

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION
Acts: The Continuing Earthly Ministry Of Our Lord Jesus Christ
Part I: Understanding The Plan For Christ's Continuing Earthly Ministry
(Acts 1:1-8)

I. Introduction

- A. When we believers in Christ read the events of Jesus' earthly life, we may marvel at His grace, power and righteousness, and long to have lived in that time when we could have witnessed Him at work.
- B. What we may not realize is that Acts 1:1 implies His earthly ministry is still continuing, although not with His own bodily presence on the earth! How this ministry works is explained in Acts 1:1-8, and we study that passage to learn how we can witness and be a part of Jesus' continuing ministry on the earth:

II. Understanding The Plan For Christ's Continuing Earthly Ministry, Acts 1:1-8.

- A. In Acts 1:1, Luke claimed he had written his Gospel of Luke to Theophilus on the things Jesus had **begun** to do and to teach, Acts 1:1 with Luke 1:1-4. Thus, "**He is still working and teaching through His people today**", cf. Bible Knowledge Commentary New Testament, p. 353.
- B. The **PLAN** for this continuing earthly ministry of our Lord is revealed in Acts 1:1-8 as follows:
 - 1. In the Church age, the Christian community is to believe the testimony and to heed the words of the Apostles who witnessed Christ's death and resurrection as authoritative for all their faith and practice:
 - a. Jesus Christ presented Himself alive and risen after His crucifixion death, using many infallible proofs to do so over a forty day period of time to solidify for His apostolic eyewitnesses the credibility of the Christian faith, Acts 1:3a,b with 1 Corinthians 15:12-19, 20-23.
 - b. He also taught the apostolic witnesses of His truths concerning the kingdom of God (Acts 1:3) and supplied commands on the direction and function of God's continued work on the earth, Acts 1:2.
 - c. Thus, the apostolic testimony of Christ's life, death and resurrection, together with His teachings and instructions as reported by His apostolic witnesses are authoritative for all Christians today!
 - 2. All believers along with the Apostles are to rely upon the indwelling Holy Spirit's ministry to them, His gifting through them and His guidance of them for effective life and service, Acts 1:4-5, 8:
 - a. Before the cross, Jesus had predicted He would send the Holy Spirit to His disciples to minister to and through them, cf. John 14:16-18, 26; 16:7-11, 12-14, etc.
 - b. Accordingly, after His resurrection and before He ascended to heaven, Jesus told His disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the promised arrival of the Holy Spirit, Acts 1:4-5. Only then would they have the power for effectively being used of Christ to do His work on the earth, Acts 1:8.
 - c. Now, we know that after the Day of Pentecost when this prophecy was fulfilled (Acts 2:1-4), every believer at salvation has since been indwelt and sealed with the Holy Spirit, 1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 1:13.
 - d. Nevertheless, it is imperative that, to be a part of Jesus' ongoing earthly ministry, the believer must rely upon the Holy Spirit's power, gifting and leading to minister effectively today! (2 Tim. 1:6-7)
 - 3. All believers with the Apostles are not to concern themselves with the establishment of Christ's messianic kingdom on earth: that is a matter the Father has not planned for the Church, Acts 1:6-8:
 - a. After His resurrection and before His ascension to heaven, Jesus was asked by His disciples if He would at that time restore the Davidic, and hence, the messianic kingdom, to Israel, Acts 1:6.
 - b. Jesus replied that the messianic kingdom was not to be the concern of the Christian Church, but that this kingdom would be restored in the future in God's time and power, Acts 1:6-7.
 - c. Rather, the Church was to busy itself with making Christian disciples of all the nations, Acts 1:8.
 - d. Accordingly, there is a literal messianic kingdom to come, so the Church is to be premillennial in theology, but that kingdom is not to be the goal of the Church! We are not to be reconstructionists in setting up an earthly kingdom, but to recruit all nations to be God's subjects in His future reign!
 - 4. Thus, believers in the Church era are to disciple all nations unto Christ in God's power, Acts 1:8.

Lesson: *Christ's PLAN for continuing what He began to do on earth is to USE CHRISTIANS who depend on the indwelling Holy Spirit's power and guidance, who believe and heed the Word of God through His eyewitness apostles to disciple all the nations in the framework of a premillennial theology.*

Application: *May we follow Jesus' plan to be involved in witnessing His wonderful work in our midst!*