

Episode #1045 The Flow of Truth Part 6-The Divine Commissions

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 Divine Commissions.

- A. *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.*
- B. This passage when honestly considered and interpreted has nothing to do with God's salvation-bringing message, or with the gospel which is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes. It did not have to do with the apostles' course of action in the Acts period, or anyone's course of action in the present, evil eon. This directive has to do with that condition of things called the kingdom of God. This commission will be performed to the letter in a time after Jesus Christ has taken to Himself His great power and is exercising this in relationship to the earth.
- C. This commission does not have to do with individuals, but with nations. It cannot be carried out until Jesus Christ asks of the Father and the nations are given to Him as His portion, as we read He will do in Psalm 2:8, 82:8. He will ask the Father, and He will give Him all nations. At that time, these twelve disciples will serve God by sitting on twelve thrones, Matthew 19:28. On those twelve thrones, they will be even more powerful than they were in the Acts period. Their power and ability then was in part, but then there will be no men on earth more respected, famous, or powerful than these twelve men will be.
- D. When God governs the nations, nations will want to be related to the Lord, and these powerful men who are serving as the great judges in Israel will go forth and relate nations to God in Christ, and will instruct them of their Divine responsibilities under God's government.
- E. Psalm 67:4. The time will come when nations as such will say through their representatives, "How can we be related to and live our lives in relationship to this One Who is the King of the earth?" The disciples will go forth in that day when He governs the nations on earth to relate and identify these nations with the character of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. They will have the ability to do so.
- F. Psalm 72:11, 17. When that is a reality, these twelve will go forth to relate and identify these nations with Jesus Christ. In law, there are laws that say any man who is the head of a religious congregation has the authority to relate a man to a woman (marriage). Just think! The time is coming when twelve of the most powerful men on earth will have the right to relate nations to Jesus Christ. Just like a minister can turn down a couple, these twelve could turn down a nation if they were not yet right in their attitude and lives. You will have to set things right before we can relate you to God in Christ. This will be a reality as the Lord said.
- G. Psalm 138:4. Just like a true bride will rejoice in her relationship to a man, and if she is a true woman will seek to maintain and preserve that relationship, so these nations

will rejoice in their relationship to Jesus Christ and will do everything they can to preserve that relationship.

- H. Isaiah 55:5. The time will come when these powerful men, who are serving as the great judges in Israel, (there will be no men more respected or glorified on earth than these men,) will go forth to relate nations to God in Christ and instruct them regarding their responsibilities under God's government.
- I. For those who insist that these words commissioned the twelve to herald God's salvation-bringing message to men of all nations, there is one complete and total answer: those to whom these words were spoken did not understand them this way. We are on safe and secure ground when we interpret these words in the same manner as they were understood by these Spirit-filled, Divinely-possessed men whose words were confirmed as truth by the God they were serving and by the Christ they were heralding. Who are we 1900 years later to say that they misunderstood or failed to obey His words because of some nationalistic attitude or prejudice in regard to the Gentiles?
- J. The commission in Mark. The commission recorded in Mark is not the same as that in Matthew. It was spoken to the same men, the eleven disciples, Judas being absent.
- K. Mark 16:15-20. This commission was performed and fulfilled to the letter in the 33 years of which the book of Acts is the history. The eleven did what they were told to do, and God did what He promised He would do. Verse 20 is proof.
- L. The three Greek words that are translated "to every creature," *pase te ktisei*, do not mean "to every creature." *Pase* is found in this exact form (dative, singular, feminine) 44 times in the New Testament, usually preceded by *en* (in), but not in this passage. I do believe this should be translated, "in the entire creation," as in Acts 7:22, 23:1, II Corinthians 8:7, Philippians 1:9. In these four passages, the translators felt it necessary to use "in" to render this dative case.
- M. Some may insist these words mean to every creature, and that this was a command to these eleven to go everywhere and preach to everyone without exception and without distinction. Let it be noted that the men who heard these words never understood them this way. The events of the early chapters of Acts make this plain, and we can do no better than to accept their understanding of these words. With the exception of Peter, these men limited their ministry to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and that was the way God wanted it, and that was the way they did it. Even Peter never made a change until the Lord made it so plain to him he could not have erred.
- N. The commission in Luke. Luke 24:46-47. This commission is different from that recorded in Matthew and Mark. After opening their understanding so they might comprehend the Scriptures, verse 45, He spoke this. There were Israelites in every nation, scattered all over the known world. This is why repentance and remission of sins was to be proclaimed among all nations. This was not an order to proclaim God's salvation-bringing message to all men without distinction or exception. Those who heard this did not understand it this way, the very ones whose understanding had been opened so they could comprehend it. Peter did not understand it this way. It would take a spectacular vision thrice repeated before Peter would go to even one Gentile household.
- O. With these facts before us, we are ready to approach the Acts dispensation. About 6½ centuries before the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ, the prophet Habakkuk,

anticipating the dispersion of Israel among the nations, declared a time would come when God would work a work of such incredible nature among the dispersed that his hearers would not believe it even if he told them about it. Habakkuk 1:5. This prophecy still awaits its final and definitive fulfillment. There was a precursory fulfillment in the Acts period, Acts 13:40-41 prove this.

- P. The Israelites who lived in the Acts period in Palestine and those scattered among the nations not only heard what God was doing, but also saw what He was doing. They were the objects of and witnesses to a work of God such as men had never seen before nor since. That 33-years of which the book of Acts is the history stands out above all other periods of Divine activity. The most careful study and thought needs to be given to those Divine purposes and operations that made the Acts period so unique. This is a sorely-neglected study.

III. The Character of the Acts Period.

- A. It has long been the purpose of most theologians to minimize, depreciate, and stultify the truth concerning the work God was doing in the Acts period. This has been done both wittingly and unwittingly. The actual history of this time has been rewritten by commentators on Acts. They are determined to see nothing in this period of time except the founding and development of “the Christian church.” They read this into every passage and interpret it into every event. They even translate so that it will be found throughout this period. They minimize everything that belongs to the Acts period, and then magnify everything that belongs to Christendom today so that they both may meet on a common level and one be a continuation of the other. Thus they insist it was “the church” that began at Pentecost, and then they make the organized, religious institutions seen on every hand to be “the church,” the outgrowth of what began at Pentecost, and that is not the truth.
- B. In fact, they make the *ekklesia* of God (church does not honestly translate any word in the New Testament. *Ekklesia* means “the out-called ones”) of the Acts period to be simply church members, and then they make the church members today to be the out-called ones of God. The Divinely-commissioned and inspired heralds of that time are made to be nothing more than preachers and pastors, and then preachers and pastors today are made to be men with a Divine commission.
- C. An apostle such as Paul is made to be a missionary, and his travels are made to be missionary journeys. The inspired proclamations of the apostle are made to be sermons, and the chief purpose of these men is said to have been the founding of churches, setting up organizations. All the great work these men did is something we could also do if we had the faith. We are now being told that the miraculous gift of tongues was just an ecstatic and unintelligible babble, and in turn we are being told that the unintelligible babble of today is the Biblical gift of tongues. Thus it is that the high is made low and the low is made high, and everything that happened in the Acts period is made to be the same as the denominational programs of today. Even Dr. C.I. Scofield fell into this trap. He gave as paragraph headings in his Scofield Reference Bible such titles in Acts as “The First Church” “The State of the Church at Jerusalem” “The Power of the Holy Church” “The First Deacons” “The First Missionaries” “The Church at Antioch” “Elders Appointed in Every Church” “Paul’s First Missionary Journey” “The Founding of the Church at Thessalonica” and “The Founding of the Church at Corinth.” I believe that this is wrong. I do not believe that

God's program and purpose in the Acts period is in any way at all comparable to what men are doing today.

IV. Conclusion: We will continue our study of the character of the Acts period in our next program.