

02a ACTS

Let's take a moment at the beginning of our study to clear our minds, to lay aside the various issues that we accumulate during the week and during the day and pause to refresh ourselves in the study of God's Word. Father, we thank you for your grace and your mercy toward us. We recognize that we are completely undeserving.

We have no redeeming qualities. We have no value except the value that you assign us through the Lord Jesus Christ. We thank you that you loved us in spite of those facts and you sent your Son to die in our stead and on our behalf.

And because of his faithfulness and his obedience and his love for us, we now have a standing before you and we have a relationship with you and we have great opportunities in this life to take the time that is allotted to us and convert it from something that passes and has gone forever into something that is of eternal value. We pray that our study tonight in the Book of Acts that follows the Gospel of Luke will contribute to the goal of our growth and our progress toward becoming more Christ-like in our thinking. We pray that we can learn to see our lives from a strategic point of view and a long-term view and a view that partakes of the heavenly and of the divine.

We pray that as a result we can reflect your glory and live in a way that is pleasing in your sight. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

Tonight we resume our study in Acts chapter 1 or Luke volume 2, depending on how you want to look at it. I really think they ought to call this Luke, you know, second Luke because as I mentioned before, to call it some of the Acts of a few of the Apostles is kind of less than exciting as far as the title goes. And Luke ties this book to the previous one by saying, The former account I made, O Theophilus, Theos, Philos, one who loves God, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach until the day in which he was taken up, after he, through the Holy Spirit, had given commandments to the Apostles whom he had chosen, to whom he also presented himself alive after his suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

By the way, that word infallible proofs is what we call a hapax legomenon. It is a word that is found only once in the Bible and it's right here. It signifies a piece of evidence, something that is given by way of tangible evidence.

This would be the touching of the scars and the wounds, the eating of the bread, but it says many infallible proofs. There were more tangible proofs of his resurrection than just the ones that we have mentioned in Luke chapter 24. Jesus told his disciples there, See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself.

Touch me and see. A spirit does not have flesh and bones, as you see that I have. Of

course, John the Apostle was present on that occasion and in 1 John 1, he says that which was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands concerning the word of life, this is what he's writing about in his epistle.

So, what do we have here? We have not seen the resurrected Christ. Well, how do we know he was raised? How do we know he was ever here? Well, how do we know Winston Churchill was the Prime Minister of Britain in World War II? Somebody told us. Somebody wrote down the facts as they happened and we consider historians from World War II to be reliable witnesses.

I don't have to have my high school teachers say, just trust me, there was a Winston Churchill and he was Prime Minister and he did say, you know, we will fight them in the trenches and we will fight them in the land and we will fight them on the sea and, you know, all these other famous things that he said because there are eyewitnesses who were there at the time in the early 1940s who tell us about Winston Churchill. That's the witness I want to listen to is the guy that was there and saw him and heard him and had a contemporaneous record, right? In the same way, it is not the testimony of Christians today who say, oh, I've had an experience. Oh, my life has been transformed.

I am happier now than I used to be. As wonderful as that is for that person, that is not the basis for our faith. We don't go to contemporary witnesses.

We go to the source witnesses, to the people who were there at the time. You don't have to take my word for the resurrection of Jesus. You can take the word of John and Peter and the Apostle Paul who saw the resurrected Lord and the others whose testimony is recorded in the New Testament.

They are first-hand eyewitnesses and they tell us that. That's why Jesus chose them. He said, you have been with me from the beginning.

You have been trained. You've been taught. You are witnesses of the miracles.

You are witnesses of the infallible proofs. You are the Apostles. Apo, stelo.

Stelo means to send. Apo means forth. They are sent forth ones.

They are the martyrs, the witnesses who will testify. And this is important. You think, well, why is that so exciting? The reason is, they are Apostles and we are not.

Nobody that you drive by their church on the rural road and it says the Apostle Billy Bob Franklin, that doesn't mean that he's an Apostle just because he says he's one. Was he there when the Lord was raised? With one exception, Jesus did all of his resurrection appearances between the Sunday that he was raised and 40 days later when he ascended from the Mount of Olives into heaven. That's when he did all of his appearing

with one exception.

You have the 12th Apostle born out of time, the Apostle Paul, and the resurrected Lord Jesus came back and spent personal time one on one with the Apostle Paul, which he talks about in his letters. We'll get to that eventually. But except for that, the Lord Jesus does not return.

He doesn't come down and walk around. He doesn't appear to people. He doesn't speak in the night.

He doesn't arrive at the foot of someone's bed glowing robes and acting like a nightlight. You hear people tell these stories all the time. If you watch Christian television, why the Lord Jesus just can't get around to everybody that he's seeing and talking to and giving instructions and visions.

And you think, well, he probably never sees his father anymore. He's too busy running around talking to all of these TV so-called preachers. But that's not the case.

And it's important because to understand the doctrine of apostleship is also to differentiate between what God commissioned them to do and what God commissions you to do and me to do. If I am not an apostle, then I do not have the apostolic commission. Being an apostle, like they say when you go and try to get something done with the city, it's not my job.

You need to go down the hall and go to that next door. Go down to the next window. You're in the wrong line.

It's not my job. Right? Well, being an apostle is not my job and it's not your job. If we know what an apostle's job is, then we'll know what he's supposed to do.

We look in the word of God and find out what we are supposed to do and we don't confuse the two. One of the biggest pieces of confusion in modern Christianity is that many, many Christians believe that they have the apostolic commission and they don't. And in seeking to pursue a commission to which they have not been called, for which they have not been trained, for which they are not qualified, for which God the Holy Spirit does not empower them and does not lead them and does not guide them, how is their life going to be spent? Productively or unproductively? It is going to be largely unproductive.

Sometimes they will be used in spite of themselves and they will claim this is a great victory in validation that they are doing the right thing when they are not. So in Acts chapter 1, it says, I'm giving you an account of what Jesus began to do and teach in Luke volume 1 until the day he was taken up. Luke volume 2 is the things that happened after he was taken up out of their sight.

After he had given commandments to the apostles whom he had chosen. When Jesus chooses an apostle, you know what he does? He talks to them one-on-one, face-to-face. They hear his voice and he says, follow me.

I am choosing you to be an apostle and let me tell you what it is you need to know and what it is you need to do. He did that with every single apostle. We studied it in Luke.

He went up on the mountain in Galilee and he called the disciples to himself and then it names them. Names all twelve, even Judas. And they came.

He was down at the foot of the mountain with them. He said, well, I'll see you later. And he went and climbed a mountain.

Then he sent a messenger down and said, hey, you all come up here. And so they had to climb the mountain to be with the same Jesus that was at the foot of the mountain. And he said, I'm calling you to be a disciple.

I want you to be one of the twelve. Here's what I'm going to have you do. You need to watch and listen and then you're going to go forth and testify of me after I'm gone.

So what about the apostle Paul? Is all of that true of him? Yes, it is. We'll see it here in Acts later on. Then in verse four, it says being assembled together with them, he commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the father, which is the Holy Spirit, which you have heard from me for John truly baptized with water.

But you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now. This is a specific baptism of the spirit. It is a unique occasion.

There was only one day of Pentecost. There was only one baptism of the spirit that followed this pattern. Now, let me ask you, if we were to go down the street here, several houses and find somebody that's an unbeliever and we arrived at the right day and the right time and God, the Holy Spirit had been witnessing to them and they were ready to be saved.

And we said, here's what the Bible says about sin and righteousness and judgment and the Lord Jesus Christ. And we explained the work of Christ. And they said, that sounds good.

I'm claiming Christ is my savior. And they became a believer. In our fundamental study, we studied 24 things that God does right at that point in that instant.

Remember that there is the the five fundamental ministries of the Holy Spirit, regeneration, sealing, indwelling, filling and gifting. You have redemption, reconciliation, propitiation. You have entering into the family.

You have transfer out of the kingdom of darkness. You have issuing the heavenly citizenship card. You have qualifying for inheritance.

You have entering into the family of God, entering from God's standpoint and entering from fellow believers. All of those 24 things that happen. But let me ask you, when people get saved today, do they have the spirit coming down like tongues of fire and resting on their heads? Do they begin speaking in foreign languages like Swahili and Croatian and Chinese and Tibetan and Tagalog and that? It doesn't happen anymore.

Why? Because the baptism that Jesus predicts here in verse 5 is not many days hence from when he speaks. And it happened not many days hence. And then it was over.

It was a one time thing. Anyone today, and we know this, but I'm stating it for the record. Anyone today who says there is Pentecostal power and you'll get the ghost and you'll speak in tongues, you'll heal, you'll do all of these things, has somehow missed this verse.

Jesus didn't say this is going to happen 2,000 years from now. He says it's going to happen in a couple of days from now. And it did.

And then it was over. It would be no different than saying, well, the Red Sea will part over and over again. Or water will come forth from the rock over and over again.

Or manna will drop from heaven perpetually till the end of time. It's just not so. There are kairos and kranos.

There are periods of time. There are seasons. And there are episodes.

There are times when certain things happen in God's plan. And when those times pass, it's over. We're not under the law anymore.

We don't worship on Saturday and cease from all labor. We do not tithe, although we are free to tithe if you'd like to take a tenth and find some worthy ministry or a worthy church or any other thing that you think is doing God's work and you want to give a tenth, God bless you. God will bless you.

Because it will be free will on your part, not grudgingly or out of necessity. But anyone who tells you, any church that preaches that you must take a tenth of all that you earn and you must give it to God, it belongs to God, and you are under woe and guilty and subject to discipline, if you do not cough it up and give it to them, somehow they have become so closely identified with God that giving it to them is giving it to God. And this is how the tithe works.

This is no different than the Catholics selling indulgences and buying people out of purgatory 1,000, 1,200, 1,300, 1,400 years ago. It's no different. Some people who have

a very little training in the Word of God and they believe that a tithe is what they should do, God will bless them.

Because if they choose that for themselves and say, I'm going to do this because I want to honor God with the first fruits of my increase and that's the way they choose to do it, it's all about the thoughts and intents of the heart. I say this because, as you know, I am immersed in the Baptist world, and in the Bible. Budgets are formed based on the tithes and the pressure is put on to squeeze in the tithes into the storehouse.

Do not ever feel compelled. The Bible also says, owe no man anything. If you get down to your last 50 bucks and you have a choice between paying a tithe to the church and paying your electric bill, what does the Bible say you should do? If you have obligated yourself for electric service and you've got a \$50 electric bill, you better pay your bill.

The Bible says, owe no man anything. That means do not fall behind in any financial obligation. If you cannot successfully do that, then you need to reduce your financial obligations or refinance or take out a second mortgage or do whatever you have to do.

The Bible says, be fiscally responsible. It is a part of our witness to the world. It is a part of the reflection of the glory of God that we do what we say we will do.

We keep our promises. We make a promise when we walk down the aisle with somebody of the opposite gender. Thank the good Lord, Texas is not going to recognize same-sex marriages.

Why do we have to pass a law to that effect? I mean, it is just disturbing. But we make a promise. You take an oath when you enter the military service.

We swear that we will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic, bear true faith and allegiance to the same, and so on. We make a promise. And we keep our promises.

That's a part of our identity, especially as a Christian, not even as an American, but especially as a Christian. Our word is a promise. When we say something, it's a promise.

When we commit ourselves, it's a promise. And if we are going to be Christ-like, how would you feel if Jesus forgot even one of His promises? How would you feel if the Lord God in heaven forgot His promise to any one of us at any time? Well, we are to be holy like God is holy. We are to be consistent like God is consistent.

We are to be faithful as our Father in heaven is faithful. And so, owing no man anything, we return what we borrow. We pay on time if we are paying on time, taking out a loan or whatever.

It's a part of faithfulness. Why are we stressing this? Because this is our Christian

responsibility. What a tragic thing that many Christians today think that Matthew 28, 19 is their commission and is their law for living and ignore the fundamental things of the Word of God where we are concerned.

We are to love one another. We are to put others ahead of ourselves. We are to walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing.

We are to do what we do heartily as unto the Lord and not unto men. I mean, think of all of the imperatives in the Bible that get short shrift when people say, well, I've got to get out and witness. I've got to get out and evangelize.

I've got to go... that person over there, I just don't think they're saved. I'm going to give them a tract. I'm going to do this.

I'm going to do that. And we're constantly looking at someone else trying to figure out if they're saved. And people are actually encouraged in many churches to make friends with their neighbors over the back fence and cultivate a relationship and cultivate a friendship for the sole purpose of injecting them with the gospel and getting them saved.

It is deceitful. It's a lie. It's hypocritical.

Somebody you have nothing in common with, but you're going to, well, I want to be all things to all men so that I may all means win some. Guess what? That is an apostolic function. That's the Apostle Paul.

That's not every believer. Do not become a hypocrite. Don't put on a false front.

Don't lie to someone and act like you have an interest in them when you don't. That you have things in common with them when you don't. If you are going to be the person to share the truth of the gospel with that individual, God the Holy Spirit will create a situation where you suddenly have opportunity and you have the coalescing of circumstances and you have an opening and a reason for so doing.

They will ask. And it is an entirely different thing than this brute force, bull in the china shop approach to evangelism that is called spirituality and is preached as being the core and center and fundamental reason for being for believers. Well, we know this, but from time to time we have to put it out there and restate it because we are just swimming against the tide of evangelicalism misguided.

So, here we are back in chapter 1 of Acts. Jesus said, you disciples will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now. And that will launch the apostolic age.

All of the hearers will be similarly baptized. And in this first generation, the first set of people, this is sort of a mini rapture. Why is it special? Why is it marked with these signs? Because these people are transferring from the age of Israel to the age of the

church.

Or the Gentiles who hear about Christ and are saved, it is a new thing. It has never happened before. And when God introduces a new thing, He hangs out a sign.

He puts out some markers that say, hey, pay attention to this. This is a new thing. When they open a new car dealership, they hang out the banners and have specials and sales and they have the clowns out there and the balloons and all kinds of promotions.

Searchlights at night, grand opening, new car dealer. Well, they don't just keep doing that ad infinitum year after year. When it is new and they are first there and they want everybody to know, they do that.

Once they are established, they tell the clown he can go home. They take down the balloons and the crepe paper and they kind of get down to business running the car dealership. And God does the same thing in each of His new ages.

The age of Israel, national Israel, was introduced with signs and wonders as Israel leaves Egypt. That is what we are studying in Exodus, right? God did not continually just part rivers and blight the enemies of Israel with ten plagues every time they came up. Well, here is the Archites, ten plagues, here we go.

Get ready for the darkness, get ready for the frogs. Oh, here is the Hittites, ten plagues on them. Here is the Hivites, ten plagues on them.

It was the beginning of the age and so it was marked out. Later on, God did not continually shower them with manna. It would have been kind of convenient, would not have had to plow and plant.

Could have gone for many days in battle and just grabbed some manna and keep right on going. But it is a sign. Same thing with the New Testament age.

We are going to see in Acts these great signs and wonders. People today are silly to expect, it is just as silly to expect that God is going to go back and reproduce the miracles at the beginning of this age as it would have been for Zephaniah in the Old Testament to say, well, where is the manna? How come I am up to this river and the water is not parting? My friend's daughter died here and I cannot get her to raise from the dead. I do not understand.

There is a reason why God does miraculous things at miraculous times. So, you will be baptized not many days hence. Therefore, when they had come together, they asked him, saying, Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel? Now, this is not the dumb question it at first appears to be.

At first you think, well, do not you see what the people of Israel just did to the king? How

can he restore the kingdom when the people of the kingdom have just crucified the king? And you think, come on, apostles, wake up. But this is actually an intelligent question. Why? Because there are going to be, there has been this great sign and wonder of Christ raised from the dead.

Christ himself in preparing for the inauguration of the kingdom age has done signs and wonders of an Old Testament biblical proportion, has he not? He has raised the dead. He has healed the lepers. He has cured the blind and the lame and the halt and the deaf and all the rest.

And these signs were harbingers and precursors for the coming in of the millennial kingdom which was rejected. But he says, okay, so we have gone through this crucifixion thing and threw them all for a loop. But now they are back and they say, well, you will receive power in a few days.

The Holy Spirit is going to come on you and you are going to be witnesses and we are going to be kind of back in that witnessing mode again. They say, oh, well, so is the kingdom program back on? And it is a valid question. Jesus sent them out on two different missionary trips to be witnesses to him, didn't he? Sent out the 12 and sent out the 70 and he says, I am sending you forth again.

I am apostellowing you. So this kind of makes sense. Well, so are we back on the kingdom program here? Is the kingdom about to come in after all? Jesus says, it is not for you to know.

That is classified. You don't have the security clearance for that information. I can only tell you that you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you and you will be witnesses to me.

And then we looked at this fascinating construction in the Greek. You will be witnesses to me in both Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria. Now that Te Kai construction we looked at last time introduces two things.

Te Kai. If you have another thing, there will be another Te in there. It will be Te Te Kai.

But here you have Te Kai. So what are the two things? Thing number one is Jerusalem. Thing number two is Judea and Samaria.

Now I may have slightly misspoken. I may have led you astray last week when I lumped together Jerusalem and Judea as one thing and Samaria as another. But in reviewing the Greek this week, I had a little V8 moment and smacked myself in the head because you see the word all there? The word all and Judea and Samaria are all in the same case and that unites them.

All Judea and Samaria which is basically all Israel. It is a way of identifying the entire

nation of Israel. Northern and Southern Kingdoms if you will.

So both in Jerusalem and in all and then under all you have Judea and Samaria. So Judea and Samaria is the second thing. Jerusalem and Israel is another way of saying it.

I wanted to correct my misstatement there. Then it says in your English and to the end of the earth. But that is not what it says.

Heos, H E O S is the Greek preposition here. It always means until. It is an adverb or a preposition, an improper, it has adverbial force and it refers to time.

Until the end of the gaze. Until the end of the world. And you say well now Sam, everybody says that this is to the ends of the earth.

That this is, the gospel will go abroad. Well this very same phrase of the Heos Esketu, remember Esketos, last things, Esketology, doctrine of last things. Until the last or the end of the gaze, of the earth.

This same phrase occurs in Acts chapter 13 and verse 47. This is Paul and Barnabas preaching to the Gentiles. Acts chapter 13, this is in Antioch.

Paul and Barnabas in Antioch. Here comes all the Greeks. On the next Sabbath the whole city, this is verse 44, came together to hear the word of God.

But when the Jews saw the multitudes they were filled with envy. Contradicting and blaspheming they opposed the things spoken by Paul. So Paul and Barnabas grew cowardly and slunk away.

Is that what it says? It says they grew bold. Here is the Jews, the historic holders of the flame, keepers of the torch, stewards of the mysteries of God and they say hey wait a minute, you are telling all this good stuff to the Gentiles, the uncircumcised, the Acrobustia. So they opposed them.

Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said it was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first but since you reject it and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold we turn to the Gentiles for so the Lord has commanded us. Notice this is Paul that got this command from Christ, just like the 11 did in Acts 1. I have set you as a light to the Gentiles that you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth. Very same phrase we had in Acts 1. So what is going on here? Have we fouled up in our understanding of Acts 1? It sounds like he is saying well see the Gentiles are all over the earth so you are supposed to go to the ends of the earth.

Not so. This that you should be for salvation until the end of the world. Until the end of the world.

This is now open to the Gentiles. It is not just a little window. It is not our Memorial Day

sale ends midnight on Monday.

This is to the end of the world. It is opened up. You have rejected it, guess what? The Gentiles are always going to have access to salvation from now to the end of the world.

I have set you as a light to the Gentiles, not just temporarily, not just to make Israel jealous and then we will fold that program up and stow it away until the end of the world. How do we know this? Well this is a quote, verse 47. It is a quote from Isaiah chapter 49 and verse 6. Turn back to Isaiah chapter 49 and verse 6. Also what I find quite interesting is this idea of haos escatouillages, until the end of the world.

It is only found two times in the New Testament and it is these two passages in Acts. It is found four times in the Septuagint which is the Greek translation of the Old Testament and one of those four verses is Isaiah 49 verse 6. So that is a good one to look at. Isaiah 49 and verse 6. Indeed he says it is too small a thing that you should be my servant to simply raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved ones of Israel.

As great as Israel is that is not glorious enough. It is too small a thing. I will also give you as a light to the Gentiles that you should be my salvation to the ends of the earth.

You say well gee here once again it sounds like he is talking about the whole world. Well we go to the Hebrew. In Hebrew if you want to talk about to the ends of the earth, if you want to say unto, you use the preposition al.

There are a couple of places where you have that actual construction. I this is not one of them. In Isaiah chapter 49 verse 6 when you look at it in Hebrew it says Lachiot Yeshuati.

You hear that word Yeshua? What does Yeshua mean? Joshua, Savior. Yeshuati is my salvation. Ad k'tzeh ha'aretz.

K'tzeh is to the limits, to the limits of the world. To the finish, to the ending point. It can be spatial or it can be conceptual.

Either way it just means until something ends. Until there isn't any more of something. That is what k'tzeh or k'tzeh deals with.

Ad means until. Ad is the Hebrew preposition here. It is not al.

It is ad. Ad, until. So in the Hebrew as well as in the Greek haos and ad, both of them, whether you go to the Septuagint, whether you go to the original Hebrew or whether you go to the quotation in Acts 13.47, all three of them say until.

Why are we making such a big point out of this? Well, go back with me now to Acts chapter 1. It makes sense in the context that Jesus is talking about time and not distance. What are the disciples asking about in verse 6? Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom? Is this the time? Jesus says it is not for you to know the time or the

season. You will be witnesses to me for all time.

You will be witnesses to me until time runs out. You will be witnesses to me until the world ends. Until the end of the world.

Until the last of the world. Does that make sense? It is all about time here. The reason this is important is it is not a commission.

How many times, I have heard this since I was old enough to understand English. Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, the outermost parts of the earth, it is like a target, it is like a bullseye. It began in Jerusalem and it spread outward in ripples.

Which it did. That is totally true. Totally historically factual.

Fine. That is just not what Jesus is saying here. He says you disciples will be witnesses to me in Jerusalem and Judea Samaria.

Who is he talking to? He is talking to the 11. Who does Peter write to in 1 Peter and 2 Peter? Turn to 1 Peter. 1 Peter chapter 1, verse 1. Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, a sent one of Jesus Christ, writing to whom? The pilgrims of the dispersion.

Pontius, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia. Actually, it says to the ones chosen to be pilgrims. But we have been down that road before.

I don't know why they moved the word elect over to verse 2 because it says in Greek, it just annoys me every time I come to this passage and see the words scrambled around. The word taken out of verse 1 and put in verse 2 in all of your English Bibles. It is a heinous crime against good translation.

Listen to this in Greek. Petros, apostolos, Jesu Christu, eclectos. Count them.

Petros, apostolos, Jesu Christu. The fifth word is eclectos. That is chosen.

In your Bible, it is the first word in verse 2, isn't it? Wrong. If this was a first year Greek class, I would flunk the guy that moved that word to the second verse. It is the fifth word in verse 1. Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the chosen pilgrims of the diaspora of Pontus, Galatia.

Chosen to be pilgrims, not elect according to the foreknowledge of God to be saved. This isn't saying they were chosen to be saved. It says they were chosen to be pilgrims.

If they are pilgrims, what does that mean? What is a pilgrim? I don't mean a John Wayne pilgrim, you know, the guy at the bar. I mean a real pilgrim. What is a pilgrim? It is a guy that has left his native land, right? It is people who are not in their homeland.

So if he is writing to pilgrims, who is he writing to? What kind of people? They are Jews

from Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria. Even though they have departed the land, he is still apostellating to them. He is the apostle to the Jews.

He is the apostle to Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria. To those people. And if those people become pilgrims, he is still writing them letters.

Peter is still ministering God's truth to his assigned audience. He doesn't say to the Greeks, to the saints and faithful, does he? He says to the pilgrims. The pilgrims are Jews.

Peter writes to the Jews. James writes to the Jews. John writes to the Jews.

Who is it that writes to the Gentiles? Paul. What is the relative proportion of epistles from Paul versus Peter and John and James? Paul has the lion's share of the New Testament because the lion's share of the audience is going to be Gentiles. So, I say all of that to say this.

In Acts, chapter 1, when Jesus says, you shall be witnesses to me in Jerusalem, both in Jerusalem and in Judea and Samaria, until the end of the world. These disciples get that commission. What commission does the apostle Paul get? Well, we just read it over in Acts 13.47. He says, you, Paul, will be a light to the Gentiles until the end of the world.

His commission is just as long as those in Israel. So, what is a point of application here? If you support ministries like the Friends of Israel, that publish Israel My Glory and the American Board of Missions to the Jews and you're interested in evangelizing Jewish people and bringing them to faith in Christ, getting them to recognize the Lord Jesus, a good place to go for Scripture are those apostles who wrote to the Jews. That's the Scripture that is best suited for their ears.

It's going to draw from Old Testament imagery. It's going to hook into their Jewish souls. Those are the men who were commissioned to witness to the Jews.

I wouldn't spend a lot of time in Ephesians and Romans. I would go to Peter. I would go to John.

I would go to the Gospel of Matthew and go to the Scriptures that are targeted at the Jews. Do like the Lord did and take them to their own Old Testament and show them Jesus Christ in the Law and the Prophets and the Writings. But secondly and more importantly, it tells us that people have an assigned area of function.

These 11, isn't it interesting that there's one sent to the broad world of the Gentiles and there's 11 sent to the Jews? God has not cast off His people whom He foreknew. He gave them every opportunity. He even gave them first crack at the church age.

They had 11 apostles for that tiny little country. The whole rest of the world essentially

had the one apostle. And yet look at the response.

It's sort of the baskets of food taken up after the feeding of the 5,000 and the feeding of the 4,000. There's a greater response on the part of the Gentiles than there was in Israel. And that's why you're going to have Israel going out in 70 A.D. And this will be true until the end of the world.

Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up and a cloud received Him out of their sight. While they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel who also said, Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? The same Jesus who was taken up from you into heaven will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven. A lot of mentions of heaven here, isn't there? He is taken up and the cloud receives Him.

He says, why are you gazing into heaven? The one that was taken from you into heaven will come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven. Then they returned to Jerusalem from the Mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day journey. This is something on the order of 3,000 feet.

It's like a little over half a mile. And then it names Peter, James, John, Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, Siloam the Zealot, Judas the son of James. These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus and with His brothers.

I don't know how it can get any more plain than this. How the Catholics can maintain in the face of Acts 1.14 that Jesus had no half brothers, that Mary never had any more children. They say, well brothers just means fellow believers, people of faith.

It lists all the people of faith and then it says Mary the mother of Jesus and His brothers. These are physical brothers. These are sons of Mary and Joseph.

Jesus had brothers. James was one of them. They found His bone box.

It says Yaakov, Ben Yosef, that ossuary that they found over there. So, they continued in one accord. They are obeying.

Now just because you have obeyed the last command you received does not mean that you've got everything squared away. We have to analyze carefully each decision point. The fact that we're gaining momentum and that we're pointed in the right direction doesn't mean that the next decision we make won't be a bad one.

We constantly have to watch. We have to watch and pray. We have to be vigilant.

We have to be alert because a single misstep can lead us down a strange path. We're going to pause here and take our break. When we come back we're going to see that this

is exactly what happens to the Apostle Peter.

Having received instruction from the Lord, having watched the Lord ascend into heaven, having continued in prayer and fellowship and done everything right, Peter is going to pull a major boo-boo when we come back from our break.