You have taken account of my wandering, O God; put my tears in Your bottle; are they not in Your book?



Sonny and Grace LaBuff, of Ramsay, MT always eager for the fellowship of the saints and the apostles' doctrin Christ's Church Butte, MT

"While I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

John 9:5





According to the Israelite calendar, what day was the Day of Atonement?

Last week's question: The gospel according to Mark records many miracles Jesus performed early in His ministry, including casting out demons. Why did He not permit the demons to speak? *Answer: they knew who He was [and He was not ready for that information to be released, and not from that source] (Mark 1:35).*

ATTENDANCE LAST WEEK:

Bible School – 101 Morning Assembly – 109 Evening Assembly – 74 Wednesday Night (2/24) – 89 Butte Lord's Day – 19 GF Lord's Day (*Wed*) – 79,93 *W-51*



Acts Alive ...

Introductory Comments

The book of Acts is the keystone of the revelation of God. Without the book of Acts, it is really not possible to understand the significance of what is recorded in the gospel accounts, nor is it possible to understand the issues brought up in the epistles or the book of Revelation. Without a clear understanding of the new covenant writings, the meaning of the Old Testament scriptures is hidden in a misty fog. The apostle Peter himself emphasized that even the Old Testament prophets did not understand what they said about "the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow." That understanding did not arrive until the revealing of those things "which now have been announced to you through those

who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven" (1 Peter 1:10-12). The apostles and new covenant prophets were the revealers of the foundational truths upon which the church of the Lord has been built. And the book of Acts is the keystone of that revelation.

While the book of Acts is sometimes billed as "the acts of the apostles," this letter to one "most excellent Theophilus" (as he is styled in Luke's gospel account, indicating that he was a Roman official), primarily follows the apostle Peter early on, then switches over to follow the apostle Paul. It indeed is a brief and select accounting, in the words foretold by Jesus Himself, of the apostles' witness "in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

From a human perspective, the book of Acts shows the record to be one of "prayer and preaching." Again and again, the key people in the account are shown first praying, then the record shows the doors for preaching opening up in big ways. But through Luke's inspired record, we moderns get a heavenly perspective, seeing the scene unfold as one of "guidance and growth," the Holy Spirit's clearly being in charge of the developments noted in this divine record. The apostles are in a fog about the meaning of most of what Jesus talked about during the years of His earthly sojourn until the Holy Spirit begins to make those meanings clear. The apostles did not anticipate the church's coming into existence as recorded in the second chapter

of Acts; they were carried along by events orchestrated by the Holy Spirit. The spread of the church outside the boundaries of Jerusalem was accomplished by a persecution that was outside the apostles' control, resulting in the spread of the gospel to Judea and Samaria. The Holy Spirit arranged for Peter's preaching of the gospel to the first Gentiles to be saved. The Holy Spirit guided the apostle Paul and Barnabas into the first concentrated effort to reach the Gentile word. The Spirit once again was working with Paul to preach to Roman authorities and eventually to appear in Rome. The Holy Spirit was the One who produced the "guidance and growth." But He

The book of Acts is a book of "guidance and growth" from the Holy Spirit.

used willing men, who diligently "prayed and preached," demonstrating themselves to be fit vessels for the great and eternal plan of God.

The "Kingdom of God" is used throughout Acts, and is one of the many descriptive names for the "church," which Jesus said that He was going to build as described in Matthew 16:12-19). "The baptism [immersion] in the Holy Spirit" was a major display of "God's fireworks," consisting of a sound like a mighty wind, tongues like fire coming down upon the recipients, and an event wherein those so baptized spoke in foreign languages they had not studied. The "gifts of the Spirit" were special miraculous powers given through the laying on of the apostles' hands to selected individuals, enabling the church to function in the absence of the later completed New Testament.

In this book of Acts we see the intensity of God's desire to get the word of salvation to "first the Jew, then the Greek." He had spent the entire history of the world, with special work with the nation of Israel, in preparation for the events recorded in Acts. Let the events communicate to us, that we may have the same zeal and courage as the first century church! JAY WILSON