

Why Do Christians Refuse to “Tarry in Jerusalem until. . .”

**Instead they prefer to “Go ye and teach
all nations. . .”**

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Are we to TARRY? – or to GO “and teach all nations”?

“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

As we’ve said so many times, it’s much easier to “work for God” than to be one with God. Christians want to “witness for God” when they don’t even know who He really is – or what they are witnesses of! They often try to pressure unbelievers into “going to church” when they, themselves, have never – in all their years of church-going – been “endued with power from on high.”

And I’m certainly NOT talking about the evangelical church’s view of “receiving the spirit” with its attendant “speaking in tongues” – a practice that is not only unbiblical (the disciples of Christ spoke in KNOWN languages of the day – not in gibberish) but that type of “speaking in tongues” has been found by linguistic studies to be identical with the “speaking in tongues” done by adherents of Satanic voodoo in darkest Africa.

So, what does it mean to be “endued with power from on high.”

Let’s read the entire passage:

This incident occurred right after Jesus had walked (anonymously) with two of His followers on the Road to Emmaus. After Jesus had revealed Himself to them (then disappeared), and they suddenly understood that He had risen from the dead, they ran back to Jerusalem, found the 11 remaining disciples who were gathered together, and said to them, “The Lord is risen, indeed.”

“And as they thus spake, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.

“But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit.

“And He said unto them, Why are you troubled? And why do thoughts arise in your hearts?

“Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself: Handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as you see I have.

“And when He had thus spoken, He showed them His hands and His feet.

. .

‘And He said unto them, These are the words that I spake to you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning Me.

“Then He opened their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures,

‘And He said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:

Notice that Jesus, Himself, said, the “three days” (and “three nights”) begins with Christ’s “suffering” - not with His death. Jesus’ “suffering” began with His first betrayal by Judas on the Tuesday night before His crucifixion on Friday, and His resurrection 3 days later (after His “suffering” began), as soon as the Sabbath came – on Friday evening at sundown. (See: “Was Jesus Really Resurrected on Sunday?” at this link: <http://www.goodnewsaboutgod.com/resurrection.htm>)

“And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations (unbelievers), beginning at Jerusalem.

“And you are witnesses of these things.

“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 24:36-49

Immediately, after saying these things, Jesus ascended into heaven. (Luke 24:50-53)

So, what does it mean to be “endued with power from on high”?

- 1) Jesus has become the center of my life. I look to Him, rather than to my husband, wife, children, friends, doctors, ministers, or others, for the answers to my problems.
- 2) I WANT to spend time with Him EVERY DAY in Bible study and prayer
- 3) I seek out and enjoy studying the Bible with others who are also looking for truth.
- 4) I will never say, "Is this information necessary for my salvation?" because I will want to know EVERYTHING I can about Jesus. "To KNOW God is life eternal (*eonian* life – the life of Christ in me)." (John 17:3)
- 5) The salvation of all the other people in the world will be as important to me as my own.
- 6) I would be a Christian even if there were no eternal life or hell.
- 7) I realize that the major issue in life is not MY salvation, but the issue is **God's** reputation and character. Am I representing HIM properly?
- 8) I will delight in keeping God's commandments, not because of any possible punishment or reward, but because I love Jesus, and I know that His ways are always right. Jesus said, "If you love Me, keep my commandments." John 14:15
- 9) I will give up my right to myself and give it over to God, letting Him make all my decisions for me instead of revering the "wisdom" of man, because Jesus owns me. He bought me with a price - His death on the Cross.
- 10) I believe God WILL do what He has already PROMISED to do: heal ALL my diseases, supply ALL my needs, including my food and water, NEVER leave me or forsake me.
- 11) **I can now understand God's Word clearly**, and explain it to others.
- 12) I now understand that God is truly loving and that all His disciplines are remedial – to turn us back to right-doing – and **none** of them are punitive (to annihilate us).

But Christians believe few, if any, of these things. They are more interested in “working for the church” “being seen by men” rather than being one with God.

“Working for the church” includes handing out literature, teaching Bible classes, putting on programs with speakers, helping the poor. All of these are “good works”, but “working for the church” requires NO faith. And a church member can do all of these things **without** knowing God!

Does God Approve of “Missionary Work”?

Jesus said, “I was sent only to the Lost Sheep of the House of Israel.” Matt 15:24

The church touts the Apostle Paul as a “Missionary” and even charts his “Missionary Journeys” around the Mediterranean. However, Paul’s travels were to his fellow countrymen – the Romans. Every country he visited was part of the Roman Empire – and Paul was a Roman.

Is one considered a “Missionary” if he is born and raised in San Francisco, and takes a trip to Philadelphia, New York and Miami?

Do we have to go to a foreign country to find people who need the Lord?

Can God bring to us the people whose hearts he has opened to WANT to know Truth?

Is it more efficient to go out and search for these people, or let God bring them to us?

No One, but God, can open the heart of a human being to the desire to know truth. We can’t change the heart. That’s God’s job.

Our job is NOT to convert people. Only God can do that. Our job is to “disciple” that person **after** he or she has already been converted by God.

Jesus was NOT an “evangelist” in the sense of that word in modern times. He did not organize venues, advertise and hand out literature on the “coming evangelistic meeting” where He would speak to a large crowd.

He just lived his life, going from place to place, mostly having conversations with strangers: the woman at the well, Matthew the tax collector, the woman taken in adultery, the rich young ruler, the demoniacs, Mary Magdalene, the military man, Jairus, whose daughter was sick and close to death, Mary and Martha, and many others.

The only time he spoke to large crowds was when they gathered spontaneously, when he gave impromptu speeches about God’s goodness and righteousness, and how to live a triumphant life in the Lord.

These were not planned, organized meetings specifically for lectures.

Christians are so busy trying to do God's work their own way, that they have no time to "Tarry in Jerusalem . . . to receive POWER from on high."

Are Organized Churches necessary to "Win Souls"?

Many Christians believe that organized churches are necessary to plan and fund Missionaries to foreign countries to "tell them about God." But isn't it more efficient to be a witness for God in your OWN country? You already know the language, the culture, and the geographic area.

Does God really want people to go as "missionaries" to countries and cultures not their own?

Can't God raise up Christians in other countries to witness to their own people?

What did Jesus mean when He said:

"I was sent only to the Lost Sheep of the House of Israel." Matt 15:24

Jesus came to the Israelites, the group into which He was born. The disciples, also from Israel, were told to confine their teaching to the Israelites.

It was the Roman – Paul – formerly Saul of Tarsus, who was sent to the nations of the Romans – HIS own people. He was no more a "missionary" (as we define the word today) than we would be if we traveled from Los Angeles to Memphis, Atlanta, and New York. Indeed, we would be traveling far from our home, but we would still be interacting with Americans – our own people.

God is far more interested in our being "one with Him" than "working for Him."

Christians today, as they did thousands of years ago, want to do GOD'S work their OWN way.

Peter: When Judas Iscariot betrayed Jesus Christ, then, in remorse, went out and hanged himself, Peter took it upon himself to pick the 12th disciple, even though Jesus, Himself, had picked the first 12 disciples.

Because Jesus was no longer visible, Peter took it upon himself to do God's job.

The disciples cast lots, and elected Mathias, undoubtedly a good man, but his name never appears again in the Bible, after that event. Peter did God's Work – his OWN way.

When Jesus Christ decided it was time to pick the replacement for the 12th disciple, He did it Himself! He appeared to the Pharisee and hater of Jesus Christ, Saul of Tarsus, on the Road to Damascus. Saul was on his way to arrest and persecute Christians.

But within moments, Saul/Paul was converted when He "saw" the Lord, and became blind physically, as he had been – spiritually!

Abraham: God told Abraham He would give him a son. As time passed, and Sarah became older and older, Abraham decided he needed to "help God out." He didn't believe that God could arrange for a 90 year old woman to get pregnant. So Abraham did God's work his OWN way, and committed adultery with Sarah's maid, Hagar, who gave birth to Ishmael.

God said nothing initially. Thirteen years later, God again appeared to Abraham and promised Him a son. Abraham responded, "O that Ishmael might live before Thee." In essence, Abraham was saying, "Thank you God, you have already given me a son."

But that was the work of Abraham's "own hands." It was not the work of the Lord. Abraham had done God's work – his OWN way.

Abraham eventually had to send Ishmael away, and never saw him again – which broke his heart.

Isaac: the Son of the Promise

Then God did HIS work HIS OWN way, and Sarah, at the age of 90, became pregnant by Abraham and gave birth to Isaac. Abraham was finally beginning to understand that God doesn't need any "help." God knows exactly what He needs done, and HE can work THROUGH us if we give up our right to ourselves, and give our life completely over to Him.

If we are willing to surrender our entire life to God, He will bring to us those whose hearts He has opened to a desire to know truth. Our job is to be alert and aware of those opportunities. Every week, and sometimes almost every day, opportunities arise when someone we meet, even casually, will want to know truth: the grocery store clerk, the air conditioning repair man, the mechanic, someone waiting in line for an event. There are numerous opportunities for

encounters if you are alert to someone asking you a question – opening the door for you to share truth with them: health truth, spiritual truth, or political truth.

God does not want us to sequester ourselves away from society, focusing only on our own “holiness” as do many nuns and monks.

We are not to “forsake the assembling of ourselves” by living a life far from society. This is not an instruction to join an organized church, but to avoid separating ourselves from society where we can, by our life, be a witness to the Lord’s character and disposition in us.

“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves, as the manner of some is; but entreating one another: and so much the more, as you are observing the day drawing near.” Hebrews 10:23-25

What does this passage mean?

“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves, as the manner of some is (such as the Essenes and their ascetic, monastic, life of “salvation by works”) but entreating one another. . .”

Again, God does not want us to remove ourselves from society to focus on our own salvation as do those in monasteries and nunneries. He wants us to be circulating in society, living His life, being witnesses for Him by exhibiting His character in our daily life.

“Tarry in Jerusalem. . .”

Unfortunately, most Christians never “Tarry in Jerusalem” long enough to “receive Power from on high.” Instead, without knowing who Jesus Christ really is, without a close personal relationship with Him, without understanding His character of love, Christians lurch forth to do “Good Works,” often to receive the approval of the other church members.

We receive “power from on high” once we give up our right to ourselves – our “right” to make our own decisions – and, instead, let Jesus Christ make every decision in our life.

“Go ye and make disciples of all nations”

Again, we have no power to convert a heart. That’s the job exclusively of Jesus Christ. However, once the heart is converted and he or she wishes to know more about the Gospel – the GOOD NEWS – of Jesus Christ, that’s when God wants us to act.

The word “nations” means those who do NOT know God – the unbelievers – as defined in 1 Thess 4:5

“. . . the nations (mistranslated “Gentiles”) who know not God.”

We are to take the GOOD NEWS of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to those who “know not God.” What better “mission field” than the United States of America, where even those who attend church know very little about the loving character of God, and that - -

“God is the Savior of ALL mankind. . .”! 1 Tim 4:10