

I would like to examine with you the first eleven vv. of the book of Acts (Acts 1:1-11). This is a passage of great importance for the Christian because it presents the very beginning of the Christian movement after the crucifixion. It is a passage which is perhaps introductory to all of Acts and the Epistles. In fact to all the rest of the NT. So I think it is a passage of very considerable importance.

In studying a Bible passage, as in studying almost any subject there are two ways to approach it. One way is to get a rapid overview. To look hastily at it to see what main points stand out. To get a general idea of the outline. Another method is to go at it in detail and look at each little section, each little problem, each particular matter of wording. Both of these ways of studying are of great importance. Both are necessary in any subject in which we deal if we are going to get a mastery of it.

I do not think it is possible satisfactorily to use a method half way in between. That goes at it in intermediate ways, you might say-- getting just a general idea of the main structure and only looking at certain of the minor points. I believe that we should in all study take two approaches, and take them separately. I believe that each contributes greatly to the understanding of the other.

So this morning I want us to take a rapid survey of this passage first and then to look at certain matters in detail. As we make a rapid survey of it there are five things which stand out. First, of course is the resurrection of Christ and His teaching. We find that stressed in the beginning of the passage where we read that this is telling about all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day He was taken up into heaven (as the previous book has), and that after his suffering He showed himself to these men appearing to them in a period of 40 days and spoke about the kingdom of God. Here is the beginning of the Christian church. Forty days Jesus Christ was with them after His resurrection. Forty days they had to get an understanding of what He wanted them to do. Forty days he had to explain to them things that were not clear before His death.

Many things, we read in the Gospels, He had told them before His death which they had not yet understood. He said, I have many things to say to you but you cannot bear them now. You cannot understand them yet. He predicted His death. He predicted His resurrection, and ~~when~~ it went in one year and out the other because it was so strange to them. They were utterly amazed when he was raised from the dead and it was only thereafter that they remembered what He had predicted before.

So where we have in this passage His resurrection and His teaching. We have that as the first thing in the passage. The resurrection and the very beginning of the Christian life, all can be drawn from the fact that Jesus' resurrection and our resurrection with Him and the fact that for 40 days after His resurrection they were actually seeing Him, talking with Him, learning more.

Then the second thing that is stressed in this passage is the promise of the Holy Spirit. He told them not to leave Jerusalem, but