

A MINISTRY FOR HUNGRY SAINTS

UNDER THE EXALTED CHRIST, THE GOSPEL BEGINS TO SPREAD

THE ACTS

† THE BOOK OF ACTS

OF THE APOSTLES

An overview of the Book of Acts, by Given O. Blakely

ACTS 5:31-32

"Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are His witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey Him."

"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:12)

Lesson #3

COMMENTARY ON: 1:12-14

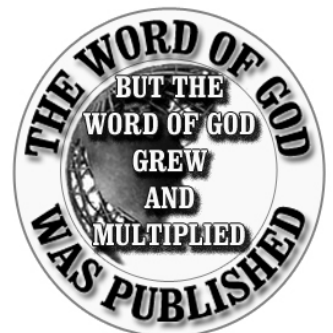
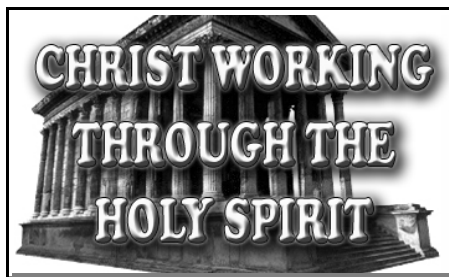
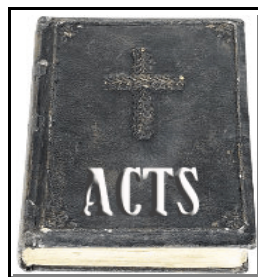
THE DISCIPLES RETURN TO JERUSALEM

After being commanded by Him to tarry in Jerusalem until they were endued with "power from on high," Christ's disciples, had witnessed His ascension into heaven. The world was on the verge of being impacted by a revolutionary and powerful message. It would be delivered by those who were invested with Divine power. These people, though accustomed to being in the bodily presence of the Lord, would embark upon their mission without that presence. They would not be directed from without, as they were when Jesus was "among" them, but would be empowered and directed from within. Throughout their tenure with Jesus of Nazareth, they had been oriented for this time – even though they were not as aware of that orientation as they now would be. From the standpoint of the flesh, these people were ordinary, but in a few days, they would be transformed into bold and effective witnesses.

ACTS 17:26-27

"And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us."

"... 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." (Acts 1:8)



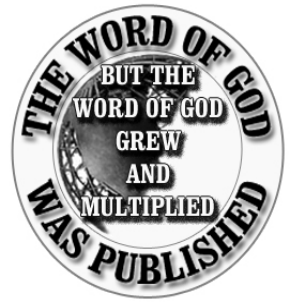
Since May, 1993, a ministry instituted for the encouragement of believers in Christ



A MINISTRY INITIATED IN MAY 1993, AND DEDICATED TO BUILDING THE FAITH AND ENHANCING THE HOPE OF THOSE WHO ARE WORKING OUT THEIR OWN SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING.

The Book of Acts

Lesson Number 3



THE INSPIRED RECORD OF HOW THE EXALTED CHRIST, BY THE HOLY SPIRIT, WORKED THROUGH HIS APOSTLES AND HOLY MEN TO SPREAD THE WORD OF THE GOSPEL THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE WORLD.

TRANSLATION LEGEND: AMPLIFIED or AMP = Amplified Bible, (1965), ASV = American Standard Version (1901), BBE = Bible in Basic English (1949), DRA = Douay-Rheims (1899), ESV = English Standard Version (2001), IE = International English, ISV = International Standard Version (1967), JPS = Jewish Publication Society (1917), KJV = King James Version (1611), LIVING = Living Bible (1971), MONTGOMERY = Montgomery's New Testament (2001), MRD = Peshitta-James Murdock Translation (1852), NAB = New American Bible (2002), NASB = New American Standard Bible (1977), NAU = New American Standard Bible (1995), NIB = New International Bible, NIV = New International Version (1984), NJB = New Jerusalem Bible (1985), NKJV = New King James Version (1979), NLT = New Living Translation (1996), NRSV = New Revised Standard Version (1989), PHILLIPS = J B Phillips New Testament (1962), PNT = BISHOP'S New Testament (1595), RSV = Revised Standard Version (1952), TNK = JPS Tanakh (1985), Webster = The Webster Bible (1833), WEYMOUTH = Weymouth's New Testament (1903), WILLIAMS = William's New Testament (1937), TNK = JPS Tanakh (1985), TYNDALE = Tyndale's Bible (1526), WYCLIFFE = Wycliffe New Testament (1382), YLT = Young's Literal Translation (1862).

LEXICON LEGEND: FRIEBERG = Friberg Lexicon, UBS = UBS Lexicon, LOUW-NIDA = Louw-Nida Lexicon, LIDDELL SCOTT = Liddell Scott Lexicon, THAYER = Thayer's Greek Lexicon

----- Lexicon and Bible Translation Codes with Identification -----

DISCLAIMER: The quoting of other translations is not to be taken as a condoning of them. My purpose is rather to show the remarkable diversity, and sometimes outright contradictions that exist among these various versions of Scripture. Our understanding of the Word of God ultimately depends upon our comprehension of the Lord Himself and His eternal purpose. Where this understanding is not present, we are shut up to scholasticism and conjecture, both of which are of the world, not of God.

THE DISCIPLES RETURN TO JERUSALEM

“ 1:12 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.” (Acts 1:12-14)

INTRODUCTION

After being commanded by Him to tarry in Jerusalem until they were endued with “power from on high,” Christ's disciples, had witnessed His ascension into heaven. At this time, the world was on the verge of being impacted by a revolutionary and powerful message. It would be delivered by those who were invested with Divine power.

DIRECTED FROM WITHIN

These people, though accustomed to being in the bodily presence of the

Lord, would embark upon their mission **without** that visible and tangible presence. They would not be directed from without, as they were when Jesus was “among” them, but would be empowered and directed **from within**.

The New Covenant is “new” in every way. The covenant itself is not one of worldly prosperity and visible impressions. It is not a covenant that is established upon signs and wonders, and sensible manifestations – even though

such things do occur. **This is a covenant in which an essential change is wrought in the people themselves.** All of the activities of those who participate in that covenant reflect that essential change.

Lest we forget the nature of the New Covenant, or are unduly impressed by those pretending to represent the Lord Jesus, let your heart again ponder the covenant under which Christ's messengers will operate. Everything about their activities will confirm the

Those who have been commanded to tarry in Jerusalem for power, now return to the holy city to wait – by Given O. Blakely

CONTENTS

- OBEDIENT DISCIPLES (1:12)
- THEY WENT INTO AN UPPER ROOM (1:13a)
- THE ELEVEN (1:13b)
- THE WAITING BEGINS (1:14a)
- DO NOT FORGET THE OTHERS (1:14b)
- CONCLUSION

reality of these characteristics.

- ⇒ **The mind would be effected.** *“I will put my laws into their mind”* (Heb 8:10a). That is, the people will think differently. Their thoughts reflect the mind and law of the Lord. Their thinking is in strict harmony with the word of the Lord. The way in which they think, as well as the substance of their thoughts, will be in accord with the mind and will of the Lord. Their thoughts and meditations would be *“acceptable”* in the sight of the Lord (Psa 19:14).
- ⇒ **The heart would be effected.** *“and write [My laws] them in their hearts”* (Heb 8:10b). That is, the affections, desires, preferences, and objectives of the people will be wholly altered. They would have an appetite for the Word of the Lord, desiring it more than their *“necessary food”* (Job 23:12). Their *“delight”* would be in the *“law of the Lord”* (Psa 1:2), and they would *“love”* it with zeal and consistency (Psa 119:97). The people will want to obey the Lord.
- ⇒ **God would be their God.** *“I will be to them a God,”* or *“I will be their God”* ^{NKJV} (Heb 8:10c). That is, the people would not consider any other god, or be drawn away from the true God. The real God would be their preference, the One they confessed, and the only One they served.
- ⇒ **They will be God’s People.** *“... they shall be to me a people”* (Heb 8:10d). That is, God will freely identify Himself with the people, not having to confess their recalcitrance as He did with Israel (Ex 32:9; 33:3,5; Deut 9:13; Isa 30:9; 65:2; Rom 10:21).

⇒ **They would ALL know the Lord.** *“And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest”* (Heb 8:11). That is, they would all be acquainted with the Lord, know His ways, and walk with Him.

⇒ **Sins would be Forgiven and Remembered no more.** *“For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more”* (Heb 8:12). That is, sin would be put away, the conscience purged, and justification from all things realized.

It is within the framework of this covenant that Christ’s laborers would conduct their affairs. They would speak with circumcised and illuminated hearts. They would teach with understanding and insight. All of this would be made possible through the power of the Holy Spirit who would come upon them.

THEY SPEAK FROM WITHIN

From their bellies would *“flow rivers of living water”* (John 7:38). They would, in the ultimate sense, fulfill the words spoken to Job by Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite: *“For I am full of matter, the spirit within me constraineth me. Behold, my belly is as wine which hath no vent; it is ready to burst like new bottles”* (Job 32:18-19). Solomon’s words would be brought to their full measure: *“The mouth of a righteous man is a well of life”* (Prov 10:11). They would set the tone for *“the day of salvation,”* with joy drawing *“water out of the wells of salvation”* (Isa 12:4). In fulfillment of Zechariah’s prophecy, *“living waters shall go out from Jerusalem”* (Zech 14:8).

THEY WERE ORIENTED FOR THIS

Throughout their tenure with Jesus of Nazareth, they had been

oriented for this time – even though they were not as aware of that orientation as they now would be. The Spirit moved Mark to write this concerning the apostles: *“And He ordained twelve, that they should be with Him, and that He might send them forth to preach”* (Mark 3:14).

It is true that Jesus, upon returning to heaven, was going to empower them by sending His Spirit to dwell within them. As He Himself said, *“And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him: for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you”* (John 14:16-17). Again He said, *“Nevertheless I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you”* (John 16:7).

However, there was a three and one-half year investment in these men before they were given the Holy Spirit. **They were exposed to the Divine manner – to the compassion of the Lord, as well as His indignation with pretentious religion.** They beheld the subjection of the spiritual underworld to Him, and how readily it yielded to His authority.

It appears as though precious few people have suddenly been wafted into spiritual maturity and empowerment. Many of Christ’s disciples were disciples of John first, readying them to become Christ’s own disciples. As it is written, *“Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples; and looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God! And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus”* (John 1:35-37). John goes on to tell us that one of those disciples was *“Andrew,*

It is within the framework of this covenant that Christ’s laborers would conduct their affairs. They would speak with circumcised and illuminated hearts. They would teach with understanding and insight.

It is not proper to expect to make great spiritual strides without some investment of your person. Mediocre disciples are nothing more than the result of second-rate interest and investment.

Simon Peter's brother" (John 1:40).

A Point to be Seen

Suffice it to say, there is something to be seen in all of this. **It is not proper to expect to make great spiritual strides without some investment of your person.** Mediocre disciples are nothing more than the result of second-rate interest and investment. If you want a lot from the Lord, then you must give Him a lot of yourself.

ORDINARY, YET EXTRAORDINARY

From the standpoint of the flesh,

these people were ordinary, but in a few days, they would be transformed into bold and effective witnesses. **When the Spirit of God came upon them, they would be anything but ordinary.**"

From this very hour, they will begin conducting their affairs with insight and great expectation. Jesus would no sooner leave them than they would begin doing exactly what He said. They would even be led to fulfill a need of which Jesus had not specially told them.

Now we will begin to see how the people of God go about their lives with an **absent Jesus** – present with them only in

Spirit, and out of the reach of their senses. Keep in mind, this is **not** how they have lived during the past three and a half years. There have been very few times when they were required to launch out without the physical presence of Jesus – as when they were sent across the sea by themselves (Mk 6:46-48). Now, however, they would live out the rest of their lives in the service of the risen Christ – while they are *"absent from the Lord"* (2 Cor 5:8).

The presence of Jesus with them during the previous forty days has had a calculated effect upon their persons. **Even while they wait for "the promise of the Father," there will be a marked difference in their thinking and conduct.**

These disciples will not set up an accountability network, or pass out a list of rules and regulations among themselves. **They will operate within the framework of faith's awareness of the Person of the glorified Christ, and His words to them while He was with them.** We will behold how men live by faith.

OBEDIENT DISCIPLES

^{1:12} **Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey."**

Having been told by the heavenly messengers that they would see Jesus again – at the appointed time – they commence the time of waiting. Jesus had told them what to do during the next few days, and now they were to commence the doing of it.

MEMORIALS

The disciples do not linger on the Mount of Olives, nor do they build a shrine there, as some professed Christians are wont to do. In fact, there have even been holy men who erected monuments to the occasions of Divine deliverance and revelation.

JACOB. When Jacob *"went out of Beersheba, and went toward Haran,"* the Lord appeared to him in a dream,

confirming the extension of the Abrahamic covenant through him. It so impressed the patriarch that he took the stone he had used for a pillow *"and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it."* He called the name of the place Bethel, and made a monument of the stone. *"And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee"* (Gen 28:22).

MOSES. When Moses received the Law he made a holy monument to the occasion. *"And Moses wrote all the words of the LORD, and rose up early in the morning, and builded an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. And he sent young men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt offerings, and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen unto the LORD"* (Ex 24:4-5).

ISRAEL. When Israel crossed

over in to Canaan, according to the word of the Lord through Moses, they assembled some very large stones, plastering them with plaster, and writing upon them all the words of the Law. They also build an altar there with untooled stones (Deut 27:1-6).

JOSHUA. When Israel went into the promised land, the Lord commanded Joshua to have a chosen man from each of the twelve tribes take a stone from the middle of the Jordan – where the priests feet stood as they crossed over. They then erected these stones as a sort of memorial to their crossing. When children of future generations inquired about these stones, the people would testify to the parting of the Jordan, and of their crossing over it into the promised land (Josh 4:1-9).

JOSHUA. After entering the promised land, Joshua gathered the people together in Shechem. There he made a covenant with them to do all the

Those who have been commanded to tarry in Jerusalem for power, now return to the holy city to wait – by Given O. Blakely

words of the Lord. To mark the occasion, Joshua wrote all of the words of the covenant in a book, took a great stone and set it up under an oak tree. That stone became a witness to the people (Josh 24:25-27).

SAMUEL. During the days of the Judges, when Israel had soundly defeated the Philistines, Samuel “took a stone, and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Ebenezer, saying, Hitherto hath the LORD helped us” (1 Sam 7:12).

However, even though the occasion we are considering transcended all of those former occurrences, yet there was no monument or pillar erected on the Mount of Olives. The disciples left the Mount without establishing a visible memorial on it – something that was completely out of harmony with the conduct of many righteous people of the past. Why was this so?

The nature of the New Covenant does not allow for the accent of visible things. It is a covenant in which the heart and mind are the prominent part. While there is nothing inherently evil about memorials as established prior to Christ, they are of a lower order, necessitated because of the rarity of faith. In Christ there are two visible ordinances that are, in one sense of speaking, memorials. They differ, however, from the kind of memorials mentioned above. They are baptism and the Lord’s table. While both of them can be seen with the eye, their power is found in their spiritual nature.

Our Baptism

Baptism identifies a point in time when we came into Christ (Gal 3:27a), put on Christ (Gal 3:27b), our sins were washed away (Acts 22:16), we received the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38), realized the circumcision of Christ (Col 2:11-12), and were placed in the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:13). When we ponder our baptism with a mind that is “controlled by the Spirit”^{NIV} (Rom 8:6), we realize that we became “dead to sin,” and therefore can “live no longer therein” (Rom 6:2-7). We also are brought to the conclusion that we are now “alive unto God” as well as “dead indeed unto sin,” and are therefore morally obligated to yield our “members

as instruments of righteousness unto God” (Rom 6:8-13). **Thus, our baptism does for us what stone monuments did for holy men of old, who lived in inferior times and under an inferior covenant.** This difference, however, exists. Our baptism is not something we built, but something we “obeyed from the heart” (Rom 6:17).

The Lord’s Table

Here is an ordinance in which our memories become intensely active. It is not the table itself that provokes the memory, but eating and drinking what has been spread upon it. “Take, eat: this is My body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of . . . This cup is the new testament in My blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me” (1 Cor 11:24-25). There is a very real fellowship, or “communion” that takes place at this table – a “communion” in which we realize afresh our participation in the benefits that flow from the death of Christ. Therefore we read of “the communion of the blood of Christ” and “the communion of the body of Christ” (1 Cor 10:16). Additionally, at this memorial we openly proclaim our embrace of the death of Christ, and our anticipation of Him coming again: “For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord’s death till he come” (1 Cor 11:26). The “table of the Lord,”

book that details the activities of those living under a new and better covenant. There will be occasions when the apostles must confront the tendency to cling to the manners of the Old Covenant – something that is strictly forbidden under the better testament.

Even in the words we now will consider, there appears to be a marked separation from the old order. There is no request to build a tabernacle on the mountain, as when the disciples witnessed Moses and Elijah returning from the unseen world to speak with Jesus (Matt 17:4; Mk 9:5; Lk 9:33). None of those who were present gathered stones to erect a pillar, devoted to the remembrance of the marvelous ascension of Christ into heaven. No one considered erecting plastered stones in memory of Jesus lifting up His hands and blessing them there. **Their hearts were already being reshaped, so that they thought differently about spiritual epochs.**

THEY RETURNED TO JERUSALEM FROM THE MOUNT

“Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet . . .” Other versions read, “Then they returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives,”^{NASB} “Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet,”^{NIV} “Then they went

The nature of the New Covenant does not allow for the accent of visible things. It is a covenant in which the heart and mind are the prominent part. While there is nothing inherently evil about memorials as established prior to Christ, they are of a lower order, necessitated because of the rarity of faith.

therefore is to us what memorial pillars and stones were to the godly in past ages. Again, it is different in that it is not something we build or erect, but something we do with devout resolution and purpose.

Why Say These Things?

I have said these things because we are embarking upon the review of a

back to Jerusalem from the mountain named Olivet,”^{BBE} “And afterwards they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called the place of Olives,”^{M RD} “So from the Mount of Olives, as it is called, they went back to Jerusalem,”^{NJB} “The apostles were at the Mount of Olives when this happened,”^{NLT} “Then the apostles went back to Jerusalem from Olive Mountain,”^{IE} and “Then [the

Those who have been commanded to tarry in Jerusalem for power, now return to the holy city to wait – by Given O. Blakely

disciples] went back to Jerusalem from the hill called Olivet.”^{AMPLIFIED}

They Returned

In his gospel, Luke tells us **how** the disciples returned: “*And it came to pass, while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy*” (Luke 24:51-52).

They Worshiped Him

Even though Jesus had ascended out of their sight, “*they worshiped Him!*” – even though they did not see Him. This was something they had never done before. Previously some of His disciples “*worshiped Him*” “*when they SAW Him*” (Matt 28:17). When the Lord calmed the storm following walking to the disciples on the water, the disciples “*came and worshipped Him*” (Matt 14:33). **Now, however, they worship a Jesus they could not see.** It was the beginning of a new epoch!

With Great Joy

On the eve of His betrayal, the disciples had sorrowed when He told them He was going away. “*But now I go my way to Him that sent Me; and none of you asketh Me, Whither goest thou? But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart*” (John 16:5-6). He also told them, “*ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy*” (John 16:20). **Now the very disciples who were sorrowful when informed their Lord was leaving them, are rejoicing even though He had, in fact, left them.** A new era had begun!

In The Temple

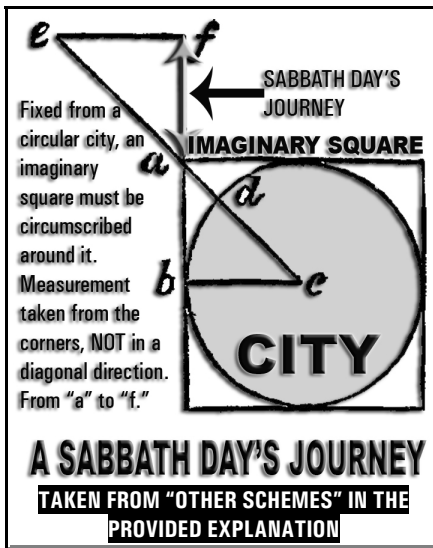
In his gospel, Luke also say, “*And were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen*” (Luke 24:53). We know this refers to the period prior to Pentecost, for Luke says his gospel covers activities through Christ’s ascension (Lk 1:1-2). This verse, therefore, refers to the ten days that followed Christ’s ascension, until the day of Pentecost.

What a change had been wrought in the disciples! Cleopas and his friend were in a state of despair after Christ’s death (Lk 24:17-24). On the day of the resurrection, the disciples were behind closed doors “*for fear of the Jews*” (John

20:19). But now that Jesus has ascended, visibly leaving their presence, they “*stayed continually at the temple, praising God*”^{NASB} (Luke 24:53). Surely, a new day was beginning!

A SABBATH DAY’S JOURNEY

“... which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day’s journey.” Other versions read, “*a Sabbath day’s walk from the city,*”^{NASB} “*which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day’s journey away,*”^{NIV} “*which was near to Jerusalem, and distant from it about seven furlongs,*”^{MRD} “*a short distance away, no more than a Sabbath walk,*”^{NJB} “*so they walked the half mile back to Jerusalem,*”^{NLT} “[*This mountain is about three-quarters of a mile from Jerusalem,*”^{IE} and “*which is near Jerusalem, [only] a Sabbath day’s journey (three-quarters of a mile) away.*”^{AMPLIFIED}



A Sabbath day’s journey was 2,000 cubits from one’s house or domicile, or 1000-1200 yards, or around 1/2 to 3/4 of a mile. The following is an explanation of “*Sabbath day’s journey,*” and of the manner in which it was determined. This was all the result of human interpretation, **not** Divine iteration.

EXPLANATION of SABBATH DAY’S JOURNEY

Used only in Acts 1:12, where it designates the distance from Jerusalem to the Mount of Olives, to which Jesus led His disciples on the day of His ascension. The expression comes from rabbinical usage

to indicate the distance a Jew might travel on the Sabbath without transgressing the Law, the command against working on that day **being interpreted as including travel** (see Ex 16:27-30). The limit set by the rabbis to the Sabbath day’s journey was 2,000 cubits from one’s house or domicile, which was *derived from the statement found in Josh 3:4* that this was the distance between the ark and the people on their march, *this being assumed to be the distance between the tents of the people and the tabernacle during the sojourn in the wilderness. Hence, it must have been allowable to travel thus far to attend the worship of the tabernacle.* We do not know when this assumption in regard to the Sabbath day’s journey was made, but it seems to have been in force in the time of Christ. The distance of the Mount of Olives from Jerusalem is stated in Josephus (Ant., XX, viii, 6) to have been five stadia or furlongs and in B.J., V, ii, 3, six stadia, the discrepancy being explained by supposing a different point of departure. This would make the distance of t from 1,000 to 1,200 yards, the first agreeing very closely with the 2,000 cubits. *The rabbis, however, invented a way of increasing this distance without technically infringing the Law, by depositing some food at the 2,000-cubit limit, before the Sabbath, and declaring that spot a temporary domicile.* They might then proceed 2,000 cubits from this point without transgressing the Law.

And in some cases even this intricacy of preparation was unnecessary. If, for instance, the approach of the Sabbath found one on his journey, *the traveler might select some tree or some stone wall at a distance of 2,000 paces and mentally declare this to be his residence for the Sabbath,* in which case he was permitted to go the 2,000 paces to the selected tree or wall and also 2,000 paces beyond, but in such a case he must do the work thoroughly and must say: “*Let my Sabbath residence be at the trunk of that tree,*” for if he merely said: “*Let my Sabbath residence be under that tree,*” this would not be sufficient, because the expression would be too general and indefinite (Tractate Erubin 4:7).

OTHER SCHEMES for extending the distance have been devised, such as *regarding the quarter of the town in which one dwells, or the whole town itself, as the domicile, thus allowing one to proceed from any part of the town to a point 2,000 cubits beyond its utmost limits.* This was most probably the case with walled towns, at least, and boundary stones have been found in the vicinity of Gaza with inscriptions supposed to mark these limits. The 2,000-cubit limits around the Levitical cities (Num 35:5) *may have suggested the limit of the Sabbath day’s journey also.* The term came to be used as a designation of distance which must have been more or less definite. INTERNATIONAL STANDARD BIBLE ENCYCLOPEDIA

The graphic of “A Sabbath Day’s Journey” illustrates the manner of calculation described in the above section (“Other Schemes.”) The city, in this case, was viewed as a circle. An imaginary box was then drawn around the city. The distance of the “*Sabbath Day’s journey*” was then calculated from the corner of the box Northward (a to f). It was not permitted to be calculated as an angle (a to e). The reason for this was that it made allowance for a slightly longer “*journey*” (b to f). This indicated that the real intent of the interpretation was not to strictly fulfill the Law. Rather the

intention was to give as much allowance to the individual as was possible without actually breaking the Law. Note the assumptions of the makers of this tradition.

- ⇒ That the prohibition of work on the Sabbath day included traveling.
- ⇒ That the distance between the ark of the covenant and the people (when crossing Jordan into Canaan) was a standard distance.
- ⇒ The distance of 2,000 cubits was assumed to be the distance between the tents of the people and the tabernacle around which they were pitched.

the Word of God itself.

The Initial Building Block

Here is the word the Lord with which the rabbis started. *“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it”* (Ex 20:8-11).

Notice, there is not a single word

of his place on the seventh day. So the people rested on the seventh day” (Ex 16:27-). Now, they conclude that even though the Israelites were commanded to stay in their tents on the Sabbath day (in regard to gathering manna), the fact that they did, in fact, leave their tents, indicated that travel was allowed within the perimeter of the camp. They had abused this allowance by looking for manna, but the travel itself was allowed.

Adding Another Building Block

Now, the Rabbis must come up with a legitimate traveling distance. It must be as lenient as possible, giving every advantage to themselves. Therefore, they take a text from the book of Joshua that had to do with traveling. When Israel crossed Jordan, a certain distance had to remain between the people and the ark of the covenant, that was being carried by the priests. *“Yet there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure: come not near unto it, that ye may know the way by which ye must go: for ye have not passed this way heretofore”* (Josh 3:4). That seemed like a comfortable distance – one with which they could live. Therefore 2,000 cubits was set as the distance of legitimate travel on the Sabbath day.

Adding An Assumption

Working with these three building blocks, some human assumption was also required. The first assumption was that the Sabbath day commandment was, in fact, addressing the matter of travel.

Adding Another Assumption

To this, another assumption was added – namely that the distance between the people and the ark of the covenant was also the distance established between the encampment of the Israelites and the tabernacle, which was in the center of the camp.

Adding Another Assumption

Yet another assumption is made, namely that the rules were more lenient for someone who was traveling on the Sabbath day. They were thus allowed to establish a temporary place of residence, and do their calculations from that point.

Adding Another Assumption

The additional assumption that

Religious men have this penchant for making applications, even if they have to force them into the revelation of God itself. Further, they have no compunctions at all about binding them upon men, even

- ⇒ The rabbi’s increased the distance by placing some food at the 2,000-cubit limit, and declaring that a temporary domicile.
- ⇒ If traveling, the individual could select a wall or a tree at a distance of about 2,000 paces, and declare that his domicile.
- ⇒ An elaborate calculation was made by making the town an imaginary circle, then placing an imaginary square around it. The calculation was then made to give the greatest possible advantage to the individual.

AN EXCELLENT EXAMPLE OF THE TRADITIONS OF MEN

Here we have a most excellent example of the traditions of men, and the reason for their development. Men form their religious tradition by starting with something God said. Then they attempt to weave their own opinion together with that word, finally concluding with a tradition that, they say, is as binding as

about travel. Yet, the human mind is most imaginative, and the heart of natural men is *“deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked”* (Jer 17:9). Religious men have this penchant for making applications, even if they have to force them into the revelation of God itself. Further, they have no compunctions at all about binding them upon men, even doing so in the name of the Lord.

Adding Another Building Block

The Jewish teachers took the Sabbath day instructions, and then merged them with instructions given for the gathering of manna during the forty-year wilderness wandering. *“And it came to pass, that there went out some of the people on the seventh day for to gather, and they found none. And the LORD said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws? See, for that the LORD hath given you the sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days: abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out*

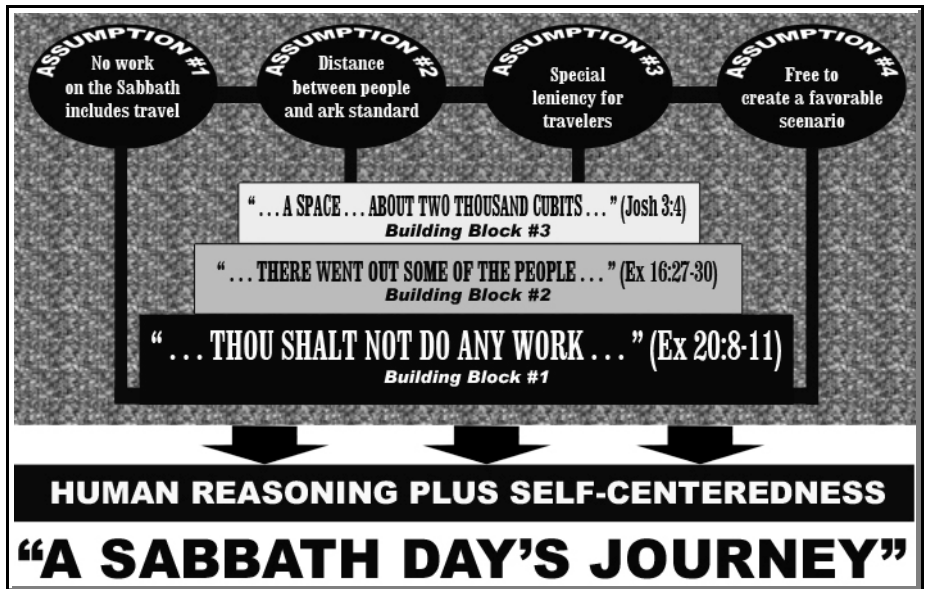
men were free to create the most favorable scenario with their own calculations was also added. They could assume the city was a circle, assume it was proper to have an imaginary square around it, and assume that through mathematics they could produce a rule that favored men the most.

Thus we see what fleshly cunning is employed in the development of *“the traditions of men.”* Jesus said that men must *“lay aside the commandment of God”* in order to *“hold the tradition of men”* (Mk 7:8). He also told scribes and Pharisees that they *“transgressed the commandment of God BY”* their tradition (Matt 15:3), and *“made the commandment of God of none effect”* by it (Matt 15:6). With even more strength He affirmed, *“Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition”* (Mark 7:9).

Paul warned the church that the *“tradition of men”* has a spoiling effect upon believers. That is, they *“cheat”*^{NKJV} them, by taking from them things essential for life and godliness. They take man *“captive,”* relying upon the *“philosophy and empty deception”* of men^{NIV} (Col 2:8). It is particularly important that professing *“Christians”* give heed to these words. **We are living in a period when there is an astounding dominance of religious tradition, making it a most dangerous time.**

During the days of Jehoiada, the priest, he established *“keepers of the watch”* to guard the king’s house and the house of the Lord (2 Kgs 11:7-9). They were to *“go forth on the Sabbath,”* but **not a word was said about any distance they traveled**, or considerations that were to be given at that time.

During the time of Nehemiah, there were certain merchants who came into the city *“to sell.”* Even though the



people were mingling about in the city on the Sabbath, Nehemiah determined they would not buy anything from these greedy merchants on that day. **There was not, however, any mention of how far the people could walk on the Sabbath** (Neh 10:31). Again, when Nehemiah saw the people treading wine presses on the Sabbath, and bringing in sheaves and *“loading them on donkeys,”* he *“testified against them.”* No mention was made of the distances they traveled, but only to the work that they did – work that was expressly forbidden for both man and beast on the Sabbath day.

Jeremiah forbade the people to bear a burden or do any manner of work on the Sabbath, but said nothing about how far they could travel (Jer 17:21-22,27).

Why Is A Sabbath’s Day Journey Mentioned Here?

This is the only reference to *“a Sabbath day’s journey”* in all of Scripture. There is not the slightest hint of it anywhere else. Not a syllable is

mentioned in the Law or the Prophets concerning an appropriate distance to travel on the Sabbath day. Why is it mentioned here?

In mentioning this fact – that the Mount of Olives was a Sabbath’s journey from Jerusalem – Luke is not condoning the tradition. **This was rather a means of declaring to Theophilus the distance the disciples traveled back to Jerusalem.** They did not return on the Sabbath day, so the statement has no relevance from the standpoint of Law.

Jesus made various appearances to His disciples for forty days following His resurrection. He rose from the dead on the first day of the week (Sunday). The day of Pentecost, fifty days after the Passover, would occur on the first day of the week. Ten days prior would be on a Friday. **This reference, then, is nothing more than a means of measurement.** It also suggests that, should the scribes and Pharisees be privy to their trip, they could find no fault with them, even if they used their tradition to judge them.

THEY WENT INTO AN UPPER ROOM

^{13a} **And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room . . .** Other versions read, *“And when they*

had entered, they went up into the upper room.”^{NKJV} *“When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room.”*^{NASB} *“When*

they had entered the city, they went to the room upstairs.”^{NRSV} *“And when they were come in, they went up into the*

upper chamber.”^{ASV} “*And when they came in, they went up into the room.*”^{BBE} “*And when they were come in, they went up into a parlor.*”^{PNT} “*The apostles entered the city. They went to the place,*”^{IE} “*And when they had entered [the city], they mounted [the stairs] to the upper room.*”^{AMPLIFIED} and “*On entering Jerusalem they went straight to the upstairs room.*”^{PHILLIPS}

WHEN THEY WERE COME IN

“*And when they were come in ...*”

That is, the disciples came into the city of Jerusalem, to which they had returned. Jesus had expressly told them, “*but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high*” (Luke 24:49). They were not to tarry in Capernaum, where Jesus had moved from Nazareth (Matt 4:13). They were not to dwell in one of the cities “*wherein*

(Psa 102:21).

The Lord spoke of a time when Jerusalem would be called “*the throne of the Lord*” (Jer 3:17). It would even be called “*The Lord our righteousness*” (Jer 33:16). Joel prophesied of the city, “*and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance*” (Joel 2:32). Jesus told His disciples that the Gospel “*should be preached among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem*” (Lk 24:47).

It was therefore not only appropriate, but mandatory, that Christ’s disciples return to Jerusalem to “wait for the promise of the Father.”

This was a matter in which convenience or human assessment had no part. The disciples may cast their lots for a the replacement of Judas’ “*bishopric,*” but they will **not** cast them for the place

It is important to be where the Lord has directed you to be if you are to receive His blessing, or be favorably used in His purpose.

most of His mighty works were done” – namely Chorasin or Bethsaida (Matt 11:20-21). Philip, Andrew, and Peter were also from the city of Bethsaida. Surely that would be a good place to “*wait.*” Perhaps some might think it would be more appropriate to wait in Bethlehem, where Jesus was born (Matt 2:1), or Nazareth, where He was raised (Lk 4:16). Some might have thought it would have been appropriate to wait on the sea shore, from which several of them had been called (Matt 4:19-22).

Of old time God Himself had said Jerusalem was the city He had “*chosen*” (1 Kgs 11:13). He chose the city out of all of the tribes of Israel “*to put His name there*” (1 Kgs 14:21). “*And unto his son will I give one tribe, that David My servant may have a light always before Me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen me to put my name there*” (1 Kgs 11:36; 2 Kgs 21:4). He even said of this city, “*will I put My name for ever*” (2 Kgs 21:7). Through the Psalmist God revealed that His praise would be “*in Jerusalem*”

where they will “*wait,*” or “*tarry.*”

A Principle to be Seen

There is something to be seen here. **It is important to be where the Lord has directed you to be if you are to receive His blessing, or be favorably used in His purpose.** The “*promise of the Father*” would not seek out where the disciples themselves had chosen to wait. The Holy Spirit would not “*come upon*” them while they remained in a convenient place, or one they thought more suited to the occasion. They HAD to be in Jerusalem. If they were not there, they would not be endued “*with power from on high*” (Lk 24:49). **A choice to be somewhere else was also a choice to be excluded from the promise.**

All of this seems quite apparent to even the casual student. Yet, we must be able to “*handle the Word of God aright*” (2 Tim 2:15), beholding the manner of the King and His kingdom.

Ponder the Lord’s insistence that

His disciples be **WHERE** He says, and associate it with what He has said to us concerning the place we occupy.

⇒ “*Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me*” (John 15:4).

⇒ “*Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?*” (2 Cor 6:14).

⇒ “*And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not*” (Gal 6:9).

⇒ “*Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is*” (Eph 5:17).

⇒ “*In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight: If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel . . .*” (Col 1:22-23).

⇒ “*How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation: which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him*” (Heb 2:3).

⇒ “*But Christ as a son over His own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end*” (Heb 3:6).

⇒ “*For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end*” (Heb 3:14).

What of those who have not taken such admonitions seriously. Will a person who does **not** “*abide*” in Christ receive the benefits promised to those who **do** abide? Can a person be unequally yoked together with unbelievers and be received by the Lord just as though that was not the case? Can a professing believer quit, fainting in the way, and still reap benefits along with those who did not

Those who have been commanded to tarry in Jerusalem for power, now return to the holy city to wait – by Given O. Blakely

faint? Is it really possible to be spiritually ignorant, not understanding the will of the Lord, and yet taste of all the good things promised to those who are not ignorant and do understand His will? Can a person really fail to continue in the faith, remaining ungrounded and unsettled, and still be presented unblameable and unreprieveable in His sight? Is it remotely possible to neglect God's great salvation and still, in the end, dwell forever with the Lord? If men do not firmly hold the confidence and rejoicing of hope firm to the end, will they still remain in Christ's household? Can a person partake of Christ, gloriously benefitting from His great work of salvation, and not hold the beginning of the confidence steadfast unto the end?

Such things are not any more likely than the disciples being endowed with power from on high while they waited in Jericho. One might just as well expect the Spirit to come on the disciples while they waited in Chorasin, than the above things could take place. The empowerment and blessing of the disciples was contingent upon them being where Jesus told them to be.

If they would have been out of town when the day of Pentecost had fully come, you may rest assured the Holy Spirit would not have chased them down and blessed them anyway. Notwithstanding this rather elementary observation, **there are still professing believers who want their prayers answered even though they are not**

where Jesus said they should remain. They are waffling back and forth, flirting with the ways of the world, and still expecting the Lord to love, care for, and bless them. Such ways of thinking are only imaginations. There is not so much as a speck of truth in them!

THE UPPER ROOM

“. . . they went up into an upper room.” Jesus did not tell them to tarry “together.” Yet, the disciples knew this was what He meant. **There are visitations, such as that which occurred on the day of Pentecost, which is not**

Jesus instructed His disciples to prepare the Passover for Himself and them, He said, “*And he will show you a large upper room furnished and prepared: there make ready for us*” (Mark 14:15; Lk 22:12). The word “large” comes from the Greek word μέγα (mega), which has this lexical meaning: “superlative, great,” THAYER “large, spacious, wide, long, extraordinary, great,” FRIEBERG “large, greatest,” UBS “big, great, extensive,” LOUW-NADA and “spacious, wide, more than enough.” LIDDLE-SCOTT

The room, then, was of sufficient size to accommodate the people who

Notwithstanding this rather elementary observation, there are still professing believers who want their prayers answered even though they are not where Jesus said they should remain. They are waffling back and forth, flirting with the ways of the world, and still expecting the Lord to love, care for, and bless them.

intended to be experienced one at a time. There are certain Divine activities that require the saints to be, and work, together.

In all probability, this was the “upper room” in which Jesus had spent His last evening with His disciples. That room was located in Jerusalem – “the city” – and was most memorable. When

resided there, as well as all of those who joined them. It was also “furnished,” with all that was required for their stay. It qualified as a residence by being in Jerusalem, and there were memories associated with it that would be great benefit to them. For them, waiting was not a time of leisure, but of great expectation – an expectation that required great attentiveness.

THE ELEVEN

^{13b} . . . 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.”

Here is an example of giving “honor” to those to whom it is due (Rom 13:7). Because they were especially chosen and ordained to be with Jesus and to preach, Luke takes the time to mention “the eleven,” and that the

residence where the brethren were gathered was where they were staying, or dwelling.

WHERE ABODE

“. . . where abode . . . ” Other versions read, “where they were staying,” NKJV “they were abiding,” ASV “where they were living,” BBE “which was now their fixed place of meeting,” WEYMOUTH “where they were accustomed to meet,” MONTGOMERY and “where they were [indefinitely] staying.” AMPLIFIED

This “upper room” had become the residence of the disciples. Evidently this was so following that dreadful evening when the Lord was betrayed, followed by His vicarious death. This is evidently where Cleopas and his companion had testified to the disciples following His revelation to them. “And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them” (Luke 24:33). This was also the place where Jesus first appeared to His disciples on

Those who have been commanded to tarry in Jerusalem for power, now return to the holy city to wait – by Given O. Blakely

the same day He had risen from the dead. *“Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, **when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you**”* (John 20:19).

THE APOSTLES

Prior to the betrayal and death of Jesus, the Apostles were referred to as *“the twelve apostles”* (Matt 10:2; Lk 22:14), *“the twelve disciples”* (Matt 10:1;

He eventually settled in Capernaum, which was the place Jesus also lived after beginning His ministry (Lk 4:31-38). He was a married man, whose mother-in-law was healed by Jesus during His prodigious ministry (Matt 8:14-15). He was one of the three disciples who were with Jesus when:

- ⇨ He healed Jairus’ daughter (Mk 5:37-43).
- ⇨ Jesus was transfigured (Matt 17:1-4).

His natural name was *“Simon,”* meaning “a hearing,” and his father’s name was Jonah. Hence, Peter was called *“Simon Barjona,”* Barjona meaning “son of Jonah.” Jesus changed his name to Cephas, which means *“A stone.”* When Andrew, his brother, brought Peter to Jesus, it is written, *“And when Jesus beheld him, He said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone”* (John 1:42). *“Cephas”* is Aramaic, and has the same meaning as *“Peter”* (a stone).

There are 158 references to *“Peter”* in the Scriptures, 6 references to *“Cephas,”* 18 references to *“Simon Peter,”* 1 reference to *“Simon Barjona,”* and 14 references to *“Simon.”* That is nearly 200 references to this key man.

According to Scripture, Peter is the only man prior to Pentecost to whom God revealed most fully the Person of Christ: *“And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God”* (Matt 16:16-17; Mk 8:29; Lk 9:20). When Jesus rose from the dead, an angel appeared to some women who came to the tomb, telling them *“But go your way, tell his disciples **and Peter** that He goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see Him, as he said unto you”* (Mark 16:7). Following His resurrection, the Lord Jesus made a special appearance to Peter (Lk 24:34; 1 Cor 15:5).

He is the first man to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles, as he himself confessed: *“Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe”* (Acts 15:7; 10:5-48).

Peter was one of the *“pillars”* of the church in Jerusalem (Gal 2:9). Three years after Paul was converted, he went up to Jerusalem and spent fifteen days with Peter (Gal 1:18). The thrust of Peter’s ministry was *“unto the circumcision,”* or the Jews – even though through him God first granted the Gentiles *“repentance unto life”* (Acts 11:18).

When Jesus sent someone to prepare the last Passover, to be spent alone with His disciples, He sent Peter

LISTINGS OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES

MATTHEW 10:2-5	MARK 3:16-19	LUKE 6:14-16	ACTS 1:13
1. Simon Peter	1. Simon Peter	1. Simon Peter	1. Simon Peter
2. Andrew	2. James	2. Andrew	2. John
3. James	3. John	3. James	3. James
4. John	4. Andrew	4. John	4. Andrew
5. Phillip	5. Philip	5. Philip	5. Philip
6. Bartholomew	6. Bartholomew	6. Bartholomew	6. Thomas
7. Thomas	7. Matthew	7. Matthew	7. Bartholomew
8. Matthew	8. Thomas	8. Thomas	8. Matthew
9. James son of Alphaeus	9. James son of Alphaeus	9. James son of Alphaeus	9. James son of Alphaeus
10. Thaddaeus	10. Thaddaeus	10. Simon the Zealot	10. Simon the Zealot
11. Simon the Cananaean	11. Simon the Cananaean	11. Judas, brother of James	11. Jude, brother, of James
12. Judas Iscariot	12. Judas Iscariot	12. Judas Iscariot	

11:1; 20:17; Lk 9:1), and *“the twelve”* (Matt 26:14,20,47; Mk 4:10; 6:7; 9:35; 10:32; 11:11; 14:10,17,20,43, etc).

Following Christ’s death, and prior to the disciples *“waiting”* in Jerusalem, the apostles were referred to as *“the eleven disciples”* (Matt 28:16), and *“the eleven”* (Mk 16:14; Lk 24:9,33; Acts 1:26).

Following the filling of Judas’ vacated position, and before Saul was converted, they are again referred to as *“the twelve”* (Acts 6:2), and *“the twelve apostles”* (Rev 21:14,21).

It is important to note these things because the first chapter will explain the necessity for replacing the position vacated by Judas.

PETER

“Peter.” Peter and his brother Andrew were the first ones called to be Apostles (Matt 4:18-20). He was a fisherman by trade (Matt 4:18), and was from the city of Bethsaida (John 1:44).

⇨ Jesus prayed in Gethsemane on the night of His betrayal (Matt 26:36-46).

Peter was one of the four who were privileged to hear the Olivet discourse on the destruction of Jerusalem, the end of the world, and Christ’s second coming (Matt 24:3; Mk 13:3-4).

It was Peter who asked Jesus to explain the following.

- ⇨ The parable of the steward (Lk 12:41).
- ⇨ The law of forgiveness (Matt 18:21).
- ⇨ The law of defilement (Matt 15:15).

Peter is the one who blurted out on the mount of transfiguration, *“Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias”* (Matt 17:4). He is the only person in the history of the world, other than Jesus, who walked on water (Matt 14:29).

and John (Lk 22:8). He is the one who called the attention to the rapid withering of the cursed fig tree (Mk 11:21). Peter is the one who attacked the legion of soldiers arresting Jesus, cutting of the right ear of Malchus, a servant of the high priest (Matt 26:51; Mk 14:47; Lk 22:50; John 18:10).

Peter is the one Satan “desired,” to sift as wheat. The severity of the sifting is confirmed by Peter’s denial of Jesus three times in the same night (Luke 22:31-32,55-61). Peter was the first apostle to see the empty tomb (Lk 24:12; John 20:2-6).

Peter is mentioned 77 times from Acts through Second Peter (“Peter” – 64 times; “Cephas” – 5 times; “Simon” – 8 times).

According to history, Peter preached in Pontus, Galatia, Bithynia, Cappadocia, Asia, Babylon, and Rome. Historian Hegeppus (110-180 A.D.) says that “Nero sought matter against Peter to put him to death; which, when the people perceived, they entreated Peter with much ado that he would fly the city. Peter, through their importunity at length persuaded, prepared himself to avoid. But, coming to the gate, he saw the Lord Christ come to meet him, to whom he, worshiping, said, “Lord, whither dost Thou go?” To whom He answered and said, “I am come again to be crucified.” By this, Peter, perceiving his suffering to be understood, returned into the city. Jerome saith that he was crucified, his head being down and his feet upward, himself so requiring, because he was (he said) unworthy to be crucified after the same form and manner as the Lord was.”

The following is also of interest. “According to church tradition, the Roman Emperor Nero, publicly announcing himself the chief enemy of God, was led in his fury to slaughter the Apostles. Because of the persecution, Peter was crucified upside down while in Rome. Concerning the last hours of his life, it is said that when Peter saw his own wife led out to die, he rejoiced because of her summons and her return home, and called to her very encouragingly and comfortingly addressing her by name, and saying, “O thou, remember the Lord.” Of the final days of the apostle Peter in Rome, Jowett wrote that Peter was cast into a horrible prison called the Mamertine and for nine months, in absolute darkness, he endured monstrous torture manacled to a

post. Mamertine (also known as Gemonium) could be seen with the dungeon and pillar to which Peter was bound in chains. During Peter’s entire incarceration, Peter was manacled in an upright position, chained to the column, unable to lay down to rest, yet ,his magnificent spirit remained undaunted. In spite of all the suffering Peter was subjected to, he converted his jailers, Processus, Martinianus, and forty-seven others. Peter met his death at the hand of the Romans by crucifying him in an upside-down position in Nero’s circus 67AD. The Search For The Twelve Apostles, William McBirnie, PH.D

Peter wrote the books of First and Second Peter. It is generally understood that he dictated the Gospel written by Mark.

JAMES

“James.” “James” is the Graecized

James to the tribunal was so influenced by the bold declaration of his faith as to embrace the Gospel and avow himself also a Christian; in consequence of which, he was beheaded at the same time.” McCLINTOK and STRONG

JOHN

“John.” The younger brother of “James,” whose name generally precedes that of John (ex: Matt 4:21; 10:3; 17:1). Prior to their call by Jesus, James and John were formerly business partners with Simon and Andrew in the fishing trade (Lk 5:10). “John” is known as the disciple that Jesus loved, confirming that he was especially close to the Lord (John 19:26; 20:2; 21:7,20). At the Last Supper, John reclined on Jesus “bosom,” or chest. When Jesus told His disciples that one

When Jesus sent someone to prepare the last Passover, to be spent alone with His disciples, He sent Peter and John. He is the one who called the attention to the rapid withering of the cursed fig tree. Peter is the one who attacked the legion of soldiers arresting Jesus, cutting of the right ear of Malchus, a servant of the high priest

form of “Jacob,” which means “supplanter.” He was the brother of John the beloved, who were the “sons of Zebedee” (Lk 5:10). Jesus called them both immediately after calling Simon Peter and his brother Andrew (Matt 4:21-22). James was also among the favored three, who enjoyed benefits that were not vouchsafed to the other apostles (Matt 17:1; Mk 5:37; 14:33). He was also with Peter, John, and Andrew as they listened in private to our Lord’s discourse on the fall of Jerusalem, the end of the world, and His coming (Mk 13:3).

James, the brother of John and an apostle of Christ, is mentioned two times in the book of Acts, and never again after he was martyred (Acts 1:13; 12:2).

James was the first apostle to be martyred, being slain with the sword by Herod, in a wicked initiative against “certain of the church” (Acts 12:1). “Clement of Alexandria, in a fragment preserved by Eusebius (Hist. Eccles. 1, 9), reports that the officer who conducted

sitting at the table would betray Him, it finally resulted in Peter asking John to ask Jesus “who it should be of whom He spake.” Jesus answered it was the one for whom he would dip a morsel and give it to him. No one at the table caught the significance of what Jesus said and did (John 13:23-29).

The Gospels give us the name of John’s mother – “Salome” (compare Matthew 27:56 with Mark 15:40; 16:1).

On the night that Jesus was betrayed, both Peter and John followed the group and Jesus to the place of the high priest. We are told that the high priest personally knew John, who went into the palace of the high priest: “And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple: that disciple was known unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest” (John 18:15). Even though John went into the palace, Peter remained on the outside. John then spoke to the woman

who was keeping the door, and she let Peter in. *“But Peter stood at the door without. Then went out that other disciple, which was known unto the high priest, and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter”*(John 18:16).

John stood at the foot of the cross when Jesus was crucified, together with Jesus’ mother, her sister, the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. It was at that time that Jesus committed the care of his mother to John, who took her into his house *“from that hour”* (John 19:25-27).

When a report was brought to the disciples that Jesus had risen from the dead, Peter and John ran to the tomb, with John outrunning Peter. He looked into the tomb, and saw the *“linen clothes”* of Jesus lying there – yet he did not go in

First, Second, and third John, and the book of the Revelation. The churches of Smyrna, Pergamos, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea, and Thyatira, were founded by him, and he was best noted for his labors in Asia Minor (Western Asia).

John is mentioned 26 times in Acts through Revelation.

ANDREW

“Andrew.” Was the brother of Peter, and they were both called together to be followers of Jesus (Matt 4:18). He is the only other disciple that was with Peter, James, and John, when Jesus delivered the Olivet discourse (Mk 13:3). He was originally a disciple of John the Baptist. When he heard John say, *“Behold the Lamb of God,”* he, with another of John’s disciples, *“followed Jesus”*(John 1:36-40). He and Peter were

PHILIP

“Philip.” Philip the apostle is distinguished from Philip, one of the first deacons, who later became an *“evangelist”* – (Acts 6:5; 8:5,6,12,13,26, 29,30,31,34,,35,37,38,39,40; 21:8). He was from Bethsaida, and among the first disciples that Jesus called (John 1:43-44). He is the one who called Natahanael, alerting him to the fact that they had found the Messiah (actually, Jesus found them (John 1:45-51).

When Jesus was about to feed the five thousand, He asked Philip, *“Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?”* (John 6:5). Philip answered, *“Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little”*(John 6:7).

Certain Greeks came to Philip saying, *“Sir, we would see Jesus.”* He went and told Andrew, and together they told Jesus of the Grecian inquiry (John 12:21-22).

During the Last Supper, Philip is the one who said, *“Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us”*(John 14:8). Jesus answered Him with a remarkably extensive reply, beginning with, *“Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?”* (John 14:9-21).

Philip born at Bethsaida, in Galilee and was first called by the name of *“disciple.”* He labored diligently in Upper Asia, and suffered martyrdom at Heliopolis, in Phrygia. He was scourged, thrown into prison, and afterwards crucified, A.D. 54. Philip also preached in Syria. There is no mention of him after Acts 1:13.

THOMAS

“Thomas.” The name Thomas means *“twin.”* Therefore, he was also called *“Didymus,”* which is the Aramaic word for *“twin”* (John 11:16; 20:24; 21:2).

When Jesus went to raise Lazaraus from the dead, Thomas is the one who said, *“Let us also go, that we may die with him”* (John 11:16). At the Last Supper, when Jesus said He was going away, Thomas is the one who said,

History records that Andrew preached the gospel to many Asiatic nations; but on his arrival at Edessa he was taken and crucified on a cross, the two ends of which were fixed transversely in the ground. Hence the derivation of the term, St. Andrew's Cross. Andrew labored in Sythia, North of the Red Sea – Russia.

until after Peter had arrived and entered the sepulcher. Then John entered the tomb, *“and he saw, and believed.”* Later, when Jesus appeared to several of the disciples, John again was the first to recognize Him, saying, *“It is the Lord”* (John 20:3-8).

Church history tells us that an attempt to kill John took place during the persecution of Domitian. *“In the persecution under Domitian he is taken to Rome, and there, by his boldness, though not by death, gains the crown of martyrdom. The boiling oil into which he is thrown has no power to hurt him (Tertull. DeProscript. c. 36). The scene of the supposed miracle was outside the Porta Latina, and hence the Western Church commemorates it by the special festival of “St. John Port. Latin.” on May 6th. He is then sent to labor in the mines, and Patmos is the place of his exile (Victorinus, InApoc. 9; Lampe, 1, 66).”*

John wrote the Gospel of John,

from the city of Bethsaida (John 1:44).

Andrew is the disciple who, when Jesus was about to feed 5,000 men, said to the Lord, *“There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?”* (John 6:9). When some Greeks came to Philip, saying that they wanted to *“see Jesus,”* Philip told Andrew, and together they went and told Jesus (John 12:21-22).

History records that Andrew preached the gospel to many Asiatic nations; but on his arrival at Edessa he was taken and crucified on a cross, the two ends of which were fixed transversely in the ground. Hence the derivation of the term, St. Andrew's Cross. Andrew labored in Sythia, North of the Red Sea – Russia. He is not mentioned in Scriptures after Acts 1:13.

Those who have been commanded to tarry in Jerusalem for power, now return to the holy city to wait – by Given O. Blakely

“Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?” (John 14:5).

Following His resurrection, when our Lord first appeared to His disciples, it is written, *“But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came”* (John 20:24). When told about the Lord’s appearing, he responded, *“Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe”* (John 20:25). Eight days later, when Jesus appeared to the disciples again, Thomas was with them. When Jesus challenged him to put forth his finger and behold His hands, also thrusting his hand into His side, Thomas replied, *“My Lord and my God.”* Jesus then told him that the blessing belonged to those who did **not** see, yet believed – something that none of the other disciples had done (John 20:26-29).

Thomas was with the seven disciples who went fishing, only to again confront the living Christ (John 21:2-12).

Thomas preached the Gospel in Parthia and India, where exciting the rage of the pagan priests, he was martyred by being thrust through with a spear. Thomas also preached in Persia and the East Indies. There is no mention of him after Acts 1:13.

BARTHOLOMEW

“Bartholomew.” This apostle is only mentioned four times in the entire Bible – all of them listings of the apostles (Matt 10:3; Mk 3:18; Lk 6:14; Acts 1:13). Some are of the opinion that references to *“Nathanael”* (John 1:45-49; 21:2), actually refer to Bartholomew by a different name. The Gospel of John is the only book that contains the name *“Nathanael.”*

History records that Bartholomew preached in several countries, and having translated the Gospel of Matthew into the language of India, he propagated it in that country. He was at length cruelly beaten and then crucified by the impatient and aggressive idolaters. Bartholomew also preached in Armenia. There is no mention of him after Acts 1:13.

MATTHEW

“Matthew.” *“Matthew”* is mentioned five times in Scripture – four of them are in apostolic listings (Matt 10:3; Mark 3:18; Luke 6:15; Acts 1:3). He is also referred to as *“Matthew the publican”* (Matt 10:3), *“Levi the son of Alphaeus”* (Mk 2:14), *“a publican, named Levi”* (Lk 5:27). His name means *“Gift of Jehovah.”*

Matthew was called to the apostleship while he was on the job,

need not a physician; but they that are sick” (Luke 5:31).

It is thought that Matthew wrote his gospel in Hebrew, which was afterwards translated into Greek by James the Less. The scene of his labors was Parthia, and Ethiopia, in which latter country he suffered martyrdom, being slain with a halberd (a battle ax with a handle of approximately six feet in length) in the city of Nadabah, A.D. 60. Matthew also preached in Macedonia,

Luke informs us that Matthew made Jesus “a great feast in his own house: and there was a great company of publicans and of others that sat down with them.” In his Gospel, Matthew does not say it was his house, but in humility simply refers to Jesus being in the house, declaring that His disciples were also with Him.

“sitting at the receipt of customs,” or *“at the tax collector’s booth”*^{NASB} (Matt 9:9; Lk 5:27). When Jesus saw him sitting there, He *“said unto him, Follow ME.”* The Scriptures emphasize his immediate and thorough response. *“And he left all, rose up, and followed Him”* (Luke 5:28), and *“he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose, and followed him”* (Matt 9:9).

Luke informs us that Matthew made Jesus *“a great feast in his own house: and there was a great company of publicans and of others that sat down with them”* (Luke 5:29). In his Gospel, Matthew does not say it was his house, but in humility simply refers to Jesus being in the house, declaring that His disciples were also with Him. *“And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples”* (Matt 9:10). This is the place where Jesus was criticized by the bigoted scribes and Pharisees, who said to His disciples, *“Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?”* (Matt 9:11; Lk 5:30). Jesus soundly rebuked His critics by saying, *“They that are whole*

Syria, Persia, and Media. There is no mention of him after Acts 1:13.

JAMES THE SON OF ALPHEAUS

“James the son of Alphaeus.” Other versions read, *“James of Alphaeus.”*^{DOUAY}

“James the son of Alphaeus” is mentioned four times in Scripture – all in apostolic listings (Matt 10:3; Mk 3:18; Lk 6:15; Acts 1:13). His mother was named *“Mary,”* as indicated by Mark, who refers to this James as *“James the less”* (Mk 15:40; Matt 27:56; Mk 16:1; Lk 24:10).

At the age of ninety-four he was beaten and stoned by the Jews; and finally had his brains dashed out with a fuller’s club.

SIMON ZELOTES

“Simon Zelotes.” Other versions read, *“Simon the Zealot,”*^{NKJV} *“Simon [known as the Revolutionary],”*^{IE} and *“Simon the Patriot.”*^{PHILLIPS}

This apostle is also referred to as *“Simon the Canaanite”* (Matt 10:4; Mk 3:18), and *“Simon called Zelotes”* (Lk

6:15). The word “*Zelotes*” is a political term meaning “Zealot” – a “member of the party of Zealots.” ROBERTSON Within the context of Roman dominance and citizenry, this party was particularly

PETER (Simon, Cephas, a stone, Andrew’s brother)
JOHN (disciple Jesus loved).....) Sons of Thunder
JAMES.....) Boanerges, brothers
ANDREW (brother of Peter)
PHILIP
THOMAS (Didymus, the twin)
BARTHOLOMEW
MATTHEW (Levi)
JAMES of ALPHAEUS (James the less)
SIMON (the Canaanite, Zelotes, the Zealot)
JUDE of JAMES (Thaddaeus)
JUDAS (Iscariot, the traitor, a demon, Simon’s son)

zealous for the Mosaic law and institutions. This type of zeal is mentioned in the book of Acts where James and the elders told Paul, “*Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law*” (Acts 21:20). This extreme nationalist party was founded about A.D. 7 by Judas of Gamala, a city that appears to have lain near the east coast of the sea of Galilee (vide Schurer, 1. 2:225). PULPIT COMMENTARY

As to the designation “*Simon the Canaanite*,” this does not refer to the condemned nation of the Canaanites, but is a translation of the Aramic equivalent of “*Zealot*.” It is appropriate here because the zeal for the Law was not being exhibited in foreign countries (where there were many “*devout*” Jews – Acts 2:5). The word is used here in a political or nationalistic way rather than in comparison with the Jews, who were given that land.

History says that Simon the Zealot preached the Gospel in Mauritania, Africa, and even in Britain, in which latter country he was crucified, A.D. 74. There is no mention of him after Acts 1:13.

JUDAS THE BROTHER OF JAMES

“*Judas the brother of James.*”

Other versions read, “*Judas the son of James,*” NKJV/NASB/NIV/NRSV “*Judas James brother,*” GENEVA “*Judas James son,*” TNT

and “*Judas, of James.*”^{YLT}

“*Judas*” is the Graecized form of the Hebrew “*Judah*,” and means “*he shall be praised.*” Matthew refers to this apostle as “*Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus*” (Matt 10:3). Mark refers to him as “*Thaddaeus*” (Mk 3:18).

This man is mentioned five times in Scripture: “*Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus*” (Matt 10:3), “*Thaddaeus*” (Mk 3:18), and “*Judas the brother of James*” (Lk 6:16; Acts 1:13). The fifth mentioning records a question he asked Jesus on the night of His betrayal. “*Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?*” (John 14:22).

Judas, brother of James, was crucified at Edessa, A.D. 72. He also preached in Egypt. There is no mention of him after Acts 1:13.

There are the original twelve apostles, minus Judas, who “*fell by transgression*” – especially chosen and empowered men: chosen to be with Jesus, and empowered to preach (Mark 3:14). Among them were four fishermen (Peter, Andrew, James, and John), a political zealot (Simon), and a tax collector (Matthew). There are two sets of brothers (Peter and Andrew, and James and John), and one twin (Thomas). Some were known as “*the son of*” (James and John the sons of Zebedee, and James the son of Alphaeus, Simon the son of Jonas), and some as “*the brother of*” (John the brother of James, and Judas the brother of James).

As you can see, these men had no worldly prominence. They did not come from a highly revered culture, and did not have impressive qualifications. **The work to which Jesus called them did not require such distinctions.** They would be given a message from another world. They would receive a Spirit the world could not receive, and would call upon people to save themselves from the very generation in which they resided.

The book of Acts will reflect these circumstances. **It will unfold the kind of work for which Jesus empowers men.** It

will establish heavenly priorities among men. What these men will declare and promote will **not** be impressive to worldly minded people. It will tend to aggravate those with a stereotyped religion, and will be challenging, calling men away from spiritual mediocrity and disinterest in the world to come. These men will think differently. They have been cultured by Jesus, and will be empowered by the Holy Spirit to do so. Their perception of Scripture will not be that of the religious professionals.

It will become increasingly apparent to your heart and mind that contemporary Christianity does not have the faintest resemblance to the book of “the Acts.” This is a book of Divine revelation, working, and empowerment. Heaven is involved in what is being done: God the Father, Christ Jesus the Son, the Holy Spirit, and holy angels. Those who are used by the Lord will **not** see their circumstances as other men. They will **not** adopt the assessments of the religious professionals, politicians, philosophers, or business world. They will **not** see “issues” as the people of the world see them. Their objectives will have no similarity to those of this world. They will **not** ask the questions the world asks. The things that confound the world will **not** confound them.

As you are exposed to them in action, you will behold a spiritual composure in them the world cannot emulate. Men cannot be trained to react as they did. When they are being threatened, they do not react as other men. They will not make plans as other men. They will **not** speak as other men. They will **not** comport themselves among their enemies as other men.

Make no mistake about this, in the book of Acts we are being exposed to real believers, real preachers, and real teachers. This is the way God really works. The fact that they do not fit the fanciful molds that men have created only confirms the falsity and pretension of much that is around us. Take note of **what** these people do. Seriously consider **how** they speak, react, assess, and purpose. You will be exposed to people that have been “*joined to the Lord.*”

Those who have been commanded to tarry in Jerusalem for power, now return to the holy city to wait – by Given O. Blakely

THE "WAITING" BEGINS

“ 14a These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication. . . ”

Before He was taken up into heaven, ascending on high, Jesus told His disciples what they were to do.

- ⇨ **“Wait for the promise of the Father, which . . . ye have heard of Me”**(Acts 1:4).
- ⇨ **“And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high”** (Luke 24:49).

What does it mean to “wait?” There are a number of promises given to those who do “wait” on the Lord.

- ⇨ **“Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD”**(Psa 27:14).
- ⇨ **“Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass. Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil. For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth”** (Psa 37:7-9).
- ⇨ **“Therefore turn thou to thy God: keep mercy and judgment, and wait on thy God continually”** (Hosea 12:6).
- ⇨ **“To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David. I waited patiently for the LORD; and He inclined unto me, and heard my cry”**(Psa 40:1).
- ⇨ **“The LORD is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him”**(Lam 3:25).
- ⇨ **“But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength: they shall mount up with wings as eagles: they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint”** (Isa

40:31).

- ⇨ **“Say not thou, I will recompense evil; but wait on the LORD, and He shall save thee”**(Prov 20:22).
- ⇨ **“And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation”**(Isa 25:9).
- ⇨ **“For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what He hath prepared for him that waiteth for him”**(Isa 64:4).

It is apparent that “waiting” is something critical in spiritual life. But what does it mean to “wait.” Some might be tempted to think that “waiting” is equivalent to idleness – or simply doing nothing. **We will see from our text that the disciples certainly were not idle.** In fact, they were quite active. Some of the things were doing include the following.

- ⇨ The “waiting” ones were continually in the Temple (Lk 24:53a).
- ⇨ Were continually praising and blessing God (Lk 24:53b).
- ⇨ Continued in one accord in prayer and supplication (Acts 1:14).
- ⇨ Took Divinely sanctioned measures to replace the office vacated by Judas (Acts 1:15-26).
- ⇨ When the day of Pentecost arrived ten days later, they were all together with one accord and in one place (Acts 2:1).

A SPIRITUAL POSTURE. Waiting upon the Lord is a spiritual posture – a stance, if you please, that is driven by the persuasion of the truth of a specific word from God. It does not shut down all human activity, but rather marshals all of one’s ransomed powers, focusing them upon matters having to do with a Divine commitment – a promise. In this case, the promise was “Ye shall



receive power . . . and ye shall be witnesses unto Me” (Acts 1:8). **The soul for which this blessing is targeted cannot be distracted, or caught up with the cares of this world.** The spiritual senses and cognitive powers must be gathered together for one grand purpose. David described this posture when He pled, **“Teach me thy way, O LORD; I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name”**(Psa 86:11).

CULTURING THE SOUL. In a way, “waiting” is culturing the soul – **drawing away from the mundane and becoming acutely conscience of heavenly priorities.** In this case, the sending of **“the promise of the Father”**would require that all of ones sensitivities and abilities be honed to a fine spiritual edge. It will be imperative for the disciples to be keenly aware of heavenly purposes and influences, and ready to respond instantly.

NECESSARY PREPARATION. In yet another way, “waiting” describes a period of time in which specific preparations are made that directly impact involvement in the will of the Lord. In the first chapter of Acts we find that there is a vacated bishopric that must be filled – a place of responsibility and participation that was never intended to be left unoccupied. In order to address this situation, there must be a grasp of the Word of the Lord. Some level of understanding must be possessed

concerning what happened when Judas fell. The disciples must know why the matter needs to be addressed, and how to go about doing it.

TUNING THE HEART. Yet another thing is accomplished in “waiting” – the heart is tuned, so to speak, to the heavenly frequency, so that the message that is sent will not be missed. No one can be struggling with sadness as Cleopas and his companion had done earlier (Lk 24:17). This was a time when they could not be described as they were earlier: “while they yet believed not for joy” (Lk 24:41). No one could be doubting, as “some” has done when they first saw the risen Christ: “And when they saw him, they worshipped Him: but some doubted” (Matt 28:17). They all had to be in the receiving mode.

PERFECTLY JOINED TOGETHER. While the disciples waited, there had to be unity among them. No division could exist, as when Thomas was absent during the resurrected Christ’s initial appearance to His disciples (John 20:12). After that appearance, Peter said he was going fishing, and only six of all

involvements in which the flesh is crucified, and all places for the entrance of the wicked one are removed.

The Necessity of Spirituality

It is deeply troubling to me that the modern church is not cognizant of the necessity of and reason for waiting upon the Lord. **Far too many professing Christians do not have the faintest notion of a Divine agenda, a specific promise, or the essentiality of a proper mindset.** Others are seriously deficient in their perception of what God is doing through Christ Jesus, and of the bearing of the death, resurrection, ascension, and enthronement of Christ upon that purpose.

These days we are hearing a lot of religious talk about man’s chief purpose being to praise and worship the Lord. To the spiritually uncultured soul, and the individual who does not have a working knowledge of Scripture, it all sounds pretty good – even holy.

In our text, the revealed purpose was that of the disciples becoming witnesses to Christ – His “ambassadors” (Acts 1:8; 2 Cor 5:20). Their witness had

redeemed humanity. The following texts are statements of Divine intent. They have a different tone than that of the religious sophists of our day. This IS what God has to say on the subject.

In these texts, the word “that” describes the purpose for the stated Divine activity. It is synonymous with “in order that . . .”

⇒ **CONFORMITY.** “For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate **TO BE CONFORMED TO THE IMAGE OF HIS SON, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren**” (Rom 8:29).

⇒ **BEING BLAMELESS.** “Who shall also confirm you unto the end, **THAT YE MAY BE blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ**” (1 Cor 1:8).

⇒ **KNOWING.** “Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; **THAT WE MIGHT KNOW the things that are freely given to us of God**” (1 Cor 2:12).

⇒ **BEING MADE SOMETHING.** “For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; **THAT WE MIGHT BE made the righteousness of God in Him**” (2 Cor 5:21).

⇒ **BEING JUSTIFIED.** “Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, **THAT WE MIGHT BE justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified**” (Gal 2:16; 3:24).

⇒ **RECEIVING THE PROMISED SPIRIT.** “That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; **THAT WE MIGHT RECEIVE the promise of the Spirit through faith**” (Gal 3:14).

⇒ **RECEIVING ADOPTION.** “To redeem them that were under the law, **THAT WE MIGHT RECEIVE the adoption of sons**” (Gal 4:5).

⇒ **BEING ABLE TO STAND.** “Put on the whole armor of God, **that ye may**

These days we are hearing a lot of religious talk about man’s chief purpose being to praise and worship the Lord. To the spiritually uncultured soul, and the individual who does not have a working knowledge of Scripture, it all sounds pretty good – even holy.

the disciples of Jesus went with him (John 21:1-2). When the promise of the Father comes, they cannot be scattered. They must have “the same mind and the same judgment” – the only proper environment in which the work of the Lord can be done (1 Cor 1:10). It is in that kind of environment – and only that kind of environment – that the Lord “commands the blessing” (Psa 133:3).

The activities that will be described in the remainder of this first chapter were conducive to the development of the things just mentioned. They were the kind of

to be precise, without the slightest bit of corruption in it. It could not contain some residual traditions of the elders that lingered in their thinking. They were going to be the initial “laborers together with God” (1 Cor 3:9), and “workers together with Him” (2 Cor 6:1).

That is very different from the stated purpose of praising and worshiping Christ – at least as modern men conceive of praise and worship.

The involvement of the disciples in the coming events would be within the framework of God’s revealed purpose for

be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" (Eph 6:11,13).

⇨ OUR HEARTS BEING ESTABLISHED. *"And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you: TO THE END HE MAY **stabilish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints**"* (1 Thess 3:12-13).

⇨ PARTAKING OF HIS HOLINESS. *"For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but He for our profit, THAT WE MIGHT BE **partakers of His holiness**"* (Heb 12:10).

⇨ BEING FOUND WITHOUT SPOT. *"Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent THAT YE MAY BE **found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless**"* (2 Pet 3:14).

⇨ LIVING THROUGH CHRIST. *"In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, THAT WE MIGHT **live through Him**"* (1 John 4:9).

These are only representative of the many statements of the revealed purpose of God's great salvation. **As you can see, it is quite different from what is being pawned off on the church of our day.** These are things that cannot be accomplished by singing trite little choruses that are not accompanied by holy hearts and an affection that has been placed on things above.

Why Say These Things?

It is necessary to say these things because of the cloud of confusion that has fallen upon the church – cast upon it by teachers who do not have a grasp of the truth. Men are being taught that proper preparation is found in praise – praise as men define it. **On the other hand, our text outlines in great detail precisely how the disciples prepared for the blessing of the Lord.** It reveals **how** they waited. The strict propriety of what they did is confirmed by the events that took place on the day of Pentecost.

Many poor souls have never received the resources provided in Christ Jesus because they simply are not ready to receive them. They are too close to the world, and, consequently, too far from God. Like the Corinthians, they are "carnal," and "walk as men" (1 Cor 3:3). Therefore, they are really **not** able to be

the kingdom of God" (Acts 1:3).

However, they had not reached that infamous saturation level where they could contain no more. They "continued" without a break.

It is possible to be on the edge of

It is necessary to say these things because of the cloud of confusion that has fallen upon the church. Men are being taught that proper preparation is found in praise – praise as men define it. On the other hand, our text outlines in great detail precisely how the disciples prepared for the blessing of the Lord. It reveals how they waited.

"blessed." They stand in need of correction, because they are lingering around the spiritual cesspool from which Jesus delivered them.

CONTINUED

"These all continued . . ." Other versions read, "They all joined together," ^{NASB} "All these were constantly," ^{NRSV} "continued steadfastly," ^{ASV} "gave themselves up to," ^{BBE} "All these were persevering," ^{DOUAY} "were continually devoting themselves," ^{NAS} "constantly," ^{NJB} "all these joined constantly," ^{NJB} "these all were continuing," ^{YLT} "They were all together," ^{IE} "kept devoting themselves to," ^{ISV} "gave their constant attention to," ^{MONTGOMERY} and "devoted themselves steadfastly." ^{AMPLIFIED}

In today's religious culture, this is a strange concept – **CONTINUANCE!** Men have grown so accustomed to seven minute devotions, fifteen minute sermons, and "hour of power," that they know nothing about being steadfast, continuing, and running with patience. They demand religious brevity so they can get on with the things they really prefer.

But that was not the posture of these disciples. They had just spend forty days with the risen Savior, with Him speaking to them "of things pertaining to

some great spiritual epoch, and be completely oblivious of it. That was not the case with these disciples. Jesus had told them, "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence" (Acts 1:5). That had whetted their appetites, and they would not be dissuaded by lesser things. Peter does not suggest that they go fishing now!

How frequently we are reminded of the role of continuance in spiritual life – perseverance and faithfulness.

- ⇨ Continue in God's **goodness** (Rom 11:22).
- ⇨ Continue in the **faith** (Col 23).
- ⇨ Continue in **prayer** (Col 4:2).
- ⇨ Continue in **taking heed** to ourselves and the doctrine (1 Tim 4:16).
- ⇨ Continue in **what we have learned** (2 Tim 3:14).
- ⇨ Let **brotherly love** continue (Heb 13:1).

It ought to be apparent that **spiritual life can be maintained by fits and starts.** It requires continuance, persevering, holding on, abiding, remaining, enduring, and persisting.

WITH ONE ACCORD

“... with one accord...” Other versions read, “with one mind,” NIV “unitedly... with one soul” MRD “with one heart,” NJB “with their minds in full agreement,” AMPLIFIED “with the same purpose,” IE and “by common consent.” PHILLIPS

Men sometimes labor for years to try and accomplish religious unity. Here, before the Holy Spirit even came, the disciples were “with one accord.” Their hearts were united. Their minds were single. They were in full agreement, desiring and anticipating the same thing. Not only that, they “continued” to be of one accord, one mind, and a common

THAYER “action agreed on unanimously with one mind, with one purpose, by common consent,” FRIBERG “with one mind, by common consent, together,” UBS “pertaining to mutual consent or agreement, with one mind, by common consent, unanimously,” LOUW-NADA and “with one accord, mostly joined with.” LADLE-SCOTT

This word is used twenty-two times in the book of Acts. It is translated “one accord” (1:14; 2:1,46; 4:24; 5:12; 7:57; 8:6; 12:20; 15:25; 18:12; 19:29). It **always has to do with a united perception of things, and being united together by that perception.**

⇨ With one accord in prayer and

- ⇨ The people of Tyre and Sidon came together in one accord, appealing to Herod for peace (12:20).
- ⇨ The Jews made an insurrection against Paul with one accord, bringing him before the judgment seat of Gallio (18:12).
- ⇨ In an aggressive defense of their false God Diana, the Ephesians rushed together in one accord, and in opposition to Paul (19:29).

In all of these cases, the people saw things the same way. Whether for good or for evil, it is their perception that brought them together. They were not merely together physically, or in body, but in mind and heart as well.

This is the kind of accord that will be seen throughout the book of Acts. When there is discord, there will always be some form of disruption, for the Lord only works for good in an environment in which the people are of one accord before Him. This is precisely why Paul wrote to the Roman brethren, “That ye may **with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ**” (Rom 15:6).

Much of the Christianity of our day is devoid of these essential qualities: **“one mind and one mouth.”** It is not at all unusual to find “church” people singing things they **do not want** to sing, hearing things they **do not want** to hear, and doing things they **do not want** to do. Many gatherings of professing Christians are **not** the result of the people being of “one accord” or of “one mind.” Some people come together because they think that is what they are supposed to do. Others come together because of carnal friendship. **Still others imagine that coming together will somehow compensate for their failure to live by faith, live by every word of God, and live unto the Lord.**

I personally know of gatherings of religious leaders – gatherings in which I have personally participated – in which the mind of the constituents on the things of God is **not even known** – much less has it drawn the people together. Some religious gatherings can only

In all of these cases, the people saw things the same way. Whether for good or for evil, it is their perception that brought them together. They were not merely together physically, or in body, but in mind and heart as well.

purpose!

They had not been this way before! There were times when some of these same people “disputed” among themselves about who “should be greatest” (Mk 9:33-34). One time James and John aggravated the other ten disciples by asking that they be granted the honor of sitting on Christ’s right and left hand in His glory (Mk 10:37-41). **However, that sort of thing is behind them now.** The risen and empowered Christ has directed their attention to great things, and they are all in one accord.

This matter of being “in one accord” is central in the work of the Lord. It is **not** the result of avoiding speaking about the things of God, or ignoring the Gospel and its implications. Being of “one accord” is **not** the result of a fleshly preference for one another, or being close friends, and operating within the framework of a humanly devised systematic theology. “One accord” is the translation of a single Greek word – ὁμοθυμαδόν (hom-oth-oo-mad-on). Lexically it means, “with one mind,”

supplication (1:14).

- ⇨ With one accord and in one place on the day of Pentecost (2:1).
- ⇨ Continuing steadfastly together in the Temple and from house to house (2:46).
- ⇨ Lifting up their voice in prayer to God together (4:24).
- ⇨ Being of one accord amidst the wondrous working of the Apostles (5:12).
- ⇨ The people of the city of Samaria with one accord giving heed to the Gospel preached by Philip.
- ⇨ With one accord choosing Barnabas and Paul, sending them to a specific work for the Lord (15:25).

Even those under the grip of Satan worked together, doing their work in a state of agreement and focus.

⇨ The Jewish council with one accord thrust Stephen out of the city and stoned him (7:57).

Those who have been commanded to tarry in Jerusalem for power, now return to the holy city to wait – by Given O. Blakely

simulate oneness by **avoiding** speaking about *“the things of the Spirit of God”* (1 Cor 2:14). I have even heard “Christian” leaders boast that they have agreed not to be overtly disagreeable, thereby acknowledging that they are **not** in *“one accord.”* Most people with “Christian” involvements know this is the case. It is not, however, fashionable to talk about it.

Such is the religion of our day. It is what has produced denominations, factions, and schisms among professed believers. It is what has produced contradicting doctrines or teachings. **Such circumstances are the result of worldly and demonic wisdom.** As James well said, *“But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work”* (James 3:14-16).

However, this is **not** the kind of environment that salvation creates. It is **not** what happens when people are born again, reconciled to God, and added to the church. Such it is **not** the religion of the book of Acts – which is an inspired account of what **really** happens when people are washed, sanctified, and justified (1 Cor 6:11).

What we are going to read is the result of single-mindedness, focused consideration, and being absorbed with the will of the Lord.

IN PRAYER

“ . . . in prayer . . . ” Other versions read, *“continual prayer,”*^{DARBY} *“constantly praying,”*^{IE} and *“earnest in prayer.”*^{WEYMOUTH}

The word from which *“prayer”* is translated is a most interesting one. It has a two-fold meaning: *“prayer addressed to God,”* and *“a place set apart or suited for the offering of prayer.”*^{THAYER} This word emphasizes **asking**, as the next phrase will confirm. Prayer does have many forms, and we are to learn to employ them all. As it is written, *“praying always with **all** prayer”* (Eph 6:18). Some of the types of prayer include:

⇒ Confession, or penitential prayers (Psa 51; 1 John 1:9).

- ⇒ Intercession (1 Tim 2:1).
- ⇒ Thanksgiving (Psa 50:14; Phil 4:6; Col 4:2).
- ⇒ Praise (Psa 118:21; Acts 16:25).

In this text, the emphasis is on asking, petitioning, requesting, calling on the name of the Lord, seeking, and inquiring. In such a wide sweeping expression, these brethren were in *“one accord.”* Their session was not one of diverse mingled requests and varied objectives. They were *“waiting”* for the promise that was to be sent to them. Their attention and prayers were doubtless centered on that event. It was at that time, when they were *“endued with power from on high,”* that the New Covenant would be inaugurated, and the purpose for which Jesus *“came into the world”* would be put into action.

AND SUPPLICATION

“ . . . and supplication . . . ” Most later versions omit this word (ASV, NASV, NIV, RSV, NRSV, ESV, NLT). The following versions **do** contain the word: New King James (1982), Geneva (1599), Bishop’s New Testament (1595), Revised Websters (1995), Tyndale (1534), Websters (1833) Young’s Literal Translation (1862).

The word *“supplication”* has the lexical meaning of, *“seeking, asking, entreating, entreaty,”*^{THAYER} *“plea, entreaty, as addressed to God in prayer, request, petition,”*^{FRIBERG} *“to plead, to beg, that which is asked with urgency based on presumed need,”*^{LOUW-NADA} and *“an entreating, asking, a prayer, entreaty.”*^{LADLE-SCOTT}

For what were these disciples praying and making supplication? **First, it could not be unrelated to the reason for them waiting for what God had promised.** Holy people do not wait for the promise of God while praying about other matters. The fact that the Father had promised to send His Spirit by no means indicated that it would all happen automatically and without the involvement of others. Concerning this promise, made by the Father, Jesus had said, *“And **I will pray the Father**, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever”* (John 14:16). No doubt they also remembered the words of the Lord Jesus concerning men receiving the Holy Spirit. *“If ye*

A WORD ON THE TRANSLATION

Technically, and for those who are interested, The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions leave out the last clause, *“and supplication.”* These words do occur in a significant number of Greek manuscripts. William Tyndale, a unique and heralded Scriptural and language scholar, included the words in his 1534 translation of the New Testament into English.

All of this is really of little consequence. I only mention it to underscore the petty nature of some in their approach to translation. First, there are sufficient acceptable manuscripts to justify the inclusion of the words. Second, there are sufficient godly and extensive scholars who see a need to include them. Third, the very nature of the text lends itself to the employment of this language. Fourth, the same Greek expressions (*προσκαιρησαι και δεησαι* *ανδ προσευχη και τη δεησει*) are also found in Ephesians 6:18 and Philippians 4:6. Versions omitting the expression in Acts 1:14, include it in those verses (*“prayer and supplication,”*^{ASV/ESV/NRSV} *“prayers and requests,”*^{NASB} *“prayers and petitions”*^{NIV}). I do not see this as a critical matter. However, I have been compelled to say a few words about it to illustrate the dreadful propensity of worldly wisdom to the nonsensical and meaningless. Only eternity will unveil the extent of the confusion that has been caused in the Christian community by multiple, and often sloppy, translations of the Scriptures.

then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?” (Luke 11:13). It is, therefore, perfectly reasonable to understand one of their chief petitions was that they would receive the Spirit.

Included in that petition could have been such things as being delivered from evil and protected from their enemies, remaining faithful, that their faith would remain strong, and that they would all remain *“of one accord.”* All of that, and more, was associated with receiving *“the promise of the Father.”*

Why Supplicate for Something Promised?

The sophist will ask, *“Why should God’s people ask for something that the Lord has promised? Isn’t that a sign of unbelief?”* To the unlearned, that makes a lot of sense. However, it really borders on spiritual insanity. **God has revealed**

that the fulfillment of His purposes in the earth includes the involvement of men. The One who can save to the uttermost will use the work of Noah to preserve the eight souls who will multiply in the earth after the flood. He who gives repentance will employ men like John the Baptist and Peter the Apostle to facilitate that repentance. This is, as Job would put it, “parts of His ways” (Job 26:14).

The Principle Declared

Speaking through Ezekiel, the Lord made known what He had purposed for Israel. Their land, which was made desolate, would become like the garden of Eden. Abandoned cities would be built, walled, and inhabited. All of this would bring the heathen around them to know the Lord Himself had done such great things – things that could in no way be accomplished by men. **However, even though God had purposed these things, He would be moved by supplications of His people to do them.** Here is how Ezekiel said it. “*And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are become fenced, and are inhabited. Then the heathen that are left round about you shall know that I the LORD build the ruined places, and plant that that was desolate: I the LORD have spoken it, and I will do it. Thus saith the Lord GOD: I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them: I will*

you an expected end. Then shall ye call upon Me, and ye shall go and pray unto Me, and I will hearken unto you” (Jer 29:12).

The Principle Illustrated

This Divine principle of human involvement is lived out in the prophet Daniel. Because he lived within the awareness of the Lord created by the Word of God, he sensed that a time for accelerated prayer and supplication had come. Here is how he recorded the experience. “*In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem. And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes”* (Dan 9:2-3).

The books of reference were the writings of Jeremiah – particularly the Divinely determined length of the Babylonian captivity: seventy years (2 Chron 36:21; Jer 25:11-12). **Of particular importance was the promise of God concerning the conclusion of those seventy years.** “*For thus saith the LORD, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place”* (Jer 29:10).

When Daniel realized that the seventy years of captivity in Babylon

9:17). In this prayer, which he called a “confession,” he said the following.

- ⇒ God was great and dreadful (4a).
- ⇒ God keeps covenant and mercy with those who love Him and keep His commandments (4b).
- ⇒ Israel had sinned, committed iniquity, and done wickedly in departing from God’s precepts (5).
- ⇒ Israel had not hearkened to God’s prophets (6).
- ⇒ Righteous belonged to God, but confusion of face to Israel (7-8).
- ⇒ Mercies and forgivenesses belonged to God, even though they had rebelled against Him (9).
- ⇒ Israel had not obeyed the Lord, but transgressed His law, departing from Him (10-11).
- ⇒ The Babylonian captivity had confirmed God’s word against them (12-14).
- ⇒ God had brought the people out of Egypt, but they had sinned against Him (15).
- ⇒ Jeremiah asked the Lord to turn away His anger from them (16).
- ⇒ He asked the Lord to make His face shine upon His sanctuary, which was then desolate (17).
- ⇒ He pleads with the Lord to look upon the desolation of His people and the city of Jerusalem (18).
- ⇒ He asks the Lord to forgive, and not defer to consider His city and His people (19).

I suppose some would argue that all of this was totally unnecessary. After all, God had already promised that He would visit the people after seventy years to perform His good word toward them and cause them to return to their land (Jer 29:10). **But let us hear the response of heaven to reasoning like that of Jeremiah! That will settle the matter.**

All of this would bring the heathen around them to know the Lord Himself had done such great things – things that could in no way be accomplished by men. However, even though God had purposed these things, He would be moved by supplications of His people to do them.

increase them with men like a flock” (Ezek 36:35-37).

Again, God spoke through Jeremiah, assuring the people of His purposes for them. **Yet, they would be realized by means of the involvement of the people.** “*For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give*

were coming to a close, he **did not** lift his hands in praise saying, “Thank God the time of judgment is coming to an end!!” Instead he said, “*And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes”* (Dan 9:3). His prayer is one of the great prayers of Scripture, extending from 9:4 through

While Daniel was still speaking his prayer and making his confession, God sent the angel Gabriel to Daniel. He said that he was sent by God to give Daniel *“skill and understanding.”* Gabriel said, *“At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to show thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision”* (Dan 9:23). He then revealed to Daniel not only the end of the Babylonian captivity, but the rebuilding of Jerusalem, and the eventual coming of the Messiah who would be *“cut off”* for the people (9:24-26).

Jesus In Gethsemane

If God has ever established His will, it is in the matter of His great salvation. He announced His intentions to destroy the devil through the seed of the woman before Adam and Eve were expelled from the garden (Gen 3:15). He declared His purpose to bless the world through the seed of Abraham (Gen 12:3; 18:18). The manner of the death of Christ was revealed through David (Psa 22). What would take place in His death was revealed through Isaiah (Isa 53). The willingness of the Savior to enter a body prepared for Him and satisfy God through a willing sacrifice was also made known through David (Psa 40:6-8).

If anything can be accomplished without any further involvement on earth, surely it will be this! But that is not the way it all played out! When the

hour began to approach when Jesus would lay down His life, He *“steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem”* where the death would be accomplished (Lk 9:51). When the night arrived when He would, according to prophecy, be betrayed by His own *“familiar friend”* (Psa 41:9), He agonized in prayer, thrice crying out, *“not as I will, but as Thou wilt”* (Matt 26:39,42,44). **This is the manner of the kingdom!**

In Our Text

Therefore, just a few days away from the promised coming of the Holy Spirit upon them, the disciples engaged in focused and consistent prayer. They began to seek fervently what was shortly

sense of the approaches of Divinely appointed epochs – whether judgments like the destruction of Jerusalem (Matt 24:15-17), or blessings, like events leading up to the return of our Lord. (Lk 21:24-28). **Somehow, the preachers and teachers of the day have produced a people who have neither eye nor heart, discernment nor sensitivity.** Like some Hebrews, they are *“dull of hearing”* (Heb 5:11). Like the disciples at one time, they are *“slow of heart to believe”* (Lk 24:25). Like Jerusalem of old, they are unable to perceive when they have been *“visited”* by the Lord (Lk 19:44).

These are not the kind of disciples we will find in the book of the Acts. Here

Somehow, the preachers and teachers of the day have produced a people who have neither eye nor heart, discernment nor sensitivity. Like some Hebrews, they are “dull of hearing.” Like the disciples at one time, they are “slow of heart to believe”

going to be accomplished. Their action was not a sign of the lack of faith, but the evidence of the strength of their faith.

Our Times

The modern church has delivered a gospel that has **not** led people to think in this manner. They appear to have no

we will be faced with a people who know what to do when they are apprised of coming events. They know what to do when they are challenged. Their responses will be immediately and zealous. This is a recounting of life under the New Covenant – of the nature of that life, and of the world’s reaction to it.

DO NOT FORGET THE OTHERS!

“^{14a} . . . with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brethren.”

“The eleven” were the principal people gathered together, **but they were not the only ones.** Furthermore, they were primary by Divine appointment, not by achievement or human merit. As it is written, *“And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues”* (1

Cor 12:28). The apostles would not be the only people the exalted Christ used to establish the truth. In this book, we will read of several who were used in an unusual way, yet were not *“first.”* They include men like Barnabas (4:36; 9:27; 11:22-30; 12:25; 13:7; 43-50; 14:12-20; 15:2,12,22-39), Stephen (6:5-9; 7:1-59), Philip (the evangelist – Acts 6:5; 8:5-40; 21:8), James (the Lord’s brother – Acts 15:13; 21:18), Silas (Acts 15:22-40; 16:19-29; 17:4-15; 18:5), Agabus (a prophet – Acts 11:28; 21:10-12), Timotheus (Acts 16:1; 17:14-15; 18:5; 19:22; 20:4), Judas

(a prophet – 15:22,27,32)), Simeon, Lucius, and Manaen (prophet-teachers – 13:1-4), and others.

All of these were used mightily by the Lord, not being equal to the apostles, yet putting their hands to the work of the Lord with them.

Now, Luke tells us of the people who were waiting for the promise of the Father. All of these had apparently understood themselves to be included in those who should wait for *“the promise of*

the Father.” All of them had concluded they should not depart from Jerusalem, and that they would, in some way, be included as Christ’s witnesses.

“The eleven” certainly did not consider it a reproach to be gathered with these personalities, nor did they despise their prayers. There are a significant number of professed Christian leaders who would not have allowed these people to be included in this number – particularly sense a major decision will be made by this very group.

THE WOMEN

“ . . . with the women . . . ” Other versions read, “along with the women,” NASB “together with certain women,” NRSV “together with the women,” RSV “with several women,” DARBY “with some women,” NAB “several other women,” NLT “with women,” YLT [waiting together] with the women,” AMPLIFIED and “together with the women who had followed Jesus.” PHILLIPS

⇨ “There were also **women** looking on afar off: among whom was **Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome;** (Who also, when He was in Galilee, followed Him, and ministered unto Him;) and **many other women** which came up with Him unto Jerusalem” (Mark 15:41).

⇨ “And when the sabbath was past, **Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome,** had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint Him” (Mark 16:1).

⇨ “And **certain women,** which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, **Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils, and Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod’s steward, and Susanna, and many others,** which ministered unto Him of their substance” (Luke 8:3).

⇨ “And **all His acquaintance, and the**

Jesus **His mother, and His mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene**” (John 19:25).

The significance of at least some of these women is found in the fact that Jesus Himself upbraided the men for not believing their testimony that they had seen the risen Christ. “Afterward He appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen” (Mark 16:14; Lk 24:22).

Women who are specifically named, were identified with Christ, and no doubt with His disciples, include Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, Mark the mother of James and John, Joanna, Susanna, and Mary’s (mother of Jesus) sister. In addition there were clusters of women referred to as “other women” and “many other women.” By mentioning them, the Spirit endears them to our hearts.

THE MOTHER OF JESUS

“ . . . and Mary the mother of Jesus . . . ” Other versions read, “Jesus’ mother,” LIVING “Mary,” WILLIAMS and “Mary His mother.” PHILLIPS

Mary is referred to as “the mother of Jesus” three times (John 2:1,3; Acts 1:14), “His mother” fourteen times (Matt 2:13,14,20,21; 12:46; Mk 3:31; Lk 2:33,43,48,51; Lk 8:19; John 2:5,12; 19:26), “His mother Mary” once (Matt 1:18), “the mother of my Lord” once (Lk 1:43) and “Mary, of whom Jesus was born” (Matt 1:16).

Prior to the her bearing the “holy child,” she was referred to as Mary, “a virgin to a man who name was Joseph, of the house of David” (Lk 1:27). The angel Gabriel appeared to her, announcing that she had been chosen and was “highly favored, the Lord was with her, and she was “blessed among women” (Lk 1:28). He specifically told her that she had “found favor with God” (Lk 1:30). Mary’s response to this marvelous announcement was, “Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word” (Luke 1:38).

Mary was related to Elizabeth,

THE APOSTLES	THE WOMEN	JESUS BROTHERS	OTHERS
Peter	Mary, Jesus’ mother	James	Barsabas
James	Mary Magdalene	Joseph	Matthias
John	Mary	Simon	Cleopas
Andrew	(mother of James, Joses)	Judas	Cleopas’ companion
Philip	Mary	Brothers: Matt 13:55 The women: Matt 27:55; Mk 15:40-41; Lk 16:1; Lk 8:2-3; 23:49,55; 24:10; John 19:25 Others: Acts 1:22-23; Lk 14:33-50;	
Thomas	{ mother of James, John, } also called Salome		
Bartholomew	Joanna		
Matthew	Susanna		
James of Alphaeus	Mary’s “sister”		
Simon Zelotes	“Other women”		
Judas of James	“Many other women”		

MINIMUM COUNT: 11 + 7 + 4 + 4 = 26 (PLUS “OTHER WOMEN” AND “MANY OTHER WOMEN”)

I understand these to be “women” that were previously defined as being associated with Jesus, either personally or in a specific group. Here are some references to these women – especially noted for following Jesus and being devoted to Him.

⇨ “And **many women** were there beholding afar off, which followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him: Among which was **Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee’s children**” (Mat 27:56).

women that followed Him from Galilee, stood afar off, beholding these things” (Luke 23:49).

⇨ “And **the women** also, which came with Him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulcher, and how His body was laid” (Luke 23:55).

⇨ “It was **Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women** that were with them, which told these things unto the apostles” (Luke 24:10).

⇨ “Now there stood by the cross of

Those who have been commanded to tarry in Jerusalem for power, now return to the holy city to wait – by Given O. Blakely

the mother of John the Baptist, who is called her "cousin" (Lk 1:36). At the time of his announcement to Mary, the angel told her that Elizabeth had conceived a son "in her old age, and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren. For with God nothing shall be impossible" (Lk 1:36-37).

Upon visited Elizabeth and saluting her, the babe John the Baptist leaped in Elizabeth's womb, and she was "filled with the Holy Spirit" (Lk 1:41). At that time, Elizabeth pronounced a blessing upon Mary: "**Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. . . And blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord**" (Luke 1:42-45).

Upon hearing these things, Mary praised God in a most unique and insightful manner. This is one of the great expressions of the salvation of God.

"My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior. For He hath regarded the low estate of His handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For He that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is His name. And His mercy is on them that fear Him from generation to generation. He hath showed strength with His arm; He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich He hath sent empty away. He hath holpen His servant Israel, in remembrance of His mercy; as He spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever" (Luke 1:38-55).

When Jesus was born, and the shepherds told Mary and Joseph what the angel had told them concerning the Babe, "Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart" (Luke 2:19).

When Jesus was twelve, and was found in the Temple "in the midst of the doctors," upon being questioned by her concerning the occasion, Jesus told her that He had to be about His "Father's business." Upon their return to Nazareth, it is written of Mary, "but His mother kept all of these sayings in her

heart" (Lk 2:51).

At the beginning of Christ's ministry, when He performed the first of His miracles, "the mother of Jesus was there" (John 2:5). When Jesus was one the cross, "His mother" was there (John 19:25). Now, after His ascension into heaven, when the disciples are waiting for the promise of the Father, "Mary the mother of Jesus" is there.

This is the last mentioning of her in the Scriptures, and we are left with a most favorable impression of her.

Mary was an extraordinarily blessed, holy, and insightful woman.

Mary was an extraordinarily blessed, holy, and insightful woman. Much of the religious world has not beheld her as they should – "blessed among woman" and "highly favored" of God.

Much of the religious world has not beheld her as they should – "blessed among woman" and "highly favored" of God.

HIS BRETHREN

" . . . and with His brethren."
Other versions read, "His brothers,"^{NKJV} "as well as His brothers,"^{NRSV} and "the brothers of Jesus."^{NLT}

These are the half-brothers of Jesus, Joseph being their father. Their names are given in Scripture: "Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, **James, and Josés, and Simon, and Judas?**" (Mat 13:55).

After Jesus turned the water into wine, He "went down to Capernaum." At that time, His brethren stayed briefly with Him. "After this He went down to Capernaum, He, and His mother, **and His brethren, and His disciples: and they continued there not many days**" (John 2:12).

Once, when His brethren had

heard the multitudes were swarming around Jesus and His disciples, and they could not even take time to eat, they concluded He was "beside Himself" and journeyed there to rescue Him (Mark 3:21,32).

Well into the ministry of Jesus, His brothers still did not believe in Him. Once, when the Feast of Tabernacles approached, they said to Him, "Depart hence, and go into Judaea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest. For there is no man that doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If Thou do these things, show Thyself to the world. **For neither did his brethren believe in**

Him" (John 7:5). They knew He was a great Teacher and miracle worker, but they were not aware of who He really was. Therefore they are properly said to not "believe in Him." **At that time, they were much like the average church member.**

Now, however, His brethren have believed on Jesus, and have joined with the disciples in waiting for the promise of the Father.

James

James, the Lord's brother, became a prominent and leading member of the Jerusalem church. He is the one who wrote the book of James. Another of Jesus' brothers, Jude, wrote the book of Jude. James the Lord's brother is also quite prominent in the book of Acts, particularly in regards to special meetings that were called to consider the acceptance of the Gentiles (12:17; 15:13-21; 21:18).

After Jesus had risen from the dead, He made a special appearance to His brother James, as distinguished from the rest of the Apostles (1 Cor 15:7). After

Paul was converted, He went up to Jerusalem, spending fifteen days with Peter (Gal 1:18). At that time, Paul said he did not see any of the other apostles – but He did see “James the Lord’s brother” (Gal 1:19). The account of that meeting is found in Acts 21:18-26).

When Paul went to Antioch, and had to confront Peter “to his face” about his improper conduct toward the Gentiles, mention is made of several brethren who had been sent to Antioch by James (Gal 2:12). James, together with Peter and John, were “pillars” in the Jerusalem church (Gal 2:9). This was after James the apostle had been killed by Herod (Acts 12:2). James, the Lord’s brother was now a leading figure.

Wrapping It Up

We are left considering this band of disciples, patiently waiting for “the promise of the Father,” and doing so at the direction of Jesus.

It appears to me that there were a minimum of twenty-six disciples present. The eleven,

THE ELEVEN	11
MARY, JESUS MOTHER	} 7
MARY MAGDALENE	
MARY (JAMES/JOSSE)	
MARY (JAMES/JOHN)	
JOHANNA	} 4
SUSANNA	
MARY'S SISTER	
JAMES	} 4
JOSEPH	
SIMON	
JUDAS	} 4
BARBABAS	
MATTHIAS	
CLEOPAS AND COMPANION	26

up” into heaven (Acts 1:22). The others were included when they were with the eleven, when Jesus appeared to them, after which He led them out to Bethany, blessed them, and was parted from them (Luke 24:36-50).

All of these people had apparently concluded that the word to “tarry in Jerusalem” applied to them. I conclude that their presence was something more than a gesture of comfort and kindness toward “the eleven.”

Considering the Women

An unbiased consideration of this gathering is devastating to certain views concerning “the role of women” in the church. To this point, **after** being taught by the Son of God Himself during His ministry, and **after** having Him teach them concerning the Kingdom of God for the forty days following His resurrection, **there was no apparent restrictive views of the women among them.**

Following His resurrection, Jesus had “appeared first to Mary Magdalene.” He charged her, “go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God.” Obediently, “Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken these things unto her” (John 20:17-18).

their way the risen Christ Himself met them. He told them, “Be not afraid: go **tell My brethren** that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see Me” (Matt 28:10).

In these texts, if there is any doubt about Jesus “brethren” being “the eleven,” that doubt is shattered by Mark. “Afterward He appeared **unto the eleven** as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because **they believed not** them which had seen Him after He was risen” (Mark 16:14). If it is countered that those bearing the testimony really refers to Cleopas and his companion, let it be remembered that Cleopas referred to the testimony of the women BEFORE he and his companion told the disciples they had seen the Lord. They told Jesus (whom they had not yet recognized), “Yea, and **certain women** also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulcher; and when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that He was alive” (Luke 24:22-23).

The Relevance of These Observations

There is a certain and contemporary relevancy in these recorded events. **We have been exposed to the mind of Christ, and how holy and informed angels thought about women – holy women.** They knew nothing of their inherent subordination to all men, or of them not being allowed to bear witness to any man. Jesus **commanded** Mary, plus a group of women, to deliver a message to His own disciples. It was a message of revelation **and** of direction as well. They were to tell the men the **fact** of Him being raised, and then **instruct** them where to meet Him. Angels from heaven were not aware of any limitations being placed on women bearing witness to men – and men are, in their best state, “a little lower than the angels” (Psa 8:5; Heb 2:7).

Men are told to be cautious about how they speak before angels (Eccl 5:6), and women are told to conduct themselves within an awareness of the presence of angels (1 Cor 10:10). But angels are never admonished to be careful how they speak before men. You may be sure they will **not** have regard for the traditions of men when they speak, no matter how hoary those traditions are.

An unbiased consideration of this gathering is devastating to certain views concerning “the role of women” in the church. To this point, after being taught by the Son of God Himself during His ministry, and after having Him teach them concerning the Kingdom of God for the forty days following His resurrection, there was no apparent restrictive views of the women among them.

seven specific women, Jesus’ four brothers, and four others: Barsabas and Matthias (identified later), and Cleopas and his companion.

Barsabas and Matthias were doubtless there, because they were with the disciples “until the day He was taken

When holy women went to anoint the body of Jesus, they confronted a holy angel. Unaware of any restrictions on women speaking to men, this angel told them, “And go quickly, and **tell His disciples** that He is risen from the dead; and, behold, He goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see Him: lo, I have told you” (Matt 28:7). As they went on

Those who have been commanded to tarry in Jerusalem for power, now return to the holy city to wait – by Given O. Blakely

In my judgment, men ought to be cautious about adopting any view of women speaking that is at variance with what the Son of God and holy angels have actually done. No view should be taken that perceives Jesus or angels acting in contradiction of the nature of the New Covenant. If it is difficult to put various texts together, then admit to the difficulty, but do not take it upon yourself to impose rules upon your sisters that have **not been** honored by either Jesus or holy angels. Men will have to give an account for such views, and explain why they ignored what Jesus did, and what

angels did, in preference for a human interpretation or tradition.

What the women I have just mentioned did, would be something like some godly women informing certain elders of some truth of God, then telling them what they should do about it. If it is countered that Jesus would never do something like this, I have just shown you where He DID do it.

All people will eventually face these holy women – women whose record was inspired by the Holy Spirit of God.

How embarrassing it will be to have to give an accounting for binding rules upon the “daughters” of God that make Mary Magdalene and the holy women appear to be acting in contradiction of the New Covenant! How will men explain that condition on the day of judgment?

Let no one remonstrate, saying that Jesus was at liberty to break the Law, or violate a Divine principle. He was prophesied to be the One who would “magnify the Law, and make it honorable,” not the One who would break it (Isa 42:21).

CONCLUSION

I have spent an unusual amount of time dealing with, what may appear to be, mere incidentals. However, as we approach this marvelous record of Divine working, it is essential that we maintain a proper perspective. The era of the New Covenant is going to be launched, and it is important that we see **how** this was done. The Gospel of salvation will be declared, and it is crucial that we see **what** is said, and **how** it is proclaimed. **We will be exposed to the reshaping of the thinking of the disciples, and it is critical that we discern the what, why, and how of that reshaping.**

The book of Acts cannot be read through the filter of the Mosaic Law. Much less can it be read through the foggy spectacles of human tradition. We will be exposed to the work that Jesus started, when He “**BEGAN** to do and teach” (Acts 1:1). **Christ’s ministry among men was not an extension of the Old Covenant**, and it is disastrous to sound thought if we think that it was. Jesus Himself said that “*the prophets and the Law prophesied until John* [the Baptist]” (Matt 11:13). As Luke said it, “*The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it*” (Luke 16:16).

Jesus, then, as well as John the

Baptist, preached during a transitional period. This was a time of preparation for the period of the New Covenant, and the preaching of both John and Jesus conformed to that objective. That is why their subject matter is described as “*the Kingdom of God*,” or “*the Kingdom of heaven*,” which Matthew prefers to use (Matt 3:2; 4:17). These synonymous expressions are used no less than eighty-four times in the Gospels alone. Acts uses them seven times. Neither one of them is used a single time from Genesis through Malachi – not in any standard translation of the Scripture!

Jesus commented on the Law, but **He did not preach the Law** – He preached the Kingdom of God. He spoke of the traditions of the elders, but **He did not preach those traditions** – He preached the Kingdom of God. In keeping with the thrust of His preaching, He spoke about such things as being “*born again*” (John 3:3,7), receiving the Holy Spirit (Matt 7:112; Lk 11:13; John 7:37-39), names being written in heaven (Lk 10:20), having “*eternal life*” (Matt 19:29; Mk 10:30; John 3:15,16,36; 4:14; 5:24; 5:39; 6:27,40,47,54; 10:28; 17:2), never dying (John 11:26), seeing Abraham (Lk 13:28), and the day of judgment (Matt 10:15; 11:22,24; 12:36; Mk 6:11). **None of these things – not a single one of them – was the thrust of the words of either Moses or**

the Prophets.

The ministry of Jesus before He died, His ministry to His disciples on earth after He rose from the dead, and His ministry in heaven after He ascended up where He was before, **ALL have to do with the New Covenant, Redemption in Christ Jesus, and newness of life.** Nothing – absolutely nothing – having to do with the enfleshment, death, and glorification of Jesus is unrelated to those realities.

My posture in all of these lessons will exhibit a total intolerance for the lifeless and unprofitable traditions of men. It will make no effort at all to synchronize the book of Acts with human perceptions. Where there is a conflict between what men have said or are saying, and the record in this book, I will energetically default to Luke’s record. **The Gospel preached in Acts is the only valid Gospel there is.** It is not a special one for the Jews. If there are weaknesses in the understanding of the people whose records are in this book, that deficiency will be dealt with forthrightly in the book and clearly resolved. If people have conducted themselves improperly, it will be clearly identified and a response recorded. This is an inspired book, and is to be so regarded. It provides an index in the Divine manner of working.

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 6/9/2006. In this session, we continue our current series of lessons on the book of Acts. The fourth lesson will cover verses fifteen through twenty-six of the first chapter: "THE CHOOSING OF MATHIAS." As the disciples "tarry" in Jerusalem to be "endued with power from on high," Peter brings to their attention that there is a matter of Kingdom business that must be handled at once. Our meeting will begin at 7:00 P.M. You are invited to bring your family and friends for fellowship around the Word of God. Refreshments are served afterward, with a time of extended fellowship for everyone.

*The Blakely Family: Given, June, Benjamin, Jonathan, and Eva
406 South Sergeant Street, Joplin, MO 64801*

A place where believers can meet, fellowship, be edified, and express themselves.

Telephone: (417) 782-3063, Email: Given (GivenB@aol.com) June: (JuneE01@aol.com)

ADAH's Webpage: <http://wotruth.com/adah.htm> -- EVA's Webpage: <http://wotruth.com/Eva.htm>

Benjamin (Bensvison@aol.com), Eva (Evablakely@aol.com)
Adah Hutchcraft (adahhutchcraft@hotmail.com), Jason Hutchcraft (hcchurch@interlink-cafe.com)

WORD OF TRUTH Website: <http://wotruth.com>

WORD OF TRUTH FELLOWSHIP Website: <http://wotruth.com/wotf/wotindex.htm>

COMMENTARY on Hebrews: <http://wotruth.com/hebindex.htm>

COMMENTARY on Revelation: <http://wotruth.com/revelationindex.htm>

COMMENTARY on First John: <http://wotruth.com/1stjohnindex.htm>

COMMENTARY on Romans: <http://wotruth.com/Romans.htm>

COMMENTARY on Daniel: <http://wotruth.com/Daniel.htm>

COMMENTARY on Colossians: <http://wotruth.com/Colossians.htm>

COMMENTARY on Second Corinthians: <http://wotruth.com/2Corinthians.htm>

COMMENTARY on Acts: <http://wotruth.com/Acts.htm>

Refreshing Waters Website: <http://wotruth.com/renewal.htm>