

# Acts 1

by Bill Gallatin

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*The Book of Acts records the early history of the Christian church and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, emphasizing the power and authority of Jesus Christ.*

**Duration:** 1:12:46

**Scripture:** Psalm 69:25, Psalm 119:11, Zechariah 11:12, Acts 1:3, Acts 1:15-16

**Topics:** "Expositional"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the unshakable security that believers have in Jesus Christ. He highlights that nothing can hinder God's plan of redemption and the establishment of His kingdom. The preacher also discusses the responsibility given to believers to use their talents and resources for God's glory and to be diligent in their work until Christ's return. He contrasts the concept of spiritual beggars in other religions with the call for believers to be active and productive in God's kingdom.

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## Transcript

This Bible study was recorded at Calvary Chapel of the Finger Lakes and was taught by Pastor Bill Gallatin. This evening we begin with the Book of Acts, Chapter 1, Verse 1. The Book of Acts. Let's bow our hearts before the Lord.

Father, we ask that by the Holy Spirit You would enable us to receive those things that You have for us tonight. Lord, that You might speak clearly through Your Word, that we might be able to share in such a way, Father, that You could touch every heart here tonight. Lord, that it come of their own will, because of their love for Christ, a desire to grow in the knowledge of Jesus Christ and an understanding of the love of Jesus Christ and the work and the power of the blessed Holy Spirit in the church and in our lives.

So, dear Lord, we invite You now to be glorified, to minister to our hearts by the power of Your Holy Spirit as you study the Book of Acts together. May Jesus be glorified in Your name be magnified, Father. In Jesus' name, Amen.

You're going to have to bear with me. The pollen is so high it's affecting the microphone. It never ends with me, does it? I've never, in all the years I've been living in New York, had gotten a sinus infection from allergies.

So there's a first here. It really must be quite high. OK, the Book of Acts.

We know without a doubt it's written by Luke. Tradition has it that his reference to Theophilus here in the first verse... Theophilus means loved of God. Now, it could be a general reference to whoever's reading this.

Oh, loved of God. And that is wonderful to know that we are all loved of God in the New Testament and the epistles in the New Testament are all written to those that are loved of God. That's you and I. But the general consensus, and I agree with it, is Theophilus is a person and tradition has it that he was an extremely wealthy man.

And that Luke, the only Gentile writer of the New Testament, was his slave and he purchased Luke's freedom. And Theophilus was also a very dear friend of the Apostle Paul. And because of the Apostle Paul's ministry and travels and constant infirmities and sicknesses and problems, Luke being a physician, Theophilus gave him his freedom and then allowed him to travel with Paul in his ministry to care for him and to watch over him.

It's interesting also that Paul having the power of the Holy Spirit and the miraculous working in his life, but in his own personal life as he prayed for others in a dynamic way, and we have the record of it, in his own personal life, it caused him to depend upon God. There are many times when God supernaturally did not heal him and he needed Luke. We also know that these accounts are very descriptive and accurate.

Luke writing one of the Gospels, not being an eyewitness. It's interesting God did choose him because being a physician and a doctor, he would be very exact in writing down facts and receiving facts. And so Luke probably did much interviewing of eyewitness accounts of the things that took place in the Gospels and being a physician, having a very clear mind and a mind that would be very careful in writing down the facts, did write them down in the Gospel of Luke.

And then he's writing here, making reference to it. It's interesting he ends it by, in Luke, you know, he makes the reference where Jesus tells the Apostles to carry in Jerusalem until they be endued with power from on high. And now he carries right over into the book of Acts, in this treatise that he writes, and he begins it by saying that this is going to take place where he gives us the record of this outpouring of the Holy Spirit which takes place on Pentecost, or the baptism that we refer to as the Holy Spirit.

He begins by saying, the former treatise, have I made O Theophilus, or O Beloved of God. Now you can insert your name there. Now stop and think of this, that God loves you so much that he's written all these letters.

These are love letters of God's grace, mercy, and assurance to you. You're just as beloved as Theophilus. Jesus loves you just as much.

And so he's had the Holy Spirit write these things for your edification, for your encouragement, for your hope, for your assurance. And especially when he brings out the beauty of the work of the Holy Spirit. It's going to work in your lives.

Something that we have that's such an advantage over the Old Testament saints. The indwelling person of the Holy Spirit to enable us to obey the commandments of God, to give us the power over sin, to give us the power that we naturally don't have to resist temptation, to flee the temptation, to live the Christian life. And having God Almighty living within us, the person of the Holy Spirit, enabling us to live the life.

And so this wonderful letter to bring out the work of the Holy Spirit in the apostles after Jesus Christ rose from the dead. So, O Theophilus, I'm writing to you of all that Jesus began both to do and to teach. And there he's making reference, naturally, to the book of Luke because he was bringing out the accounts of all the things that Jesus Christ did and did teach in the Gospel of Luke.

Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he, through the Holy Ghost, had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen. Now, there's a direct reference here that there must be some specific level of apostleship of the original eleven. We will exclude Jude because he betrayed Christ, even though Jesus can pick him.

Now, it tells us in Ephesians that one of the gifts of the church is an apostle. And then it goes on to list people that are gifted by God, given to the church during the church age for the edifying of the saints. And it's interesting when it says apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, it doesn't say that they're given for the salvation of souls.

Even evangelists are given to the church for the edifying of the body of Christ. God does the saving, and these gifted men, but even though there are apostles, and I believe there are apostles in the church today. There are apostles that don't make American newspapers and the denominational monthly magazines because of healing services and large crowds and stadiums with praise bands and publicity programs and great, you know, organizations behind them.

There are men that are probably walking around the jungles of South America and Africa. You know that we'll never hear of until rain glory doing the same thing. Raising people from the dead through prayer and doing the things of the book of Acts.

But I do not believe that there are any men that come to the same level as the original apostles, because Luke here makes mention of these eleven men that Jesus had picked. And I'll bring out something out later to give you the reason why I think that no one will equal those twelve men, even though there are apostles. Now, the word apostle means one who is sent out.

But clearly, I don't believe today there are any men that have the anointing or the ministry that these original men have. And here's a reference. He had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen.

So, remember, he had many disciples and he went up into a mountain to pray. Remember, before he picked these twelve men, he spent all night in prayer, you remember, alone on one of the mountaintops overlooking the Sea of Galilee. Out of all the disciples, then he came down off that mountain, you remember, and multitude gathered around him.

But then he drew aside and he picked his disciples, or his twelve apostles, Judas being one of them. Amazing, isn't it? Because he knew what Judas was and what he would do. But it just shows you, again, the sovereign power and control of God over everything.

That it didn't hurt the glory of God or hinder the kingdom at all to have someone like Judas in the original twelve. Didn't hurt at all. Nothing really upsets God's agenda.

Nothing can set aside God's program of redemption in the coming kingdom and the finalization of everything in time and Jesus Christ returning and setting up His kingdom. And nothing can really hinder the work of God in your life as you submit your life to Jesus Christ, no matter what Satan may attempt, no

matter what kind of a Judas the enemy may bring into your life. But Jesus Christ has it all under control.

That's how secure you are when you put your trust in your faith in Jesus Christ. And then, after he had chosen them, Luke shows us that Christ gave the commandments, gave his life, rose from the dead. And then he goes to verse three, "...to whom also he showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs." In other words, it cannot be refuted.

"...being seen of them forty days." In other words, appearing in his resurrected, glorified body for forty days. Many times, you remember, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene and Mary at the tomb. Then he appeared to Peter.

He appeared to the two disciples walking along the road to Emmaus and gave them a magnificent Bible study and then had a meal with them. He appeared to a handful of the disciples of the Sea of Galilee and cooked breakfast with them and ate breakfast with them, had some fish and bread with them, showing that he wasn't a ghost or a phantom or a spirit, that he had a glorified body and he ate food. We know that he appeared, as Paul tells us in the end of 1 Corinthians 15, to above five hundred people at once.

Now, in our system of law, to convict a man of a crime, you only need two eyewitnesses of an event that are in agreement. Two or three at the most, and you can convict a man of a crime if they are eyewitness and they line up. And it's amazing, the eyewitness accounts, the many infallible proofs and records that we have on hand of the risen Christ, and yet today people doubt the resurrection.

And again, it's the act of the will. There are more documents verifying the resurrection of Jesus Christ, him being seen by credible witnesses, eating meals, conversing, scholarshiping, and even when he appeared to Thomas, you remember, he came out of the fifth dimension into our dimension and passed through the wall and manifested himself. And he told Thomas, you know, put your fingers in my wound, put your hand in my thigh, because Thomas, you know, had doubted and said, I will not believe unless I see the wounds in his side.

And Jesus was there in his invisible form, listening, you remember, and so then he stepped into the room and then he had a meal with him and he told him, he said, you can feel my body. Does the spirit have flesh and bone? And sinners remember, he didn't include blood, because in the glorified body, blood won't be the life. We will be spirit.

You won't need blood in your glorified body, and there is no blood in Christ's glorified body. He said, does the spirit have flesh and bone? But he has a body, a glorified body, as Paul lays out clearly in 1 Corinthians 15. We will be given a glorified body fit for the heavens that will live eternally, never to grow old.

I looked at a brother today, you know, he's been fellowshiping with us. We have kind of grown together here at Calvary Chapel for the past fifteen or sixteen years. I said, we're growing, you know, we're growing old, getting great together, Jim.

He says, yeah, and we're not even using Grecian formula. Well, no need for that up there. Just a body that will never age, or weaken, or be fatigued.

And these mortal bodies, sometimes, you know, just this sinus infection, just, I don't know what it is, but your immune system's fighting it, and you're sneezing, and your nose is running, and stuff's pouring out of the, you know, luck in your eyes. And at the end of the day, you're just exhausted just from sneezing and

sniffing. I said, boy, there won't be like that in glory.

I'll be able to smell flowers up there. It's going to be wonderful. Glorified mold, and it won't bother me.

It's just going to be great. But many, many infallible proofs. It's an act of the will, isn't it? People don't believe because they don't want to.

It's not that you can't. It's a choice. I mean, every single person in this room, if you've gotten to high school, has been given some sort of a course in history, and you've been given some facts about some great historical figure, whether he's been a good person or a bad person, he's been great.

Or she has been great. And she's made, or he's made his mark on history, right? And it's so old in history, you don't even have a photograph. All you do is have what someone says, well, this is what a Narda said he looked like in those days, in the 1600s, and you believe that they existed, don't you? You accept it as fact.

You incorporate it into your life, and you go on with your older life, and with your education, believing that Napoleon existed, that the king of whoever existed, that Attila the Hun existed. Yet, there's no photograph. You've never met anybody that had dinner with him.

Why do you believe that they existed? Because somebody said they existed, wrote some evidence, and it's in a book somewhere, and there's a witness that said, yes, he existed. And somebody drew some kind of a character or a picture that said he lived. Got him on a horse or something.

And it's in your history books, and you accept it as fact. And he's not even the savior of the world. He may not even be good.

He may be a despot, a horrible but a powerful man, and he's in your history books. You accept that man is living, that woman is living, as a very fact of life. And yet, there's more infallible proof of the living Christ, that Jesus Christ conquered death, the savior of the world.

He can save your soul, and people wrestle with it and doubt it. They say, I need more facts. It's unbelievable.

Now, why is that the case? Because with Jesus, there's a sin issue. I can believe that Horus, the great Greek, or Pluto, or Caesar, or Attila the Hun, or Napoleon. You see, it's not a sin issue.

When it comes to Jesus, there's a personal sin issue. I have to reckon with that. And so, other than face my personal sin in dealing with Jesus Christ, I just say, I don't believe it.

I believe that Napoleon's real. I even believe that Santa Claus is real. So, many infallible proofs.

Being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. Jesus Christ laying out that one day he's going to return and set up his blessed kingdom on this earth. Right now, Satan's ruling this earth.

And as you look at the world today, as he's trying to draw the world together, economically and politically. You know, it's interesting to watch the stock market and see that America is being sucked into Europe and Asia, and we can't let go or we'll collapse. You know, they're talking about, you know, the great economy, but the only reason the stock market is exploding above 8,000 is that we are now so inclined with Asia and

Europe that we can't isolate ourselves.

We're not great enough to get out of that market now and survive. And the greatness of the stock market is because of money from Asia and Europe, and we're being caught right up into it, and we can't afford to let go. We're part of it.

This new world order, a unified world and a new economy, and everything being tied together. You see, and Satan, that one day, through electronic funds transfer and computer technology, he'll just start throwing switches and you won't go anywhere. You won't get money out of the bank.

You won't have your heat in your home. You won't get in the hospital. He's going to control the whole world.

I've got, I'm circulating it through the pastors, a new patent in the patent office in Washington, D.C., of a microfilm, or actually it's so thin, you can almost see through it, it's so thin, a chip that they can now implant in the hand, a computer chip, that wherever you go now, they can take your blood type, your body temperature, your pulse, and your medical record, and you can show it and get it in any hospital in the world. You won't even know it's under your skin, and it's in the patent office now in Washington, D.C. We are rapidly approaching that, and Satan's going to control the world that way. Jesus said, you remember when Satan offered him all the power and the glory and the money and wealth of the world, if he bowed down and worshipped, you know, get thee behind me, Satan.

Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only. And what he was telling Satan is, you should be worshipping me, the Lord your God. And he rejected Satan's kingdom, Satan's offer.

But it's coming to an end. And Jesus gives this marvelous, wonderful hope of a kingdom that when he returns, that he establishes in righteousness, in peace, in joy. It's going to be glorious.

This marvelous kingdom that Jesus Christ will establish as he fulfills his promises to Abraham, the Mosaic Covenant, and the Davidic Covenant. And being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which saith he, you have heard of me. Now, that's not the promise of salvation.

Jesus had already offered that through himself. They'd already experienced their salvation. The promise of the Father, you remember in Luke 11, was the promise of the baptism and the power of the Holy Spirit.

The promise that Joel spoke of in Joel chapter 2, verse 28, in the last days he would pour out his spirit upon all flesh. This promise of the Father that they needed to be the witnesses that they needed to be. It was a promise from the Father.

That's a wonderful thing to know that God has made a promise to you that you can receive the power of the Holy Spirit and you just receive it by faith. For John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. Well, probably just about ten more days until Pentecost.

Jesus had been showing himself forty days and ten more days would be the day of Pentecost. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the formation of the church, every believer having that opportunity to receive the power and the fullness of the Holy Spirit. Now, John gave the baptism of water, you remember.

In fact, John himself, when he spoke of Jesus, said, you know, I baptize in water, but there's one coming. It was the baptism of repentance. You're burying the old life.

We're going to have that water baptism shortly down at Canaan, Jake, and Malay. It's the burying of the old life, doing away with the old, putting it to death, and then coming up out of that water in the new, a signal of that new life and typifying the resurrection. That Jesus Christ promises.

But he said, there's someone coming that's going to baptize you with fire. I'm not even worthy to unlatch his sandals. I can dunk you in the water.

I'll baptize you with water, but I don't have the power to baptize you with this fire, this Holy Ghost. Jesus is the baptizer. He's the one that will do that, and it's through the promise of the Father.

And isn't it wonderful to know, as we go through this, you can receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit simply by faith, receiving it the same way you do your salvation, by faith. In just a few days coming, they received the very promise. They didn't know what was going to happen.

They were just told away. They had no idea. And so, by believing what God said, they applied it to their lives, anticipated, and they waited upon it.

And he didn't say exactly how many days. That's another wonderful thing. Thank God they didn't get frustrated after two or three days.

Ah, the promise isn't coming, and it just goes their way. They wanted it bad enough that they waited on it until they received it. Now, remember, they had already had the indwelling spirit.

In John chapter 20, before this time, before Jesus Christ brought them to this point, you remember, he breathed on them and said, Receive ye the Holy Spirit. So, they already had the spirit dwelling within them. Jesus said in John chapter 7, that when you drink of this well, remember, that I offer you this living water, it will be like a gusher coming up inside of you, and you can be filled with this spirit.

The filling of the spirit from the inside is to conform you into the image of Jesus Christ, to give you that ability to have the grace of God in your life and the attributes of God. It's filling you up. When you fill a vessel with a liquid, and whatever stain or color it is, and you look at that liquid and that vessel, you can see what's in it.

OK, you're filled with the spirit of God. Then you see the fruit of the spirit in your life. Remember, receive ye the Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 1.13, Paul said, After you believe on the salvation of Jesus Christ, the spirit of God comes within you and seals you until the day of redemption. That has already happened to the apostles. But now, they need to be totally immersed from the outside.

Power from on high. The spirit has to come upon them. Now, what's he mean? What's baptized mean? It means to immerse.

When you're water baptized, you're totally immersed in that water, a type of the great. You're going under, you disappear. The old man's gone.

You're buried. You come up anew out of the water. You've been totally immersed in it, and you're changed.

It's from the Greek term where they dye garments, and they would baptize the garments when they give them the color. They take a garment, maybe it's bland with no color whatsoever. They totally immerse it in a vat, a certain color.

That's called, they baptize it, and they put it down underneath the liquid. Totally immersed in it. They bring it out.

It would be different. When you're water baptized, you're burying the old man. But now, God wants to totally immerse you in the Holy Spirit.

Totally immerse you that when that's taken place, you're a different person. It gives you the power to be a witness. When they, therefore, were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? See, that was their concern.

You remember, even before Jesus Christ was crucified, they thought he was going to restore the kingdom then. They were looking for the promise of Abraham. They knew some of the scriptures, and when Jesus was announcing to them who he was, they thought right then the kingdom was going to be restored.

They wanted it then. Well, who wouldn't? I want it now. I don't want to wait.

God only knows who's going to be the next president. It doesn't matter what party they are, whether they're a conservative or a liberal socialist. You know, they can label themselves whatever they are, but we're almost now the United States of the world.

We're no longer just the United States of America. We're going to, in the next few years before the rapture of the church, mark my words, you might even see different terminology for America. With this new educational system, outcome-based education.

You can't just be a black man or a white man or have a German background. You've got to be an Afro-American or a Spanish-American or a German-American. Why can't you just be an American? You see, because they want to do away with America.

With all real nationality and pool the whole world, the brotherhood of man. That's the last age before the rapture of the church. What they're doing is dumbing down the United States to sweep us all up into this new world order, the brotherhood of man.

There's no nation, no identity anymore. We're just all pooled together in the new world order. Under one big, massive government.

Under a social system with one number to buy and sell for passport, insurance, car rental, air travel, automobile, gasoline, food, hospitalization. It's right around the corner. I wouldn't mind Jesus coming back today.

Just think. Look how glorious it is living in that kingdom that no one knows about now. Just being directed by the Holy Spirit now.

Having his will done on this earth in my life. My life's not out of control anymore. It's not chaos anymore.

The will of God's being done in my life. It's not perfectly. Far from it.

But so much. Oh, it's so glorious and so restful, so wonderful to be in the Lord's kingdom, to be directed by his spirit. I love it.

So, they said, Lord, are you going to restore the kingdom now? Now that you're risen, is this it? You know, they want it. He said unto them, well, it's not for you to know the times and the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power. You see, that was almost 2,000 years ago and they were nowhere near the second coming.

They had no idea what God had planned for the future with their lives and many generations afterward. They had no concept. Remember, Jesus taught, I think in Luke, also of the man in his parable where he went away and he assigned talents to certain individuals that they would trade and he said, occupy until I come.

Make busy. Be a wise steward over the things that I've given you and bring an increase until I return again. Stay busy.

Even though he gave the truth of the second coming, he didn't say, now just sit around and try not to sit and wait for the rapture. He gave each individual in the parable a certain responsibility and amount of money and he said, now I want you to increase it. I want you to deal with it in such a way that it's for my kingdom and it brings glory.

I'll meet your needs. I will bless you. Occupy.

Make busy until I come. Jesus Christ is not slothful. In fact, in Jesus Christ's kingdom, and it's different from every religion on earth, did you know that in many religions on the earth it's actually spiritual to be a beggar? Especially in Hinduism, there are men that are almost worshipped and are nothing but beggars.

They wander around India begging. Jesus said, there's no beggars in my kingdom. Work.

Occupy until I come. You glorify God by working and serving and being busy with active faith, being a productive person in your society. In fact, he wrote to Paul in 2 Thessalonians 2. He said, if a man doesn't work, he shouldn't even get food from the church.

If he doesn't work, he calls himself a brother. He shouldn't eat. God doesn't want lazy people.

He wants people bringing in glory and he gives the power. Don't be thinking of the second coming all the time. Don't be sitting around waiting for the rapture of the church.

It's coming. It's God's time. But there's other things that are important.

There are people that are perishing. There's a darkened world that needs to see the light of Christ in your life in an active way, in a normal, everyday situation. Someone who will be responsible with love and responsibility and integrity.

So, occupy. Don't worry about that right now. That day will come.

Then he goes on to say in verse 8, You shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you. And you shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and in Samaria and unto the

uttermost part of the earth. It's going to start in your own personal life, in the city of Jerusalem.

It's going to spread out. He knew that persecution was coming. As they began to express their faith, their persecution would come from the Pharisees.

They'd be driven to Judea, to Samaria, and then the uttermost parts of the earth as the apostles were driven further and further away from the land of Palestine. Now, what is the power that Jesus Christ is speaking of? What is the power of the Holy Spirit? It's love. It's love.

That's the greatest power, you see, of the church. That's the power that holds things together. You know, I haven't seen a supernatural healing save a marriage, but I've seen love save a marriage.

I've seen people that both have the gift of tongues and it hasn't saved their marriage. But love saves a marriage. See, that's the greatest power we need.

And the power to be a witness, and the word witness there is martyr, or you have so much love in your life from Jesus Christ that you're not afraid to die for Jesus Christ or for the sake of love. That's the power. And I think again, as I look at the church, I look at some lives, I look at the failures in my own life in the past, going after the wrong kind of power, not understanding the mistakes I've made.

I thank God that I realize now the greatest power that there is, is the power of love through the Holy Spirit, the fruit of the Spirit. And that's what Jesus Christ is interested in. You see, Satan can't combat that.

He's always trying to destroy. He cannot destroy the love of Jesus Christ. Nothing can separate you or us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

Many of you have had some real hard times in your life, had some real crises and some powerful experiences that have been satanic and negative. If it wasn't for the love of Jesus Christ, you wouldn't have survived literally. You know, I love miracles.

I've seen miracles. I've had miracles in my own life. I've seen a lot.

But as I measure it all now, the greatest power, and it's exactly what Jesus says, you're going to need the power of love to go on, because love stops you from quitting, from giving up. In the beginning of Jesus Christ's ministry, there were miracles that you couldn't even fathom. I mean, some of them are recorded here.

And the multitudes went running after him. It's sensational. The crowds wanted to see food multiplied, lame walk, blind get their sight.

They'd heard about him. They'd run around and see a Galilee. It's just like you see today when so-and-so may have some dynamic ministry and do no fault of his own.

They'll go for miles to fill the auditorium to see something sensational. And yet, some of these very same people, after they've seen those miracles a couple years later, you find out they're divorced. They're not living together.

They're drinking again. They're back into whatever. So, you see, miracles are great, but without love, without that power, you can't continue.

You can't go on. It's the greatest power there is. So, he said, now this is very important.

Get that power of the Holy Spirit that will fill you with the love of Jesus Christ. And you shall be witnesses. Not only in Jerusalem, you'll be a witness in Judea.

If you lose your job again, and you're forced to move to Samaria, you'll still be a witness for me. If you even have to go to another country, you'll be a witness for me. You'll be witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the earth.

No matter where you go, because of the love and the power of the Holy Spirit, you'll continue. Remember, Jesus said, continue ye in my love. I think we have to ask ourselves, some of us, we reflect back when we got saved, are we apprehending more of the love of Jesus, the purity of Jesus, in our actions toward each other? How quick we forgive.

The tone of our voice in an argument. Our attitudes. Are we really continuing in the love of Christ? Are we growing in the love of Christ? Are we just speaking tongues now? Have we got some doctors under our belt? I've been on a mission trip, and it's exciting.

Now I'm back. Now what do I do? You see, the love of God is so wonderful. It's powerful.

When he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight. Just as he was there, sharing these last few things with him, the importance of love, and the power that just immersion of the Holy Spirit will do for you. The Shekinah presence of God came down, and up he went, back to the Father.

You remember in Exodus chapter 40 verse 34, when Moses erected the tabernacle in the wilderness, it says the Shekinah cloud of God came down upon the tabernacle, the presence of God, and all of his glory. It says Moses couldn't even enter in. He had to wait for a while until God's Shekinah had settled.

He couldn't enter in, as the cloud came down upon him. In 1 Kings, I think it's chapter 8 verse 11, when Solomon dedicated the temple, the Shekinah cloud of God came down, approving of his presence. God the Father, and all of his fullness.

It says the priest, they just had to sit and wait. They couldn't get up and go in to begin the ministry. They had to just sit and wait because of the cloud.

Luke, earlier in his gospel, said in Luke 21 verse 27, it says when these things begin to take place, you look up, you remember, earlier in that text, and then he speaks of this coming of Jesus Christ, that he will come in a cloud with power and great glory. Revelation 1 says, tells us the same thing, that he's going to return in a cloud of glory, and all the tribes of the earth will see him and mourn, just as he is taken up in the Mount of Transfiguration. You remember Peter, James, and John were given the privilege to be there with Moses and Elijah, and they appeared briefly as Jesus invited them into the kingdom, and they saw the living Elijah and Moses, and they didn't need an introduction.

They'd been dead for hundreds of years, but they knew who they were, because it's the fulfillment of 1 Corinthians chapter 13, that we were in glory. We will know as we are known. No introduction is necessary.

We will know everything. And so they knew it was Elijah and Moses, and they were so enamored, you remember. Oh, Elijah and Moses, let's build some booths here, and let's just fellowship and stay here.

Let's not come off the mountaintop. There's demon-possessed people down there. There's trouble down there.

I mean, we have to witness down there, and I don't want to do that. We've got to go back to work. Let's just stay up here at the retreat.

And if you remember, all of a sudden, Moses and Elijah disappeared, and a cloud overshadowed them, and God the Father said, this is my beloved son. Hear ye him. Don't be enamored with Elijah and Moses.

Jesus is here now. My son. If you want to be excited about somebody, you want your life and your ministry to be like something, look at the life of Jesus Christ.

This is my beloved son. Hear ye him. Don't be enamored with Moses and Elijah.

He was out of that cloud, you see. And so here Jesus is returning to the Father, and the cloud receives him up out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven, as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white and purple.

More than likely, this is the two angels that were in the tomb at either end of the slab where Jesus' body was laid. And then remember, at the resurrection, they went rushing in, and Jesus wasn't there, just the grave clothes and the angels, one at the head and one at the feet where Jesus' body had lain. More than likely, these were the two angels.

And they said, ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, not another one, this same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as you have seen him go into heaven. Now, remember in Zechariah chapter 14, Zechariah sees and speaks, as God has shown in the second coming of Jesus Christ, that he's going to return from heaven, and he's going to come to the Mount of Olives, and there will be a tremendous earthquake, and the Mount of Olives will split from the east and the west, and half of the Mount will move to the north, half of the Mount will move to the south, and there will be an opening, a crevice, right to the eastern gate. The Psalms tell us that when the earth moves, it says the gates will be pushed up to be prepared for the coming of the king.

It's interesting that there are gates buried. There's another gate buried underground of the eastern gate, the seal that you see now in Jerusalem. And because that gate is there, and the archaeologists tried to go in and do some research and dig, the Muslims put a cemetery there to stop it.

But there's a gate under there, and the Psalms says, lift up ye heads, O ye gates, lift up ye heads, for the king cometh in all his glory. And when this mountain splits, Jesus will be leading all the remnant of the Jews that have fled to Petra, up from Petra, just as Moses brought the original people of Israel in to the promised land. Jesus, coming again, that prophet, like unto Moses, is going to bring the remnant, and all of Israel shall be saved.

And he brings them up right through the Mount of Olives to the eastern gate. And he stands on the Mount of Olives with the remnant, and the church, all the faith with thee, shall come, Zacharias says. Isaiah, chapter sixty-three, one through seven, describes the Lord coming back in all the glory to rescue the Jews that have fled from Antichrist, that have fled down to Petra, in the rock.

And they'll find out that even that rock can't save them. The only rock is the rock of their salvation, Jesus Christ. And they look about and say, what is this blood on thine apparel? It's the very blood of his own sacrifice, as he went into the holiest of holies, proving his only death, his death, his sacrifice for sin.

He is the atonement, the sacrificial goat for all of us. And he comes back with the blood of his own apparel, destroys the Antichrist in Armageddon, and then brings the remnant with the church, his bride, and they enter in through this Mount of Olives, just as he left, the God of heaven and glory. Revelation one-seven, again, describes it.

The whole universe lights up at the second coming of Jesus Christ, when he comes with all of his glory, and all the saints, all the armies from heaven, described in Revelation nineteen. It's going to be a glorious time. Then return they unto Jerusalem, from the Mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem in Sabbath day's journey, oh, close to a mile, about five thousand feet.

And it's about that to the city, just to the old city and the Temple Mount from the other side, the back side of the Mount of Olives. And they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter and James and John and Andrew, Philip, Thomas and Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, Simon the Lotus and Judas the brother of James. Quite possible this is the writer of the book of Jude, who would be the half-brother of Jesus Christ, because Paul tells us in Galatians chapter one, verse seventeen, of James, the half-brother of our Lord.

And so, this would more than likely be James and Judas, the half-brothers of Jesus Christ. And Judas would be the writer or the author of the book of Jude, as he has asked them to do, about a hundred and twenty of them. And they all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication with the women and Mary, the mother of Jesus, and with his brother.

And it's interesting, this is the last mention of Mary in the New Testament. She had a marvelous place in history, but after this, she's never mentioned again. And it just shows you the imbalance and the error of Roman Catholicism to make more out of Mary than is biblical.

In fact, the tragedy is that the Catholic Church has deceived millions of people into getting people thinking they need to pray to Mary. It's a nuisance. It's as though Jesus is too busy or Mary can help you with your prayers.

And we know that's not true, because Paul tells Timothy that there's only one mediator between God and man, and that's the man Christ Jesus. Another tragic thing is that the Pope, they say, is very feeble. One of the last decrees he's going to be making, they say he's working on an infallible decree.

One of his last shining moments, evidently, before he leaves, he's going to make a decree and a statement that Mary is the co-redeemer of mankind with Jesus Christ. Such a perversion of truth to make a statement that Mary is the co-redeemer of mankind. In the train station in Rome, the Catholic Church has made a statue of the cross with this grotesque figure of a body with Mary's body on one side and Christ on the other on the cross.

So, a lot of things have crept into some of the church that is simply not biblical. This is the last mention of Mary, the mother of Jesus, in the New Testament. She's there with the brethren.

And in those days, Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples and he said, the number of the names together were about 120. Men and Brethren, this scripture must need to have been fulfilled. This is

interesting that if you know the Bible, when you see something that really seems so catastrophic, so negative, or so alarming that you can see the hand of God and you say, you know, Lord, it's not good.

I don't like it, but you are sovereign and you've got it under control. There's a wonderful hope and stability that knowing the word of God brings a believer. He says, Men and Brethren, this scripture must need to have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus.

Now, here again, remember the Pharisees called him an ignoramus, an idiot, an illiterate Galilean, the so-called half-breeds of the Jews. Remember, the Galileans were the lowlife. They were the poor peasant type and farmers and the fishermen of the north.

The elite lived in Jerusalem, around the temple area, all the merchants and the wealthy, and all the lowlife would bring their goods to Jerusalem to sell in the market. But it's interesting, this illiterate fisherman knew his Bible and knew that the Holy Ghost anointed David and he could quote and make reference to the forty-first psalm, verse nine, and knowing that David, when he prophesied, was prophesying about Judas. Hundreds of years earlier.

So, you see, you don't have to be a theological genius or a seminary graduate to be used of God. Here was a fisherman, but he read his Bible, he read the scriptures, and he loved Jesus Christ. The Lord said, you're going to be an apostle.

And at this time, you remember, he'd only walked with the Lord three years. The apostle only known Jesus as the Messiah for three years, at this point. This is just after his crucifixion, and they only met him.

Jesus' ministry lasted three years. So, here you have fishermen that up to the time they met Jesus Christ and got their calling, just went to church on a regular basis out in their community somewhere. They lived in Capernaum and Tiberias and Bethsaida, around the Sea of Galilee.

So, you know, they went to church and they read the scriptures. They knew the scriptures. So, that's why they could respond to Jesus or see the hand of Jesus so quickly and incident in their life.

That's why people can't recognize the Lord. I don't know if the Lord's in their life. Well, it's obvious they're not reading the Bible.

That's usually the case. I won't say that that's 100%. I don't want to offend.

But you come to find out that people don't recognize the hand of the Lord in experiences of can't quite see what's going on. They're just simply not reading the Bible. They're satisfied with just hearing it taught to them and hearing it by someone else, but they never really investigated themselves and then grow in that relationship and sensitivity to the way the Lord's working and directing things in their own personal life and getting to know how the Lord operates.

So, they don't recognize the hand of the Lord or His sovereignty or His providence in the circumstances in their own life. So, that's why a lot of times they panic. They think, oh, things are out of control.

Oh, oh. And it never, it's never out of control. What happens, you see, is I don't have my eyes on the Lord.

I'm not reading the Word and I get out of control. The Lord's always in control. He's the potentate of the universe.



the sun and out with believers.

He led people to Christ. He went to church. He was the treasurer of the church, but the Bible is plainly clear.

He was never a believer. He cleverly moved in and gotten in the crowd, learned the language, sang the songs, did the ministry, no bad doctrine, but his torment drove him to suicide because he wasn't a true believer. He didn't have true hope in Christ.

And I would imagine that you'd offend one of his friends and say, oh, he's never saved. Oh, yes, he was. I went to church with him.

We were on a mission trip together and he led people to Christ. Don't tell me he wasn't saved. He wasn't saved.

Just because he committed suicide, God is love. The reason he didn't know Jesus was like he was tormented with his guilt and he couldn't undo the wrong. His torment drove him to take his life, even though he went to church and he knew Jesus personally.

But he was not a believer in the Son of God. It was known unto all the dwellers of Jerusalem, in so much as that field is called in their proper tongue, Echeldamah, that is to say, the field of blood. In other words, because it was dirty money, the Pharisees would not take it, so they gave it to charity and they bought it.

Remember, you purchased the potter's seal. And again, if you look at the prophecy of Zechariah chapter 11, again, you have prophecy being fulfilled in Judas casting the money to the potter's seal. They weighed my price and it was for 30 pieces of silver.

Zechariah prophesied of what would take place. And then Peter, again, notice knowing the Scripture, he quotes Psalm 69 verse 25. He sees in the Spirit that Psalm 69 is speaking of Judas.

He says, For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate and let no man dwell therein and let his bishopric and his bishopric let another take. So here, Peter again is aware of the Scriptures in the Spirit, knowing that Psalm 69 verse 25 is a prophecy concerning Judas, years earlier. Now, you have that same availability.

Remember David said, Thy word, O Lord, have I hidden in my heart. If you read the Word of God with an open heart, God's Spirit puts that in your heart even better than a computer. You know, when you put something into a computer, it's locked in, it's in there and you have access to it.

You may wait for a month and go in and just blip, blip, blip and next thing you know, out it comes. It's in the computer. It's been put in there.

The Spirit of God is far greater than a human computer and you don't have to worry about memorizing Scripture. I'm not saying don't do it. A lot of people do it and enjoy it, but if you read the Word of God, you study the Word of God and it gets into your heart.

The Spirit of God promises that when you're in a situation, he will bring it to the surface for you to identify. You say, How can I know whether this is sin or not? If you read the Word of God, the Spirit of God will identify the situation you're in every single time and he'll direct you as what to do. Would Jesus do this? No.

He brings the Scripture up and shows you how Jesus dealt with that same situation. It's in your heart. You've read it.

You don't have to worry about memorizing it. The Spirit of God will bring everything to your remembrance. It's so imperative to read the Word of God that the Spirit of God can bring it up for you.

Boot it up into your heart and you can identify. This is a wolf. This isn't the direction I should go.

This isn't the person I should be involved with. I shouldn't be watching this. I shouldn't sign.

The Spirit of God will honor his Word, and the more you read, the more information you have. Fill the computer. Fill your heart with the Word of God and the Spirit of God will bring it up for you at any given moment that you have need.

That's why Christians are deceived. It's not that they really want to be deceived. It's not that they want to deny Christ, but they can't identify.

Paul said we're not ignorant of Satan's devices. We're wary of the wiles of the enemy, and Satan doctors things up and camouflages things and makes them seem so plausible. Look what he did to Eve.

Made it seem like she's in the best thing ever for her husband, for herself. It was a grand deception, and she did not pay heed to the Word of God, and she fell. She was deceived.

And every Christian today... and you see, we're Eve. We're the bride. We're the bride of the last Adam.

Eve was the bride of the first Adam. The church, man and woman, we are the Eve of the last Adam, Jesus Christ. And Satan's always coming to you.

Ask God, said, is this in the Bible? Can you do this? Whenever you catch your thought saying that, don't do it. When you catch yourself starting to think, I wonder if this is in the Bible, don't even think about it. Protect yourself instantly.

Don't even argue with the devil. Eve shouldn't even have a conversation with Satan. What did Jesus do? Did he argue with Satan in his temptation? He used Scripture and said, take a hike.

Each time Satan tempted Jesus Christ in his need, with a legitimate need, a human need, but it wasn't God's will at the time, Jesus Christ identified it because he knew the Word of God. The Spirit of God brought it to his heart immediately. He will do the same for you.

He did it for a fisherman from Galilee. He'll do it to a truck driver, to a schoolteacher, to an architect, to a businessman, to a pastor, to an elder, to a housewife. Therefore, of these men which have accompanied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness of his resurrection.

So, this is the proof text right here, that the original twelve had some specific significance, because Peter didn't say we need ten more or twenty more, there's going to be many to follow. There's that original twelve. One had to take the place of Judas.

Twelve. There must be one ordained. There was that original twelve that had a specific importance in the scheme of things, even though there may be apostles today, but nothing like the original twelve.

And I believe I have a proof text. Turn to Revelation chapter 21. If somebody wants to call themselves an apostle today, great, but they aren't the same class as the twelve.

John sees the New Jerusalem, and notice verse fourteen. After he sees the gates, the wall and the gates, it says in verse fourteen, And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. And I believe that they are the original twelve, with the exception of the twelve that took Judas' place.

Now, let's look at this. This is interesting. You see, if there's only twelve apostles in those twelve foundations, what about all the other names of apostles? See, there's a specific significance to twelve, and that's why here Peter says it's important that we replace the twelve here.

And those twelve, and those twelve only, will be in the foundation stone of the New Jerusalem, even though there are many today, maybe many after those twelve, with lesser gifts and significance. But those twelve, who's the twelve? They appointed two, Joseph and Barnabas, or Barthabas, who was surnamed Justice and Matthias. And they prayed, and they said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, show whether of these two thou hast chosen.

It's like they chose them. Now you pick one. We'll pick the two, and you pick one of them, God.

Isn't that the way we pray? Lord, I think we ought to do this. Now bless us. I mean, we say we want to do God's will, and we already go out and make the purchase, and then we ask God to honor it.

Lord, we're picking these two guys. You pick one of them for us now. You tell us which one it is, but we'll pick the two.

It's interesting, when God was going to bring revival to Gideon, remember what he said? Gideon, you have too many guys. You've got to get rid of several hundred, or not hundred, but several thousand, some, you know, twenty-some thousand. He got down to the last three hundred, and God told Gideon, he said, Now there's going to be three hundred men of the men that I will choose, not you, Gideon.

I thank God that he has chosen the pastors and the elders of Calvary Chapel, and everybody that's in ministry. That's why we're so blessed. That's why it's such a joy and a delight to be here, because God has picked the people.

He never makes mistakes, even if he picks a wrong one now and then to teach us some things. So they prayed, and they said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, show whether of these two thou hast chosen, that he may take part of this ministry and apostleship from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place, which would be hell. And they gave forth their lots.

Now, remember, this is interesting. In Proverbs 1633, in the Old Testament, they used a system of lots that are drawing of straws, so to speak, to choose and make choices. They'd cast lots.

Now, it says in Proverbs 1633 that the lot is cast in the lap, but the whole disposing of the matter thereof is of the Lord. Remember, they cast lots in the ship, in the storm, and the lot, God controlled it all. When these guys were cast in their lots and it came back down to Jonah, he's the guy that got tossed overboard,

because God wanted him tossed overboard.

But in the New Testament, we have the indwelling Holy Spirit now to pray. Jesus said, We can ask our Father. We have an advantage.

Now, notice how God treated this, and I personally believe that God just ignored it. He just said, OK, do your thing. Form your committee, your five-year plan to cause church growth.

You know, do all your stuff. I'm just going to ignore it, because it's not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, sayeth the Lord. So they gave forth their lots, and the lots fell on Messiah.

And he was numbered with the eleven apostles. Now, it's interesting, this is the last time you ever hear of Messiah. If he was really that important, I don't know what he did, but you never hear his name mentioned again.

But who did God pick? A man on the way to Damascus. That was his choice. And I'll bet you, whatever I have reward in heaven, that when we get there, his name's going to be in one of those twelve foundations with the other eleven.

So you see, the lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing of the matters of the Lord. So, if something isn't going your way right now, one of your great plans for Jesus, don't be upset. He knows best.

Don't get all angry. He's got everything under control. Remember, he's going to work it to the good.

He may just be ignoring one of your projects right now. I've had plenty of them ignored, believe me. And I'm learning not to let it upset me.

I'm just making less projects, because he just ignores them. He says, the money doesn't come when no one gets involved. And I start praying, Lord, stir these people up.

Don't they love you? God says, Bill, let go. Quit trying to make things happen, because you're excited about it. It's not my will.

He just ignores whatever isn't his will. He doesn't get angry. He just ignores it.

Well, you never hear of a bias again. That's it. It's the last time he's mentioned, because men picked up.

But you hear an awful lot about Paul. And he was an eyewitness of the resurrection, wasn't he? Jesus himself appeared to him on the road to Damascus. Shall we stand? Father, I encourage you to know that you use men like Peter, a fisherman, tax collectors, people just like us to do wonderful things through us and in us.

We thank you, Lord, that if we allow the word to get into our heart, you'll bring it forth in any situation to guide us, to enlighten us, to encourage us, to strengthen us, to protect us. And how we thank you, Lord, for your perfect wisdom that we may devise something and you just might ignore it, because it isn't important. Lord, you don't get angry.

You don't quit using us. You just ignore it. We thank you, Father, for that wisdom, and we pray that we might learn, Lord, just to yield more and more to your perfect will and rest.

And realize how great your power is through the work of the Holy Spirit. Lord, how we thank you for your choice of us personally to be in your kingdom, to grant us forgiveness of sin. How we thank you, Jesus, for that marvelous life in you.

Lord, grant us that power, that fresh power each day of that love, that marvelous love that you have, that it might change our attitudes, our thinking, our responses, that it might free us from ourselves and we might begin to think of others and serve others and be free. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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