

October 4, 1972

JESUS' LAST COMMANDS

People sometimes express great interest in the last words of famous leaders. Whether this interest is reasonable or not in most cases, it is certainly right in the case of One who, after being raised from the dead, spent forty days instructing His disciples and then voluntarily left them and returned to heaven.

The first eleven verses of the Book of Acts describe the last day that Jesus was on earth. In the course of these verses two subjects are particularly stressed, and these two are intertwined. These questions are: (1) To what are the disciples to look forward? and (2), What are the disciples to do in the meantime?

The passage alternates between these two emphases. First, there is definite reference to the kingdom of God. Then the disciples are told what they should do immediately. Then they ask a question about the kingdom of God to which Jesus gives a brief but very important answer. Then He speaks further about what they should do while waiting for His return. Lastly, angelic visitors give further information about His return. This morning we shall examine what is said about each of these subjects in these first eleven verses of the Book of Acts. First, however, we shall read the entire passage:

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

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:

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: