek order, Lord at this time, will you restore the kingdom to Israel? And there are a lot of people who say, oh, there's no kingdom for Israel.

That's not true. We've already gone over that. So if you're going to cancel out the kingdom, you're going to have to explain why Jesus didn't do that.

But what he does tell them here is this. You can't know the time. You cannot know the time.

It's going to come in an hour when you think not. Didn't he say that? Yes, he did. It's going to come like a thief in the night.

He's going to come suddenly. Here we are a couple thousand years later, and I don't have any more information on this than they did. This is something we can't interpret because we don't know the element of time.

But we have good news. That's a good thing to know so that every generation lives as if he might come at any moment. Now, this is the doctrine of imminence.

Luke 19, 13, he said, occupy until I come. He said, work for the night is coming. You live as if every day was your last day.

You invest in every single day, everything that you can for the sake of the kingdom of God. That's why I always say I love vacations, but vacations are overrated. God revealed enough to excite our anticipation and kept enough secrets so we don't know when it is.

So every generation lived in anticipation that it would come at any time, just like we do today. Now, we've studied because we now have got interpretation of the scriptures that we're actually living in the last time. Hosea said he would come in the third year.

We are coming up to the beginning, if not at the third year already. One day is a thousand years. A thousand years is one day.

We've already gone through 2,000 years since Christ. Or if you take Christ literally at not his starting of him in his ministry, but starting of him in the church after his death, the year 2030 is right around the corner. When Paul was talking about the rapture of the church, he said, we who are alive and remain, we, talking about himself as if he could happen in his day.

So they needed to know that as they went out on this task, it was an open-ended situation. They were going to just keep being faithful without ever knowing when it was all going to come to an end. Don't concentrate on that.

Don't speculate on that. In the last couple of weeks or so, Harold Camping died. He died several weeks ago, or matter of fact, a couple of years ago.

I hope you guys have heard of him. He's the one that kept predicting when Jesus was coming to come. He made 12 predictions, and every time he did that, he violated the simple statement of Scripture.

He's coming in an hour you think not. 12 times, and he was wrong every time. There have been all kinds of strange, bizarre groups that have predicted the coming of Christ.

You know, the people who get their pajamas on and sit on the roof on a certain day, ready to go. This is not how we approach the coming of Christ. We work as if every day is our last.

We plan as if he is coming, was far off, and we leave that day to him, and that infuses every waking hour with tremendous responsibility. I don't want to know. Matter of fact, I don't want to know when I die.

I don't need a prediction of that. I don't want any previews of that. I don't want somebody to tell me I'm going to be dead in six months.

I hate doctors. They predict all kinds of stuff, and they're wrong. They're always wrong.

I don't need that. I just want to work every day as if it was my last, which I do. I work constantly.

You can ask my wife. She just says, you know, when are you going to stop? I'm not going to stop. I don't want to know.

Now, that leads us to a simple conclusion. We'll just call it the proper mission. What is this mission? We get that in verse 8. After the power comes on you, you'll be my witnesses.

You shall be my witnesses. You shall be. The Holy Spirit comes, and you become a witness, a teacher, whether or not in words or deeds, but you become a witness of Christ.

This is a statement of fact. You're the only witnesses he has. Think about that.

In Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and even the remotest part of the earth, the word witness is a very interesting word. It's actually martyries, plural. Martyr, but pluralized.

We get the English word here as martyr. What's the connection, you may ask? The connection is that the word witness came to be the word martyr because so many witnesses to the gospel died. They died.

Word came to mean one who dies for his testimony because so many did. So, back in Greek, because they all started dying off immediately, starting preaching. Remember, Stephen was right there, got stoned to death very early in this process.

All of the people that we classify as witnesses became a martyr for him. They all died. You remember when Jesus said, if any man will come after me, he then said, let him deny himself, take up what? The cross, which costs you your life.

You have to be willing to hate your own life. We've talked about this. Christianity is about giving up your total self.

You don't operate this life if you are a true follower of Christ. You just don't. You know what? In thinking about that in our context, I want you to just kind of think this through with me for a moment.

There was no supporting Christian culture at this time. They were going against total paganism. Everything they did was against the grain.

The world was pagan, total pagan. There was no affirmation of some kind of cultural Christianity, cultural Christianity or Christian moral morality. Sorry, scratching my morality.

There were aliens to everything in the culture. The culture had turned against them. That's the reason why Luke, as a historian, used a man like Theophilus to get the word out, because they needed to strike down the fear or stress about this new thing called Christianity.

They went out preaching the words of Jesus about God becoming incarnate, the bread of heaven coming down there. They were saying that if you didn't believe him, you were going to hell forever. Gosh, I think I've said that a number of times in here.

Some of you chastised me of not being politically correct in my speech, but you know what? Hell's hell. And you're going to hell if you're not saved. So that's the truth.

They were saying that people were sinners and they were going to perish in their sin. They were preaching the gospel. They had nothing to support them whatsoever.

It was alien to the Jews. It was a horrible message to the Gentiles. Think about it.

You're going to hell. That's what they were saying. If you don't believe in the gospel, you're a result of your life is hell.

Just that brass tacks. That's what they were saying. That was their message.

Persecution was happening everywhere, so that witnesses essentially became martyrs because it was so tough. Keep in mind that there's no support for that message at all. You think about that kind of connected to our country today.

Most of you older people, like me, grew up in a time period in America where there was cultural Christianity. I remember I was asking as one of my early, early childhood work jobs to pay my father rent, what church I went to. And when I told them the church, they hired me because they knew that if I was going to church that I had some type of morality or societal morality that existed in that little town, okay, for whatever reason.

And that was a kind of Christian consensus in America. People understood the church. They understood the Bible.

They understood the gospel. They understood the morality that came out of the Bible. Sometimes it was called the Judeo-Christian ethic, which you hear today.

But even more, it was a cultural kind of Christianity. If you grew up in the South, specifically, you probably joined a church. There was church probably on almost every corner, like there is now coffee shops or beer pubs in Ireland or whatever, okay? There was a church on every corner.

Some church, because if you joined a church, you could get a job at the bank. You could get a job pretty much anywhere because that was part of the question that the hiring person asked you, what church do you go to? In casual conversation, of course. So if you joined a church, you could be hired somewhere because you were one of the good guys.

If you joined a church, you connected with other people. You networked. And you were socially acceptable because everybody could see you.

And you were religious. Oh, that's going to be a tough one to come with understanding when we get down in Ephesians. And you believed in God.

And that was good. Like the founders of America believe. Oh, but they didn't believe the God of the Bible.

You go back to our founding documents. Now, this might surprise you. If you go back to our founding documents and look at how they referenced God and what they did, it was not the God in the Bible.

But they believed they couldn't keep people moral if there wasn't some divine threat. So they created a God of their own imaging to hold over the people's heads. So there was a belief in God that it was defined primarily by the Bible.

So there was a kind of cultural morality that survived a long time in America. And it was showing up in elections 20 years ago, 15 years ago. There was still a consensus 10 years ago.

We remember the moral majority. You guys are old enough to remember when the politicians were talking about a moral majority. Well, that was supposed to be the Christian cultural majority, the righteous right.

Think about it. There were still to get people elected, some able to have some clout and some power lobbyists, the moral majority lobbyists. Now think about it.

If you're a church, I love this. If you're the church of Christ, why do you think you need to take man and lobby for what God has already provided? Makes no sense. Those days are gone.

They're no more. There's no more cultural Christianity. Thank God.

There is no collective Christian consensus that is going to have any power in this country whatsoever any longer. In fact, the more distinctly Christian we are, the more we are being labeled as extremists. We're back in the days of acts.

Think about it. The church is being persecuted because of its number one thing called belief, faith in God. Bizarre.

We're alien. We're homophobic. We're intolerant.

We're guilty of hate crimes. Cultural Christianity is, as we know it, that kind of consensus coming from a biblical understanding is gone. The people who now vote in America couldn't care less about any morality.

The people who carry the elections, they don't want anything to do with that. They want to escape the extremism of cultural Christianity as they see it. So I think as we go forward in this change, which you're going to see, it's going to come down to this, and this is exactly where it ought to be anyway.

We need to forget the cultural Christianity because people really got going in the wrong direction all that time where they used the cultural Christianity to change your mind. They put lobbyists in to tell Congress what you wanted to have. They started the process on us long before they started the process on the rest of the world.

Because if they didn't have us, the rest of the world wouldn't follow. So they got started on us long ago. Where did they get started? In Acts.

That's how long it's been going. 2,000 years. You do everything you can to vote for morality and family and marriage and all of that because it's better for people to live that way.

Wrong focus. It's better for kids to have two parents. It's better for men and women to get married.

It's better to be moral. It's not to be a criminal. It's better not to commit all kinds of sex outside of marriage or sin on sin on sin on sin.

It's better not to free will through life having relations with anybody you want. That's all bad. Yes, that's bad.

It's better not to do that at all if you want to follow Scripture. And we want what's best for people, if nothing else, as a common grace. We're not going to have any power to make that happen in the future.

And many people thought that was exercising their Christian witness. And was it? Absolutely not. You had no witness in that.

You had somebody representing you and you thought as long as they achieved whatever and they achieved the betterment of society that you thought you were doing your thing. That's not what the Bible says. Christianity went into redefinition and Christianity became some kind of political movement.

It's shifting now. Nobody's going to call it the Christian right. People who used to say things like that now call themselves, used to call themselves the Tea Party, and now they call themselves what? MAGA.

But we're not going to have that kind of clout anymore in this. And we're and what's going to happen is going to have to be back to where we should have been all along. The gospel, the change in life happens by personal testimony to Christ one soul at a time.

This is what we're originally called to do. And as I said earlier, I think we're closer to living in the conditions like those people in the book of Acts than we've ever been in our history of our country. The church has now got to separate itself and take leadership and come back into society.

And this is where God reveals himself, comes back into society as the leader of the society. We're like aliens in an increasingly anti-Christian culture. And what is our witness? Our witness is to give testimony to Christ, to speak of Christ, to speak the gospel.

Obviously, you could say a lot about that, but I'm just going to leave it short at that point. We need to say everything we can possibly say about Christ personally. That is the testimony that the scriptures tell us to use.

I want to point out one thing to you. If you are a Christian, you have received the Holy Spirit as a fact. That's a gift.

If you have received the Holy Spirit, then you're a witness. The only question is if you're a faithful one or an unfaithful one and your Christian witness isn't discharged by getting mad at non-Christians. You're to love everybody.

You're to hate the sin. You're to hate everything God hates. You're to love everybody as a soul, not to associate with them because you can't allow their focus to jump the fence, jump monkey to you.

Your Christian witness is scandalized by doing that. They are the mission field. Matter of fact, the Catholic Church is the largest mission field we have outside of the Mormons and a few others, and the kingdom advances not through politics, not through some kind of cultural morality.

The kingdom advances one soul at a time through personal testimony, personal witness from you, from me, from me. Maybe it includes teaching, which I'm doing for you. Maybe it includes neighbors and giving them a Bible study.

Maybe it's a one-on-one, but that's the way the kingdom advances. Spirit-filled, spirit-powered individual believers are made witnesses who give testimony to the power of the gospel and the truth of the gospel on a personal level. That's how people are going to understand.

And so again, the kingdom advances one soul at a time. So there's a final tool that he gives us, and it's called the proper motive. Proper motive is tied to proper mystery.

Verse nine, after he said these things, he was lifted up while they were looking on and a cloud received him out of their sight. And as they were gazing intently into the sky while he was going, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside him, two angels appeared. They also said, men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky gazing? The verb here is very strong.

Why are you transfixed, gazing into the sky as if you were losing him? Then Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come again in just the same way as you've watched him go into heaven. He went in clouds, he'll come back in clouds. Is that a motive? Yeah, that should be a motive.

That should be the great motive. You might ask, what do you mean? I mean, he's coming back. Our motive is the fact that we're getting a redeemed, redemption.

We're learning, excuse me, we're learning that in Ephesians. That should be our great motive, is the fact we get fully redeemed. I mean, listen to what John wrote at the very end of the book of Revelation.

He who testified to these things says, yes, I am coming quickly. And then John says, come Lord Jesus, I'm coming quickly. My reward is with me to give to every man.

That's the motive. He's coming. He's coming suddenly, unexpectedly, and that kind of splits into two realities, a personal meeting and an eternal reward.

What's the personal meeting side of this? Okay, so let's look at that a moment. There shall every man have praise from God, 1 Corinthians. You'll be rewarded for what is gold, silver, precious stones.

That's the other side of it. The personal meeting, well done, good and faithful servant, the eternal reward crown that he gives to the faithful servants. So it's twofold motivation, that when I see him face to face, I want to know I love him.

I want to hear, well done, good and faithful servant, and I want to receive full reward. John says, look to yourselves that you lose, not the things you have wrought, but that you receive a full reward. What about, what have I said? There are some Christians that have got their ticket booked, but they're not going to like their place when they get there.

Why? Because that is all you've So that's the message to that first generation of 12 apostles. And here we are 2000 years later, and amazingly, by the power of the Holy Spirit, they were able to get it started right. And now Christianity in our generation is circling the gold in a way that we would never have ever imagined the day in which we are living.

Just imagine, you can hear teachings all over the world. People are reviewing our teachings on this site from places thousands of miles away. Everything we give in this language is taught to them, not in their language yet.

They haven't built that translator yet, but it's going to happen. Okay, but they can hear it in a language that they can understand because English is a universal language. The gospel is circling the globe.

We're living in the greatest revival of biblical truth in the history of the world, simply because its electronic capabilities circle the globe. We also are nearer the second coming than we've ever been as the gospel is extended to the ends of the earth. Many verses in the New Testament encourage us to be faithful until it comes.

It's my hope maybe you'll see that in a fresh light. So we have set the stage for the whole Book of Acts now by looking at verses 1 through 11, but mainly focusing on 1 through about 8. In looking at the tool set, the resources, and the first transition of the apostles that had to be necessary for this to even get kick-started. So we have kick-started the Book of Acts.

We have kick-started the church. We've kick-started everything that is in our age that we live today in the last several weeks. And we'll migrate then further into chapter 1 verse 12 by looking at the replacement of Judas starting next week.

Any questions, guys? Comments? Whatever. Norma Jean? Because we're studying a lot of the writings of Luke, a question that I've had that's come up, and I've tried to do some research, is Luke a Gentile or a Jew? And then also as a historian, he was not one of the apostles that was with Christ. So as the historian, where did he get all of his facts that he was writing down? Okay, Luke is a Jew, and he walked with the apostles the entire apostle life, all the way up to Paul's imprisonment in Rome at the end of Acts.

So Luke, as a historian, was a doctor, and he practiced his medicine during the road trips where he walked with Christ and the apostles, and he documented all of the life of Christ as a seer through his own eyes. So he actually walked with Christ? Absolutely. Oh, okay.

I didn't realize that. Thank you. Anything else, Sam? Are we going to see a Saul turn into a Paul in today's society? In today's society? Yeah, the way everything's evolving, it's almost like somebody may step up on the bad side and turn to the good side.

You know what? I can't answer that question, but the possibility is there, okay? Because the only thing that's not a possibility in all of this is gathering apostles, because apostles today do not meet the criteria of apostles at that time. But that doesn't mean that you can't have a prophet or an evangelist do that. I mean, so the possibility is there, Sam.

I just don't have any knowledge of that being a fact. Okay. Yeah, just looking at how Damascus has come back into play in the news as well, so kind of brought on a thought process of that.

So I think it is in Acts. I think it's Acts 9, 11, where he talks about Saul going down the street. You know, Christ reveals himself to people as he wants.

I mean, just because the Bible stops with John's letter to the churches about revelation doesn't mean Christ's work stopped. That's what we're taught in the church, that basically we have to look at what the Bible says and not relate it to current day process. Christ is alive and well.

The words are living. We live in that. So Christ can reveal himself.

He can pick and choose who he wants. He calls us just like he called them. So yeah, the possibility is there, but God's not revealed anything like that to me.

So I can't, I wouldn't know specifically one way or the other. All right. Thank you.

Maria. Okay. I have a question about when you said that Jesus was baptized, but John.

Okay. And you said something about the Gentiles. I kind of missed that.

You said that. Jesus. Okay.

You got to think about this. When did Jesus become the Christ? That's number one. So and the Christ is not just for Jews, it's for Gentiles.

Right. So the mantle shift from Jesus becoming the Christ happened at his baptism. So the outwardly baptism activity made known to mankind that this person named Jesus, the Holy Spirit descended upon him like a dove, which had never been done in history.

And Jesus became mantled with the Christ. And that mantle ship was for the whole world, not just the Jewish nation. Okay.

Now, can I ask you something about Judas? Sure. Okay. Judas betrayed Christ.

Okay. Now, my understanding is Stephen replaced Judas. No, Stephen did not replace Judas.

Matthias replaced Judas. Oh, Matthias. Okay.

And you're going to find that in next week's lesson, starting in chapter 12. Okay. Now, you were talking about, you know, we supposed to glorify God and our living, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera.

And then, you know, Jesus was very charismatic. I mean, people just came to him. Yeah.

And but you're saying that we're not supposed to associate with nonbelievers. So I'm trying to. Everybody's freezing.

You know, how do you how do you how do you bring the gospel to these people if we don't talk to them? I didn't say you didn't talk to them. I didn't say you didn't love them. I said you don't associate with them.

In other words, you do not in a social setting associate with them. You do not bring them into your church and allow them to become members of your church without knowing there's their salvation history. You don't you don't go into business with them.

You don't marry them. You don't do these things because they bring on to you their sinful nature, which is what you try to get rid of. Right.

OK, so. All right. When when Jesus went to the.

The tax collectors house, OK, what was he doing? He was ministering to him. OK, so. When you go to when you're invited to a party.

OK. And of course, you go ask God, you know, is there somebody here that you want me to minister to or do I go or do I not go? That's what we do. That's what I do.

That's what you should I do. That's what I do. Yeah.

OK. But that's that's what you mean that I mean, like I will be going there. What is our intention when we go? It's not to mingle, but it's to minister.

And if you minister in the right frame, in what I call being in the spirit, then the spirit protects you while you're ministering to those people. Right. Right.

OK. I just wanted to try to get a clarification of what you meant, because I I don't know. I mean, I mean, not that I don't know.

I'm just trying to get an understanding of what you were trying to say when you say don't associate with nonbelievers. Well, the reason why Christ tells that in the Bible is because you don't want to go back yoked underneath the sinful nature that you came out of. And right now, I agree with that.

I agree with the basis of this. This physical life is sin. This body is pride of life.

Less of the less of the eyes, you know, all kinds of stuff. All right. And that happens to that.

That can happen to us at any moment. If we let down our guard in any way in a in a situation that knowing we're going into the lion's den, we don't have protection. We're going for the wrong reason.

That opens the door to sin that opens the door to for you falling, falling farther than what you might think, by the way. OK. OK, thank you.

You're mean by Christianity became a political right, like the Tea Party and the MAGA group? I mean, I didn't they use they use the Christian symbol to create a political focus. OK, so we're saying the MAGA thing is basically basically what's happened is and you need you need to take this in stride and don't think too much about it, but understand what I'm trying to say here. Is it our grandparents and even some of us that are old like me can understand the fact that when we grew up, the first thing that was thought about in the home was God.

Really? OK, OK. And over a very short period of that. The powers that be that have been in control for over 2000 years said if we're going to control this population, if we're going to control society and change society like we want it, we have to first.

Control the church. Right. So they they started political movements focused on terms like moral majority lobbyists.

Moral, moral, the moral morality of this world comes from the church. So they begin to put things in motion that took away your individual responsibility. I think about that word, your individual responsibility to administer to people one on one for salvation of souls and teaching them then the understanding about what this what our governing rules and responsibility are that's based upon the church.

Manipulated our emotions. That's absolutely right. So they gain control over the church.

And they took control over seminaries, they took control over religious schools, they took control over all that stuff and begin to teach their morality. Oh, OK. What happened was is the the result of the Tea Party was to break away from that.

The basis of the Tea Party was to break away from that. Oh, OK. And the Tea Party then turned in to MAGA.

But the difference is, is we have a leader at the top that is bringing Christian moral values back into the fray and is trying to decentralize everything back down to the people where we originally started out in our grandparents and our our young days. They're trying to take it back to that level. So but the the the powers are treating that as Christian nationalists and they're calling that MAGA and they're calling that extremists and they're calling that domestic terrorists, the same thing that happened in the Book of Acts.

OK, all right. OK, I understand that now. Hello.

Wow. So they just keep turning everybody's words around. And oh, my gosh.

It's hard to believe. You need to understand that because that is that is the truth. Yeah.

You need to understand it. And you can't allow it to happen again. Yeah.

And you hear that on the media constantly. You know how MAGA is extreme, you know. Sure.

Yeah, it's I mean, OK, I understand that now. So, OK, thank you. Hey, guys, anything else? Sure.

All right. Let's close in prayer. We'll call it a day.

Father, thank you for this time. Father, it's wonderful to get together with like-minded people and study your word. We ask that you open your word and reveal that which each one of us needs to have from it.

We ask that you open our hearts, providing that understanding culminated into wisdom that will change our beliefs as necessary. We ask that you continue to bless us and continue to show us the way to pull down those heavenly blessings into our life eternal process today. Father, we ask for your guidance, your patience.

We ask that you bestow not only those to us, but bestow us to them so that we may not only understand what they mean, but be able to practice them in our lives. Father, we ask that you go with us, protect us and bless us today and the rest of the week and the things to come. We know that everything is in your hands and timing of everything you will provide.

Father, more importantly, we ask you that we love the fact that you have forgiven us of all our sins even before the foundation of the world and know that all we have to do is constantly be cleansed by the Holy Spirit in our sanctification process. We love you. We seek your guidance in all things.

In your son's holy name. All right, guys. Let me cut this off.