

Reading Acts 1:1-12 . . .

I believe it is very important in studying the Bible, in fact in studying almost any subject, to approach it in two ways. To approach it in the long view, that is, covering much ground, giving a hasty overview you might say, and also to approach it in detail. I don't think there's a middle ground. I don't think there is an intermediate rate at which we can study the Bible satisfactorily. It is good ~~to~~ to read ~~the~~ the whole book at a time, to get an overview. It's good to deal with large sections; it's also good to take small sections and study it in close detail. I'm going to use both methods today. That is to say I want to first survey these 12 verses simply looking at their main features. Then I want to take a closer look at certain vital factors in the course of the 12 verses.

As a survey I have divided it into 5 parts. (1) Jesus was alive after His passion, v. 3 "to whom He also showed Himself alive after His passion." Of course this old English word "passion" does not mean anything to us today, or at least does not mean at all what it meant at that time. At that time "passion" was a word for any tempetuous, strong, difficult experience one might go through. Therefore, "suffering" might be a better phrase for it. After His suffering and death. After all He endured for our sakes. There He hung on the cross. His body was put in a tomb. It seemed to His disciples to be the end of all they had hoped for. Yet 3 days later they saw Him alive and talked with Him. The great foundation stone of the Christian faith, the fact that Jesus was raised from the dead, brought out so clearly at the beginning of this second.

(2) Forty days of teaching. v.3 "being seen of them 40 days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." I incline to think it should be a period instead of a colon at the end of v. 3 because it seems to me from v. 4 on it seems to be talking about the last of the 40 days. That it is a continuous narrative from there on. So I would like it better if it said, " Being assembled together with them He commanded, as the start of the last conversation that He had with them perhaps as they were on their way over to the mount of Olives. In the course of this we find that

(3) on that last day He gave them their permission and their promise of power. He told them, v. 8, "you shall receive power . . . and you shall be witnesses unto me. . ." They are commissioned and they are promised that He would give them the power to carry out the commission. We will look at this a little more closely when we look more in detail at some of these facts.

But then as He talked with them and discussed their commission, discussed the work they were to do, discussed the wonderful teachings He had given them during the 40 days, we have this very dramatic event,