

Episode #1044 The Flow of Truth Part 5-The Incredible Apostles

I. All truth flows out of the Old Testament into the gospels. It flows out of the gospels into the book of Acts. It flows out of the book of Acts into Paul's final epistles. That is the flow of truth. We are studying this flow and how it can teach us about God's work with us today and how it differs from His work with others in the past and future.

II. The Incredible Apostles.

- A. John 6:66. Jesus declared certain truths that caused many of His disciples to turn back from following Him. Their defection caused Him to turn to His twelve and ask if they also would go away. Peter responded in John 6:68-69. Peter was entirely right. There was only one upon the earth Who could utter a message that one by believing could get the guarantee of eternal life. If they turned from Him, there was no one else to whom they could go during the three years in which He carried on His ministry.
- B. Before this time, the Lord commissioned the twelve as heralds. Matthew 10. He barred them from taking any highway to the Gentiles, but only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. He limited their message to a call to submission (repentance) because the kingdom of the heavens was at hand. That was not an offer of salvation or forgiveness or of eternal life. They could only call on people to submit or yield to the coming kingdom. They might have preferred to proclaim that they had found the long-awaited Messiah and that He was an object of faith for eternal life. Yet they could not dare to do that at that time. His instructions to them were very specific. They did not paraphrase His instructions to pad out their commission and convey a more spectacular message. They themselves had pledged to submission.
- C. Later interpreters would like to build up their commission and have them carrying the salvation-bringing message to all men in all places without exception, but that is a false interpretation that has no basis in the Word of God. This was not their privilege at that time. Later it will be, but not during the three years of the Lord's ministry.
- D. In their experience, during the three years of Christ's ministry, their consciousness grew in regard to Jesus being the long-awaited Messiah. They followed Him at first hardly knowing what they were following, but their knowledge began to grow until Matthew 16:13-20. Commanded means they were charged severely. He stops all proclamation and preaching. The moment they had fully discovered Who He was, they were charged they should tell no man anything about it. Not until after the pouring forth of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost could they speak the words that would bring about a Theogenic, God-generated faith in the great truth that Jesus was and is the Christ. Until then, Jesus alone could speak the message.
- E. That is in harmony with Hebrews 2:3. At first the Lord was the only One Who could speak it during the three years of His ministry. Later confirmed by the apostles.
- F. These three things need to be firmly fixed in our minds.
 1. Jesus Christ was the first to speak the message that men could believe and lay hold of the promise of life as a result.
 2. Before His ascension, He was the only One Who could speak.
 3. He spoke it only to a limited number of the lost sheep of the house of Israel.
- G. That is how it was, and we have no right to rewrite the history into how we think it should have been.

- H. When a Syro-Pheonician woman asked the Lord for something, He gave her no reply at all. Matthew 15:21-28. I have fully adopted this passage into my thinking and teaching, taking by faith every word said in it. I would like every listener to be patently familiar with it. Read passage. He acted as if she had not even spoken to Him. He was not commissioned but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Now he speaks to her for the first time. She in this word saw an opportunity for faith and laid hold of it. She took Him at His Word. He had called her a dog? She would take the dog's place and claim the dog's portion. In all the Biblical record, as far as we know, there were only two Gentiles who received anything from the Lord Jesus Christ during His earthly ministry. This woman got her daughter healed, and a centurion got his servant healed. Yet here we have that important declaration: He was not commissioned except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.
- I. There are many expositors of whom it is evident that they wish His statement, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel," would go away and get lost. This statement does not fit at all with their conception that the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ was to all men without exception. But this statement is there in the Word of God and stands written. It is the Lord's Own positive statement as to the extent of His Divine commission. Everyone who believes in Jesus Christ should also believe this declaration from His Own lips. One who claims to believe in Jesus Christ and then starts to quibble and doubt about statements the Lord Himself made brings his own faith into question. In Christ's complete submission to God, He would not be guilty of extending His Own commission. Only two Gentiles got anything from Him.
- J. That is the way it was all throughout His earthly ministry. On the evening after His resurrection, John 20:21, He appeared to His disciples. He sent them the way He was commissioned. These words limited their service to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, even as His commission was also limited. Any change in this will need to be based on later Divine revelations given to these disciples.
- K. John 20:22-23. By this act and these words, these men were commissioned once again, and constituted as His commissioned ones (apostles). They were to perform on earth acts He would decree in heaven. These twelve men would become the most gifted, able, powerful, spiritual, energetic, incredible men who ever operated on this earth on behalf of God. He had given them eonian life and His Word. John 17:2, 14. I have piled up the adjectives in describing these men. These men were despised and ignored by the world in their day, and are still put down, stultified, and belittled by the theological world of today. They were not fuddy-duddies running around in bathrobes. They were God's commissioned ones, the representatives of the One seated in the heavens. They could bind and loose on earth and those things were bound or loosed in heaven. They could forgive or retain sins and they would be forgiven or retained. Eleven, Matthias would be added later. They were the most incredible men who ever operated on behalf of God on this earth.

III. The Divine Commissions.

- A. Some believe that the Divine commissions counteract and deny what we just taught, demonstrating that Jesus Christ's intent was that His disciples should proclaim the salvation-bringing message to all men without exception or distinction. Not true!
- B. He was not commissioned but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and as He was sent, so He sent them. Their ministry as they started Acts was limited to the house of

- Israel. We are told what limited their ministry was their own nationalistic feelings and prejudices against the Gentiles, and their commissions really sent them to everyone in the world. Therefore, these commissions need to be carefully examined.
- C. Matthew 28:18-20. "The Great Commission." A more accurate rendering of the Greek is a crying need here. Please note: it is my conviction that *baptizo* here has in it the idea of identifying; that is, establishing a fixed relationship that results in a merger. *Baptisma* is a name given to the ceremony used to establish such a relationship, but that is not its most basic meaning.
 - D. *Resultant Version. And Jesus approaching them spoke unto them, saying, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. 19. Going therefore, disciple all the nations, relating them to the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit: 20. Teaching them to observe all whatsoever I direct you: and, lo, I am with you all the days, even to the consummation of the eon.*
 - E. That is an honest translation. I have made no radical changes, other than perhaps baptizing to relating or identifying.
- IV. Conclusion: We will continue our study of the Divine commissions in our next program.