

ACTS: ALIGNING WITH GOD'S SOVEREIGN WORK OF DISCIPLING

I. Waiting On The Lord To Lead

(Acts 1:1-14)

I. Introduction

- A. The book of Acts explains "the orderly and sovereignly directed progress of the kingdom message from Jews to Gentiles, and from Jerusalem to Rome," Bible Knowledge Commentary, New Testament, p. 351.
- B. Accordingly, we can learn much about aligning our ministry efforts with God's sovereign work from studying the Early Church era as presented in the book of Acts.
- C. Acts 1:1-14 reveals our need to learn to wait on the Lord to lead in our ministries, and we view it for insight:

II. Waiting On The Lord To Lead, Acts 1:1-14.

- A. Luke as the author of the book of Acts (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, "Introduction to the Acts of the Apostles," p. 1537) began his record in that book of writing about God's sovereign work to develop the Church's discipling ministry by reminding his reader Theophilus about his former Gospel of Luke, Acts 1:1.
- B. The words and works of Jesus Christ were the focus of that Gospel, but they were just the beginning of the record of God's working through His Son according to Acts 1:1, for that record had concluded with Christ's resurrection, His post-resurrection appearances with many infallible proofs of that resurrection over a forty-day period ending with His ascension to heaven to continue His work in heaven, Acts 1:2-3a.
- C. Indeed, during the forty days of Jesus' post-resurrection appearances to His disciples, He had spoken of things pertaining to the Kingdom of God that was yet to arrive, Acts 1:3b.
- D. On one occasion in this forty-day period when the disciples had met with the risen Lord, He told them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of God the Father that they had heard from Jesus, Acts 1:4. That promise involved the disciples' being spiritually baptized by the Holy Spirit not many days in the future as John the Baptizer had predicted Christ would perform in his ministry, Acts 1:5 with Luke 3:15-16.
- E. This command by Christ recalled the Old Testament prophecy of Joel 2:28-32 of God's pouring out His Spirit on Israel and of God's deliverance rising from Zion and Jerusalem for all who call on the name of the Lord.
- F. Since this prophecy will be fulfilled in its fullest sense at the start of the Messianic Kingdom (*Ibid.*, Ryrie, ftns. to Joel 2:28, 3:1 and 3:2-3), the disciples with their Hebrew prophetic timeline that had no reference to a Church age between Christ's resurrection and the start of the Messianic Kingdom naturally asked Jesus if He would then restore the "Davidic, millennial kingdom on earth," *Ibid.*, ftn. to Acts 1:6.
- G. Christ's response is very revealing to us: He did not rebuke His disciples for asking this question, meaning "God is not through with Israel and the kingdom will eventually come (Rom. 11:26)," *Ibid.*, ftn. to Acts 1:7. There is no basis for holding to the Amillennial view that the Church replaces Israel, for this would have been the time for Christ to deny that Israel had a future messianic kingdom if the Church indeed replaced Israel!
- H. Rather, Jesus claimed that the "disciples were not . . . to know either the times or the critical periods the Father had set by His . . . authority," Acts 1:7; *Ibid.*, Bible Know. Com. N. T., p. 354.
- I. Instead, Christ introduced the strong adversative particle *alla* that contrasted with the subject of the millennial kingdom subject matter just referenced (U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 416; Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 37-38) to say that the disciples would receive power with the Holy Spirit coming upon them as He had announced in Acts 1:5, and they would then be witnesses of Christ in Jerusalem, then in all Judaea, then in Samaria and eventually to the ends of the earth, Acts 1:8.
- J. After He had said this, Jesus was taken up in a cloud to heaven in fulfillment of Daniel 7:13; Acts 1:9.
- K. The disciples were left gazing after Christ when He had ascended, and two angels in white apparel asked them why they were gazing up into heaven, Acts 1:10-11a. They explained that this same Jesus Who had been taken up from them into heaven would come in like manner as they had seen Him go, a reference to the Second Coming of Christ at that same location of the Mount of Olives predicted in Zechariah 14:1-5.
- L. Not knowing God's timetable or that they were in the Church age, the disciples did the only thing they knew they should do – return from the Mount of Olives to Jerusalem and wait for the Holy Spirit, Acts 1:11-14.

Lesson: *Being ignorant of how they then fit into God's program of the ages as leaders in the era of the Church that they did not yet understand, following Christ's ascension to heaven, the disciples did the only thing they knew that Christ had wanted them to do then –return from the Mount of Olives and wait in Jerusalem for the Holy Spirit.*

Application: *In all of our ministry efforts in the Church, may we not run ahead of God, but wait on Him to lead us.*