



The
ENJOY THE BIBLE

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Looking At What You Cannot See

²⁴ For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?

²⁵ But if we hope for that we see not, *then* do we with patience wait for *it*. (Romans 8:24–25)

With these words the apostle Paul concludes the first doctrine to our sonship edification. A doctrine that had its beginning back in verse 16, and that conforms perfectly with how a father begins to educate his son after having adopted him. Just as a natural father begins his son's education and edification with the knowledge of his inheritance and its implications on his life, so also does God our Father begin our Godly education and edification with the doctrine of our inheritance as His "sons." By means of this particular information and knowledge we receive the fundamental and foundational Godly viewpoint and perspective on our lives that our Father wants us to have, and that we need to have, as we begin to live as God's "sons" in this present dispensation of His grace.

Specifically, though, by these closing words Paul brings home the doctrine's designed impact on our thinking by declaring the issue of the salvation that we receive when the knowledge of our inheritance with its "hope" effectually works within us as God has purposed for it to do. And indeed we do receive a salvation. Salvation, that is, from being adversely affected by "the sufferings of this present time" that come upon us as we await both the conclusion of this present dispensation and our "manifestation" as "the sons of God." Instead of being adversely affected by any such "sufferings" and only being able to respond to them as natural men do, we are "saved" from that situation by being enabled to respond to them differently and in a Godly manner.

Through the effectual working within us of the doctrine of verses 16–23 we are able to view any of "the sufferings of this present time" from the perspective of what our Father is now doing in His plan and purpose; and likewise from the perspective of the inheritance that we have in our Father's plan and purpose and the role that such "sufferings" have in it. Therefore we are enabled to view such sufferings exactly the same way that our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ view

(see "Looking At What You Cannot See" page 2)

Table of Contents

Articles:

Looking At What You Cannot See.....	1
"Receive Ye The Holy Ghost".....	1
From EBM To You.....	2
Bible Study Resources.....	8
Contact Information.....	8

"Receive Ye The Holy Ghost"

Following the Lord's resurrection from the dead, He not only showed Himself alive unto His apostles and other chosen members of the remnant of Israel, but He also finished preparing His apostles to be able to function in His absence as the climactic stage in Israel's program continued on. What had begun 3 plus years earlier with the ministry of John the Baptist was now exiting its initial portion with the event of the Lord's resurrection and His final days on earth. When the Lord returned to His Father the climactic stage in the program would then enter its middle portion, during which repentance would be given to Israel, and the Lord would 'sit at His Father's right hand' until the time came 'to make His foes His footstool.' This middle portion to the climactic stage would then be followed by the concluding portion, which would see the Lord's day of wrath take place, along with the "great tribulation," and this would all end with the Lord's return to Israel for the establishment of the kingdom.

Wherefore during both the middle and concluding portions to the climactic stage in the program the apostles would be functioning in the Lord's absence. And though the Lord had been preparing them for this time throughout His ministry among them, there were still some preparations for it that could only take place *following* His sufferings and resurrection from the dead.

Now it is in connection with these remaining preparations that the Lord did something unique to His apostles after He was resurrected from the dead and when He appeared unto them. In John 20 we read,...

¹⁹ Then the same day at evening, being the first *day* of the week, when the doors were shut where the

(see "Receive Ye The Holy Ghost" page 4)

From EBM To You

Dear Friends of EBM,

Usually on page 7 of each edition of the *Quarterly* we provide a partial listing of our various Bible Study Resources. However we have omitted the listing in this edition, in order to provide the space for its two articles. A full listing of all of our materials can be obtained at any time by visiting our website, or by requesting a catalog.

Our booklet *Have You Ever Wondered What Heaven Is Like?* has been out of stock for a time while we worked on some technical matters pertaining to reprinting it. Those matters have been successfully resolved, with the result that it has now been reprinted and is once again available.

Work continues to progress on converting our audio tape study series into digital files that then can be put into CD format. We greatly appreciate the expertise and kindness of the saints who have volunteered to do this work for us, and we look forward soon to being able to make these studies available on CD.

Participation in our Lending Library continues to grow, as many folks find that borrowing materials is ideal for them. If this might be the case with you, you can find the information for contacting the Library on the back page. You will also find the volunteers who run it to be very helpful and efficient.

**Our thanks to those
who faithfully help in
supporting this
ministry!**

(“Looking At What You Cannot See” from page 1)

them. And when this is our perspective and viewpoint, we can contentedly endure such “sufferings of this present time,” as we “with patience wait for” the fulfillment of our “hope” as God’s “sons.” A “hope,” as Paul says, which we not only do not yet “see,” but due to the realm in which it pertains we also cannot now see.¹

Now this first doctrine to our sonship edification is fundamental, foundational, and essential to our lives as God’s “sons” today; both at the outset of our edification and on a day-to-day basis thereafter. However this is true not only of the overall doctrine itself, but also it is especially true of its closing words regarding the effectual working within us of knowledge about things “that we see not.” This is because the knowledge of our “hope” is not the only thing God tells us about “that we see not.” It is not the only thing that we are to presently look at with ‘the eyes of our understanding’ and not with our physical eyes. Instead this issue of operating upon the knowledge of our ‘not-yet-seen’ hope is just the beginning for us.

A Different Set of Eyes

As we progress on in our sonship edification we continue to encounter more and more knowledge regarding things that we cannot see with our physical eyes. And as we are confronted with them, it does not take long before we become aware that our sonship edification and lives are actually replete with such things. Accordingly it quickly becomes apparent that our Father has designed for us to do most of our ‘seeing’ with a *different set of eyes* — i.e. with ‘the eyes of our understanding.’ This means that on a regular basis we need to be looking at, and occupied with, things that we cannot see with our physical eyes but only with our mind’s eyes, as our Father teaches us to understand, appreciate, and operate upon things that are outside the realm of our natural visual awareness and perception. Indeed so much so is this the case with us that later on in II Corinthians the apostle Paul puts this issue into the form of the ‘standard-operating-maxim’ that it is for us when he says,...

⁷ (For we walk by faith, not by sight:)
(II Corinthians 5:7)

Moreover this issue of Paul constantly teaching us to operate upon the knowledge of things that we cannot see is something that even Bible scoffers and critics perceive. For among

other things Paul is often criticized and/or ridiculed by them for ‘taking numerous flights of fancy’ or ‘wild excursions into the imagination’ as he preaches about things for which ‘there is no empirical evidence.’ Of all the Biblical writers, we are told, it takes ‘the most blind faith and casting away of one’s reason to believe what Paul says.’ Indeed ‘he seems to relish in requiring blind faith.’

Though such comments come from Bible critics and opponents, they are astute observations nonetheless. For though they often assign what Paul preaches to mere ‘fancy’ or ‘imagination,’ they do correctly recognize that much of what he teaches involves things “that we see not.” They rightly assess the situation when they perceive that especially with Paul ‘seeing is not believing, but believing is seeing.’

And indeed this is the situation with us. Because of the way in which God is dealing with us today, as well as the realm in which His purpose with us pertains, it is only natural that we are taught about many things of which we cannot see. Hence, as Paul says, “we walk by faith, not by sight.” We walk, therefore, looking at things which we cannot see by looking at them with ‘the eyes of our understanding’; believing that what God says about them is true, even though by natural sight we can see no evidence of them.

Characteristic, but not Exclusive

Now though the issue of ‘walking by faith, not by sight’ is designed by God to be a characteristic of our sonship lives, the opportunity to do so is not exclusive to us in this present dispensation. In God’s program with Israel He clearly did covenant to do much with His nation on the basis of their physical sight.² Hence it can be rightly said that they did, (and yet will), ‘walk by sight’ to a great degree. However, as Hebrews 11:1ff makes evident, there were also opportunities for the saints to operate on the basis of faith in things that they too could not see. Hence Hebrews 11 begins by saying,...

¹ Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

² For by it the elders obtained a good report. (Hebrews 11:1–2)

As the chapter goes on to set forth, the elders indeed did have opportunities to operate on the basis of faith in “things not seen.” Moreover this will especially be so for the

members of the remnant of Israel when God resumes His program with Israel. For even though there will still be much for them to physically “see” and go by during that time, they will also have the greatest opportunity that God gives to the Israel of God to walk by faith in things that they cannot see. For this reason Hebrews 11 teaches them what it does, preparing them for this very thing.

Nevertheless it is with us today, (God’s “new creature,” the church the body of Christ), that ‘walking by faith, not by sight’ is to be so commonplace that it is characteristic. For this reason right from the outset of our sonship edification we are taught to operate upon a hope “that we see not.” And then from this point on we are taught more and more to look at, and operate upon, an increasing number of things that we cannot see.

A Few Examples

In connection with drawing attention to this issue and underscoring its essential on-going function in our lives as God’s “sons,” note just a few of the many examples that we encounter as we progress through the curriculum for our sonship edification.

First notice that after our Godly viewpoint and perspective on life is established within us through the effectual working of Romans 8:16–25, our Father immediately tells us about something else that we cannot see with our physical eyes, but only with ‘the eyes of our understanding.’

²⁶ Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

²⁷ And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what *is* the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to *the will of God*. (Romans 8:26–27)

This marvelous provision that the Spirit makes for us is also something for which we have no empirical evidence. Not only do we not see it when it oc-

curs, we also do not feel it, hear it, or sense it in anyway. In fact if our Father did not tell us about it, we never would know it did take place or even could take place. Hence this “help” from the Spirit, (which ensures that we can enjoy unperurbed constancy in our sonship prayers on those occasions when “we know not what we should pray for as we ought”), is also something that we only ‘see’ with ‘the eyes of our understanding.’ Hence we know it occurs, and we rely upon it when needed, simply because our Father says that it takes place. Any and all lack of empirical evidence notwithstanding.

Now as we progress on in our sonship edification, and eventually begin to experience “the sufferings of Christ” that Paul speaks about and deals with in II Corinthians, things really begin to ‘heat up,’ so to speak. Things that we cannot see become more and more the issue for us. In fact just about every category of consolation and comfort that “the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort” provides for us to operate upon as we partake of the “sufferings of Christ” has its own ‘cannot be seen’ component to it. In other words an integral and essential part of the comfort that our Father gives to us, pertains to something that neither our physical eyes, nor other senses, can detect or confirm to be true.

Hence benefiting from the effectual working of the comfort, (so that we are able to endure ‘the suffering of Christ’ to God’s honor and glory), requires that we look at something specific that we cannot see. And not only this, but benefiting from our Father’s comfort frequently requires that we do this in the face of the fact that we are constantly receiving extremely distressing, discomfoting, and even unnerving testimony of a contrary nature from the things that we do physically see and from the things that we do physically sense. This, therefore, makes it so that the only way in which we can benefit from our Father’s comfort is to be unwaveringly looking at what we cannot see; thinking about and evaluating our situation solely on the basis of what we are taught to ‘see’ with ‘the eyes of our understanding.’

As an example of this note what Paul says comfort-wise regarding the particular ‘suffering of Christ’ that he describes and deals with in II Corinthians 4.

¹⁶ For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward *man* is renewed day by day.

¹⁷ For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory;

¹⁸ While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen *are* temporal; but the things which are not seen *are* eternal. (II Corinthians 4:16–18)

By nature, (i.e. operating upon what he physically saw and felt), the ‘perishing’ of Paul’s “outward man” constantly testified something discomfoting and grievous to him as he experienced this particular ‘suffering of Christ.’ And while what he physically saw and felt brought the weight of its unpleasant testimony to bear upon him, the natural tendency was to induce him to “faint.” However, as Paul says, he did not “faint.” For instead of operating upon what he physically saw and/or felt, Paul did something else. In his “inward *man*” he operated upon something “not seen” that God had told him about.

Wherefore instead of ‘fainting’ under the weight of the affliction’s natural unpleasantness and grief, Paul not only continued on, but he continued on with the affliction now being judged by him to be “light,” and the weight he now bears he judged to be “a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory.” And this Paul did by looking “at the things which are not seen,” and not at “the things which are seen.”

Now if looking at what we cannot see can be said to ‘heat up’ as our sonship edification progresses on, then it aptly can be described as ‘boiling over’ when it advances on into the greater edification attainments that we acquire, for example, in Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians. For at this stage in our sonship edification not only are we

taught about so much more that we cannot physically see or sense, but also we are taught that our “conversation” is exalted into heaven itself, and that we need to understand, appreciate, and be occupied with the issue of its *unseen* impact in that realm. For this cause when Paul warns and reproves the Colossians about being on guard against the specific tactics from the policy of evil that are designed to thwart their unseen heavenly impact, among other things he says to them,...

¹ If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

² Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

³ For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

⁴ When Christ, *who is our life*, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. (Colossians 3:1–4)

An Essential Characteristic

Without a doubt, therefore, ‘looking at what we cannot see,’ or ‘walking by faith, not by sight,’ is not only designed by God to be characteristic of us today, it is an *essential* characteristic for us to operate upon. It is an integral, indispensable virtue in our sonship lives, which only becomes more and more of an issue, (and so more and more of a necessity for us), as our godly edification increases and matures.

Consequently we cannot properly live as “sons” to our Father’s honor and glory, or to the fulness of the effectual working within us of His curriculum for our “godly edifying,” if we walk by sight or senses, and not by faith. The plain fact is that the nature of our sonship edification demands ‘walking by faith,’ with the result that little or nothing beyond partial establishment can take place without it.

Therefore, as stated earlier, right from the outset of our sonship edification we are immediately taught to look at something “that we see not.” And when we actually do look at what we cannot see by means of the effectual

working of Romans 8:16–25 within us; and when we do operate upon our unseen “hope” as we experience “the sufferings of this present time”; an additional and far-reaching accomplishment is achieved within us. For then it is that our different set of eyes — the ‘eyes of our understanding’ — begin to take their place of importance and dominance in our lives. Then it is that they and what they ‘see’ start to be given precedence by us over the things that we physically see and sense.

Furthermore when this occurs, the ‘eyes of our understanding’ are then able to begin to focus our thoughts, our attention, and our heart’s desires upon an entire realm of things that we either cannot see, or cannot yet see. And as ‘the eyes of our understanding’ do this they

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provide for us as “sons” to be able to live with our Father the full scope of our sonship lives; even to the point of not only having our conversation in heaven, but also being able to ‘see’ its impact there.

An Eye Test

How is it, therefore, with you? How well do ‘the eyes of your understanding’ function? May it be that they at least function well in accordance with the beginning of your sonship edification, and that you therefore clearly and constantly look at your ‘hope that you see not’ when it comes to responding to any of “the sufferings of this present time” that you experience.

However in view of the fact that this is only the initial functioning of ‘the eyes of your understanding,’ may it also be that your range of vision and field of view both increase and sharpen in perception

as your sonship edification progresses on, and as our Father calls upon you to look more and more at things that you cannot see. With the result being that you not only do look at them, and do ‘see’ them, but also that you are captivated by them, even enamored with them, and so you set your affections on them.

— K. R. Blades

1. For a more detailed examination of Romans 8:16–25, see the Second Quarter 2002 edition of *The Enjoy The Bible Quarterly*.

2. Cf., for example, Exodus 34:10.

(“Receive Ye The Holy Ghost” from page 1)

disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace *be* unto you.

²⁰ And when he had so said, he shewed unto them *his* hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.

²¹ Then said Jesus to them again, Peace *be* unto you: as *my* Father hath sent me, even so send I you.

²² And when he had said this, he breathed on *them*, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost:

²³ Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; *and* whose soever *sins* ye retain, they are retained. (John 20:19–23)

Note, as verse 22 states, that the Lord “breathed on *them*” and said unto them “Receive ye the Holy Ghost.”

On first reading this event might seem somewhat peculiar or odd, for it seems to be out of place. In view of the prophesied schedule of events pertaining to the climactic stage in Israel’s program, this does not match up with the anticipated time for the giving of the Holy Ghost. It should not be until after the Lord had returned to the Father and the middle portion to the climactic stage in the program had arrived that the Holy Ghost would be given. Both the issue of the time for the remnant of Israel, (including the apostles), to be baptized with

the Holy Ghost, and the issue of the time for the Holy Ghost to have His prophesied ministry to Israel and in the world, clearly awaited the Lord's return to the Father and the arrival of the middle portion in the climactic stage. Hence whenever reference is made to these issues in the Gospel accounts the time for their occurrence is *after* the Lord returns to the Father. For example,...

³⁷ In the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.

³⁸ He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

³⁹ (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet *given*; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.) (John 7:37-39)

⁷ Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.

⁸ And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:

⁹ Of sin, because they believe not on me;

¹⁰ Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more;

¹¹ Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. (John 16:7-11)

Moreover the Lord made it clear to His apostles following His resurrection that they were not yet the beneficiaries of being baptized with the Holy Ghost, even though He had "breathed on *them*" and said unto them "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." Wherefore in Luke 24 we read how He said to them,...

⁴⁹ And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high. (Luke 24:49)

And as Acts 1 records,...

⁴ 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*, ye have heard of me.

⁵ For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. (Acts 1:4-5)

What then occurred when the Lord 'breathed on His apostles' on the day of His resurrection from the dead and said unto them "Receive ye the Holy Ghost"? And what was the purpose or significance of it?

The Context

The specific context in which this

In connection with the apostles having a special role and ministry, the Holy Ghost Himself also had a special ministry to and with them.

event occurred is the key to understanding and appreciating what the Lord did. For when the Lord 'breathed on His apostles' and said to them "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," He did not do this in the context of the Holy Ghost's *general* role and ministry that would occur once He had returned to the Father. Rather the Lord did this in the context of dealing with the apostles' *specific* role and ministry after He departed, and more pointedly in connection with their final preparations for fulfilling that role and ministry. In connection with the apostles having a special role and ministry, the Holy Ghost Himself also had a special ministry to and with them. One that had features and functions to it that were uniquely for them. This is the reason why they received the Holy Ghost at this particular time and in this particular fashion.

Notice that before the Lord 'breathed on them' He began to speak to them about their special role and ministry, particularly declaring unto them that the time had arrived for Him to send them out as He Himself had been sent out.

²¹ Then said Jesus to them again, Peace *be* unto you: as *my* Father hath sent me, even so send I you. (John 20:21)

Once again, the Lord had been preparing His apostles for this time, and they knew it was coming. And now that He had suffered and was raised from the dead, the time for them to be 'sent out' to fulfill their specific role and ministry during the middle and final portions of the climactic stage in the program was at hand. With this being so the Lord not only announces this to them, but His follow-up act of 'breathing on them' was in direct connection with it. Hence verse 22 begins by saying, "And when he had said this,"...

²² And when he had said this, he breathed on *them*, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost:

²³ Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; *and* whose soever *sins* ye retain, they are retained. (John 20:22-23)

Therefore by 'breathing on them' and saying unto them "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," the Lord did something that was directly connected with His apostles special role and ministry. And as subsequent testimony relates, it was specifically for what they now needed to learn as the time for them to actually be 'sent out' rapidly approached.

So then by 'breathing on them' and saying unto them "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," the Lord made His apostles aware that this is exactly what was being done to them at this time. They were actually being given the Holy Ghost, and He was being given to them in accordance with their special role and ministry that was now at hand. And this is something that the apostles would readily come to understand and appreciate at this time. For as they had been

foretold, it would be by the Holy Ghost's ministry both in them and through them that they would authoritatively minister for God to Israel and beyond during the remainder of the climactic stage in the program. And indeed they would do this authoritatively. Hence in verse 23 the Lord pointedly referred to, and reminded them of, the particular issue of their God-given authority.

Moreover during the Lord's final days before departing to the Father, He would also give the apostles their final instructions and commandments regarding what they would need to do both at the beginning of their ministry once He was gone and during the fulfilling of it thereafter. And though there was much that they still needed to be taught, they were now not only able to receive the teaching, but they possessed a special provision for receiving it quickly and readily. For the giving of these final doctrines and instructions, (with all of the insight, understanding, and intelligence that they imparted to the apostles), is something that the Lord accomplished *through the Holy Ghost* whom He had given to them on the day of His resurrection. Hence as Acts 1:1-3 relate,...

¹ The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach,

² 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:

³ To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God: (Acts 1:1-3)

As verse 2 states, the Lord gave "commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen." And this He did "through the Holy Ghost."

These then are the particular reasons why the Lord 'breathed on His apostles' on the day of His resurrection and said unto them "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." By so doing the apostles re-

ceived the Holy Ghost in connection with the unique and special ministry belonging to them as the Lord's apostles to Israel.

Wherefore having received the Holy Ghost, they were first of all invested with the authority and capacity to function authoritatively for God in the remaining portions to the climactic stage in Israel's program. The transfer of God's authoritative witness to His nation was made at this particular time, with that witness now being turned over by the Son to the Holy Ghost, who in accordance with the Father's plan would execute His testimony to Israel through the apostles.

In addition to this, having received the Holy Ghost the apostles were provided with the ability to receive their final indoctrination regarding the function and responsibilities of their ministry once the Lord returned to the Father. "Through the Holy Ghost" the Lord "had given (them) commandments," by which they would knowingly and intelligently put their God-given authoritative ministry into practice, and would carry out the things God wanted done, and that needed to be done, as the climactic stage in the program proceeded on.

A Couple of Significant Ramifications

Now besides the importance of properly understanding and appreciating this event as it pertained to the Lord's apostles, there are also at least two significant ramifications to it. Significant especially because they testify against two unjust accusations or charges that are frequently leveled against the apostles for things they did that are recorded in the remainder of Acts 1.

It is commonly said by ones who fail to understand and appreciate the reality of God's program with Israel continuing on following the Lord's rejection, that Peter and the rest of the apostles made two blunders in Acts 1. First they blundered, it is said, by asking the Lord a question that showed their ignorance of what God was now doing, and that showed they had not properly learned what they should have learned. This

question being, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" as related in Acts 1:6. According to their critics, the apostles would not have asked this question if they had properly learned that God had put the establishment of the kingdom on hold in view of Israel's rejection of Christ. Then, it is said, they blundered again by impetuously appointing Matthias to take Judas' place, as recorded in Acts 1:15-26, instead of waiting for God to install Paul as Judas' replacement.

Now besides all of the various evidences that can be amassed against both of these accusations to prove them to be false and unjust, in view of the event of John 20:21-23, and in view of what Acts 1:1-3 states, the very notion that the apostles blundered in these two matters ought to be considered inconceivable. For the fact is that their understanding at this time was the product of them having 'received the Holy Ghost' for the very purpose of clearly understanding and comprehending what they needed to know. In addition their actions following the Lord's departure were the result of them having been given specific "commandments" by the Lord "through the Holy Ghost."¹

Hence instead of them blundering in either understanding or deed, what the apostles asked and what they did was both intelligent and obedient. It is their present day false accusers and critics who blunder, not understanding what the apostles understood, and not being obedient to the truth of what God was doing at that time, as the apostles were.

The Question in Acts 1:6

Simply and briefly put, when the apostles asked the Lord, "Wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" they asked a question that showed clear understanding of exactly what was going on, especially as it pertains to and fits into the progression that was taking place in God's program with Israel. Moreover their question showed great insight and perception into a particular matter of timing as the climactic stage in the program would now be entering its middle, and then final portions. Furthermore in view of all that the

apostles had been taught about the program during the past three plus years, and especially in view of what they had just been taught during the past 40 days, they asked a specific question about a specific matter that they knew *had not been addressed*, yet about which they wanted to know.

Wherefore they did not ask a question that by any means showed a misunderstanding on their part, or ignorance of what God was doing. Instead their question was one of penetrating insight, especially since they perceived that it had not been addressed in all that they had been taught. However the reason it had not been addressed was on purpose, just as the Lord points out in His response.

⁷ And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. (Acts 1:7)

As the Lord states, the answer to their question fell within the realm of information about the timing of certain events during the remainder of the program that God the Father was not disclosing to them just yet. Hence the Lord did not address the issue in their question during the previous forty days, nor would He address it now. Instead the Father would disclose it to them at the appropriate time as the program progressed on.

Nevertheless their question showed clear intelligence and understanding of what was going on as Israel's program proceeded on, as well as showing great insight into the details of it. So much was this the case with them that a missing piece of information bothered them, and before the Lord departed they asked Him about it.

Therefore far from making a blunder and showing their ignorance, the apostles showed how that they had learned exactly what they were given to learn. They showed that they were one with the Lord in understanding, having learned all that He gave them to learn when He had spent the previous forty days speaking to them "of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God."

The Deed of Acts 1:15–26

Likewise the apostles did not blunder in filling the apostleship vacated by Judas, and doing it at the very time at which they did. For this too they not only did intelligently, but they did it in obedience to one of the "commandments" the Lord had previously given to them "through the Holy Ghost."

Once again setting aside all other evidences proving that the apostles did the right thing, (including the fact that Paul could not meet God's qualifications for filling Judas' apostleship, and that his own apostleship is deliberately distinct and different from the 12),² the very tone of Peter's handling of the proceeding testifies that he and the others were not acting impetuously or on their own, but that they were keeping a commandment that the Lord had given to them. Hence

in what Peter declared he twice underscored the "must" factor in what they were doing. First as he introduced the issue, and then again when he described what they "must" now do.

¹⁵ And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty,)

¹⁶ Men *and* brethren, this scripture **MUST NEEDS HAVE BEEN FULFILLED**, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus. ...

²¹ Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us,

²² 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 with us of his resurrection. (Acts 1:15–16; 21–22)

The overall tone of Peter's words is not that of rashness or impetuosity; nor that of uncertainty, apprehension, or doubt. Rather the tone is one of sobriety and clear understanding of the situation. Moreover in view of the "must" factor, it is particularly one of compliance; of the clear fulfilling of an injunction, a command, or an obligation; and fulfilling it in a timely manner as a prerequisite to further issues. And this tone is in perfect accordance with the fact that the Lord had previously given Peter and the others "commandments" to be fulfilled once He was gone, and had done so "through the Holy Ghost."

Far from being rash, hasty, or impulsive, Peter and the others acted in obedience, knowing that one of the first "commandments" they had been given by the Lord to fulfill following His departure was the filling of Judas' vacated apostleship. Hence "must one be ordained," as Peter said. Upon which they ordained Matthias, "and he was numbered with the eleven apostles."

So then having received the Holy Ghost on the day of the Lord's resurrection in accordance with their special authoritative role and ministry, and after having received forty days of Spirit-led illumination, instruction, and commandments from the Lord, the apostles did anything but blunder. Instead they acted in perfect accordance with understanding and appreciating both the Scriptures pertaining to that time and authoritatively beginning to fulfill the "commandments" that the Lord had given to them for that time. — K.R. Blades

1. For a detailed examination of the various evidences disproving these accusations, see for example the tape series *Repentance To Israel: Acts 1–7*; and the doctrinal tracts *The Apostle Paul & The 12 Apostles*; *The Apostle Paul and His Special Apostleship from God*; and the book *Satan and His Plan of Evil*.

2. *Ibid.*

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