

"The Foundation for the Apostles"

Part 2

Introduction: Tonight we return again to Acts chapter 1 and we are looking at how the Apostles were prepared by the Lord for what they were about to engage in and that was to carry the Gospel out into the world. The lessons here are basic and fundamental but these fundamental lessons are very important for us to be reminded of.

Tonight I want to begin by looking at the misunderstanding of the Apostles.

I. "Looking for the Kingdom"

Notice Acts 1:6

This is such an important question asked by the Apostles. The fact that Jesus did NOT correct their thinking is really important. They were looking for an earthly kingdom in which they would rule with Him, and Israel would be restored to global prominence. We will see this confirmed in Acts 3 when we read Peter's sermon.

Acts 3:18-21

¹⁸ But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled.

¹⁹ Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.

²⁰ And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:

²¹ Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.

Let us notice a few of the verses in the Old Testament that the Apostles would have been familiar with.

Isaiah 1:25-26

²⁵ And I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin:

²⁶ And I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning: afterward thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness, the faithful city.

Isaiah 9:6-7

⁶ For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

⁷ Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

Isaiah 35:4-10

⁴ Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come and save you.

⁵ Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.

⁶ Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.

⁷ And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes.

⁸ And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.

⁹ No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there:

¹⁰ And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Jeremiah 23:5-6

⁵ Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.

⁶ In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Notice Acts 1:7-8

It is so important to notice that Jesus did not correct their think concerning the kingdom. This means their theology was correct. There will be a future earthly kingdom in which God will fulfill His promises to Israel.

Jesus did rebuke them for desiring to know the times. The timing was not for them to know for it was God's timing. The concern of the Apostles was to be on witnessing and carrying the Gospel into the world. There is an Old Testament verse that connects here.

Deuteronomy 29:29

²⁹ The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.

Notice Acts 1:7 again.

I want us to notice two words here. The word "times" and the word "seasons." These have different meanings. "**Times**" refers to duration of times and "**seasons**" refers to both length of times and kinds of times [tough times or easy times]. The verse also tells us that both are controlled by the power of God. That means that how long something lasts is determined by God and it also means that God determines what kind of times we will experience. They can be easy times, or they can be trying times. Whatever it is that we are experiencing we can be sure that God has determined a time when it will end, and He has also determined if we will experience trying times or times of ease. He uses both of these in our lives. What ever "season" we are going through we can rest assured it is in God's control and He is using it for His purpose in our lives.

Malachi 3:3

³ And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness.

1 Peter 1:6-7

⁶ Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:

⁷ That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

Notice Acts 1:7-8 again.

When I read these verses again, I see that the Apostles wanted to discuss the timing of the Kingdom, but Jesus was concerned more about reaching the lost with the Gospel. The Kingdom would one day be established but there was a responsibility given to the Apostles and that was to carry the message into the world. They would be empowered by the Holy Spirit for this very purpose.

Application:

We need to take a step back here and look at our own lives. This command is not just for the church as a corporate body, but it is a personal command for each one of us. It is our responsibility to see that we do all we can to get the message of the Gospel out to the world. Many church members sit back and say that it is the church's responsibility to get the Gospel out. They do not realize that it is a personal responsibility. Now someone might say, "I cannot go to the ends of the world with the Gospel." But you can personally give to a missionary that can, or you can give to a radio program that gets the Word out.

As Jesus was about to leave this earth, He explained to His Apostles they were to be His witnesses. He was not just speaking to these men in our text, but He was also speaking to you and me. We are His witnesses. We are to be eager to testify of what He has done for all sinners. We too are empowered as they were. The very same Spirit that was given to them is given to us as well. Let us notice what happens when this command is obeyed.

Acts 4:31-33

³¹ And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.

³² And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.

³³ And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.

When they were filled with the Spirit, they spoke not their words, but they spoke the Word of God with boldness. The Word went out from them in the power of the Spirit and when it did God blessed their obedience and people were saved.

This is the very way the church is to function today. Notice the words of A. W. Tozer:

"If God were to take the Holy Spirit out of this world, much of what we're doing in our churches would go right on and nobody would know the difference!...I do not believe in a repetition of Pentecost, but I do believe in a perpetuation of Pentecost—and there is a vast difference between the two."

Let us now notice the incentive to walk in obedience.

Notice Acts 1:9-11

Here is our incentive to carry out the commands of our Lord. Just as Jesus ascended into heaven He will also return in like manner. For His church this is a reminder that there will be a day of reckoning.

Matthew 25:14-19

¹⁴ For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.

¹⁵ And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey.

¹⁶ Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents.

¹⁷ And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two.

¹⁸ But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money.

¹⁹ After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them.

Our Lord has entrusted us with spiritual gifts, He has empowered us for service, and He has given us the grace to exercise our gifts. One day we will stand before Him, and we will answer for what we did with all of these and more.

Ephesians 4:7

⁷ But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

1 Corinthians 3:13-15

¹³ Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

¹⁴ If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

¹⁵ If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

2 Corinthians 5:9-11

⁹ Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.

¹⁰ For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

¹¹ Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.

In these verses Paul reveals his motivation for living in obedience to God's Word and it was the **TERROR OF THE LORD**. This is a reference to a deep reverence for the Lord. It comes from the realization that he would one day stand before his Creator and answer for what He had entrusted to him. It is a fear in the sense that Paul wanted his service to be pleasing to the Lord. He wanted to hear the words, "Well done."

Conclusion:

Might we too have a desire to serve in such a way that we will hear the Words, "Well done thou good and faithful servant." We have a limited amount of time given to us for service therefore we need to make the most of every day we live. Let us be very careful about not getting caught up in the world's philosophies. Let us stay focused upon our Lord and live in the power of the Spirit so as to glorify Him.

1 John 2:15-16

¹⁵ Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

¹⁶ For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.