

The Foundation of the Apostles and Prophets

By Phillip G. Kayser · Acts 1:12-26, Part 3 · 2005-5-29

Because it's been a while since I have been in the book of Acts, let me give you a little review of where we have been so far. In verses 1-3 we were presented with Christ's passion for the kingdom of God. And I say He was passionate about it because He spent His last 40 days teaching about the kingdom. In your last days with those that you love you usually focus on those things that are most important. And if you are not passionate about the kingdom of God, your priorities are not where Christ's were. The book of Acts is a kingdom document. Unfortunately, so many people treat it as if it were anything but kingdom. I have books in my library that Glenn is probably going to hunt down and try to get me to throw away, because I'm a packrat – but these books claim that Christ postponed the kingdom and what he was talking about in these verses is what would happen at the end of history. But think about it: why would Jesus spend His precious last 40 days with His disciples talking about something that – sure, might pique their curiosity, but which would be utterly irrelevant to what they would be doing, if indeed the book of Acts is not about the kingdom. Instead, we would point out that this book starts with Christ talking about the kingdom. The last verse of the book speaks of Paul preaching the kingdom. And every chapter in between is about the kingdom. And we looked at several practical ramifications of that fact.

Then in verses 4-8 we looked at the incredible plan of the kingdom (referred to as the promise of the Father), the power of the kingdom being the Holy Spirit, the rule of Christ from His throne in heaven, the place that Israel plays in God's majestic scheme of things and the world-wide conquest that the kingdom must make before Christ comes back. That too had many practical ramifications. You cannot believe those doctrines and consistently continue to avoid applying the whole of Scripture to the whole of life.

Then, in verses 9-11 we looked at Christ's ascension to His throne, and those three verses give us a general overview of what Christ must do from His throne between His first coming and His Second Coming. And we saw that He must (as 1 Corinthians 15 words it – He must) remain at the right hand of the Father until all things are subdued beneath His feet. What an incredible vision. What an encouragement in dominion and missions.

Then in verses 12-26 we have already had two sermons showing the preparations God was making for Pentecost. First, we saw that this whole chapter speaks of several *internal* preparations God was making, and how desperately needed those internal preparations are for today.

Then in the last sermon we began looking at God's *historia solutis* – the historical and outward preparations that had to be in place before Pentecost could come.

For example, we saw that there was a significance to there being twelve disciples, to these disciples remaining in Jerusalem and to their staying (as the last verse of Luke says) "continually in the temple praising and blessing God." You see, the Spirit had to

be poured out in the temple to fulfill kingdom prophecy. And we looked at many reasons to believe that the upper room that the disciples were waiting in was an upper room on the south side of the temple complex. And I won't repeat all of those reasons, but the Sabbath Day's journey (which was 2000 cubits) that's mentioned in verse 12 would have landed them right in the temple. And any Jew reading this book would have known that this was the first building you would come to and that it was a Sabbath days journey from the mount of Olives. Ezekiel had said that just as the Spirit had left the temple from the south side in Nebuchadnezzar's day and had been poured out on a remnant of Jewish believers who would form the new Israel and a new temple among the nations, in the same way, in the time of the New Covenant God would again pour out His Spirit on a tiny remnant of Jewish believers in the temple and through them would leave the physical temple and form a new temple – a temple not made with *literal* stones, but with *spiritual* stones - human beings. And so, I want to pick up where we left off, at verse 15.

And today's sermon is going to be a little different. Before I contrast Peter and Judas next week and go verse by verse through rest of chapter 1, I thought that I better deal with five controversies that have come up in connection with this chapter. You can see those on one side of your handout. There is the controversy of Peter's leadership. Why is he the leader? This has been a chapter that Rome heavily appeals to teach about the supremacy of Peter and the supremacy of the papacy.

Then there is the controversy of the 120. People have pointed out that there were far more believers than the 120. In fact, there were over 500 for sure.

Then there is the controversy of Matthias being the twelfth apostle. Some people just can't believe that could be the case.

Then the controversy of how Mark, Luke, James and Jude (none of whom were apostles) could write Scripture. This has troubled many people. And I believe chapter 1 answers that question, and answers it beautifully.

And lastly, there is the question of whether apostles and prophets continue today. And from the title of the sermon you can guess that my answer is no. They form the foundation (and what a wonderful foundation they form) for the church! But let's dig into the passage and begin to examine these questions.

And we'll start at verse 15. "And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples..." There are some who think that Peter was given the privilege of being the spokesman and pillar in the church because he was solid as a rock. After all, say some, didn't Jesus say to Peter (whose name means rock), "Upon this rock I will build My church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it." That's a standard Roman Catholic interpretation. It's Peter, the Rock, who starts things going. He is the foundation of the church. Well, believe it or not, there is *some* truth to that interpretation. It's mixed with a whole lot of error. Peter was called the rock, not because he strong – boy did he fail – but because God's final revelation would come through Peter, the apostles and the prophets. Well, that's a direction that Roman Catholics really don't want to go. And there

are some who have over-reacted to their teaching and have said that Matthew 16:18 isn't referring to Peter at all; that Jesus is the Rock. But several Reformed writers have pointed out that this really is an over-reaction. The passage says literally, "And I also say to you that you are Peter [literally, "you are a rock"], and on this rock I will build My church." Knox Chamblin from Reformed Seminary says that Jesus identifies Himself there as the *builder, not a rock*, and Peter is *a rock*, not *the rock*. In fact, the other apostles are all foundation-rocks in the church. Where the Roman Catholics go wrong is not in seeing Peter as a stone or a rock, but in failing to see that *all* the apostles were foundational and that there can be no apostolic succession. Once the foundation is laid you build the building. You don't keep laying foundation throughout history. And because this is such a big argument for the Roman Catholics, let me have you turn to a couple of Scriptures with me.

Turn to Revelation 21:14. This is a beautiful description of the bride of Christ using the imagery of city of Jerusalem. Roman Catholics say, "Hey. It's Peter who is called the rock. He is the only foundation. He's the only vicar of Christ on earth, and the one to whom he transfers his title." But look at this passage. Revelation 21:14. "Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb." Peter is not the only foundation-stone upon which Jesus is building. This says that there were twelve foundations in the city. And there is no hint that this foundation keeps getting passed on to pope after pope. It's a first century foundation. Turn to Ephesians 2:19-21. This uses the mixed metaphors of a nation and a temple to describe the church. Ephesians 2:19-20.

Now therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, [did you get that? The foundation of the apostles and prophets] Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in which the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord.

Notice here that the foundation is not just made up of apostles, but of apostles and prophets, and Jesus being the chief cornerstone.

What's going on in Acts 1-2 is the laying down of the foundation for the church. If New Testament apostles and prophets are the foundation, you wouldn't expect apostles and prophets to pop up after the first century. And in fact, Isaiah 8, Daniel 9 and other Old Testament passages indicate that once Jerusalem is destroyed, there will be no more inspired revelation given to the church. And we'll get to that when we get to the last controversy.

But back to verse 15 and Peter's leadership in this whole chapter; - Peter or Petros or Rock was a foundation stone, not a pattern for 20th century apostles. And Jesus commissioned Peter to lead in the formation of this foundation, not because He was so strong, but as a testimony to God's mercy and grace. In fact, shortly after Jesus said, "upon this rock I will build My church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it," He told fearful Peter, get behind me Satan. He wasn't looking very much like a rock there, because rather than depending upon God's revelation, Peter was depending upon his own thinking.

In fact, why don't you look with me at Matthew 16 where Simon is named Peter. And let's begin reading at verse 13.

When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, 'Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?' So they said, 'Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.' He said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Simon Peter answered and said, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.' Jesus answered and said to him, 'Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. [notice that Peter's testimony was a revelational testimony. It came from the Father. Verse 18] And I also say to you that you are Peter [or rock], and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.'

Now I should point out as a side note that all the apostles were given those keys. But the important point to note here is that Peter was not called a rock because in his person he was strong and stable and solid as a rock. Three verses later in verse 23 when Peter fears Jesus going to the cross, Jesus says, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men." Peter is not looking very much like a rock there. It was only when Peter was a vehicle of the Father's revelation that he stood as a rock. When he acts as Simon-BarJona, he is not a rock. When he acts as Peter, the receiver of the Father's revelation, he is a rock. Not much after this Christ again says to Simon:

Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren. (Luke 22:32)

He doesn't describe them as supermen that we can't relate to. Peter failed and had to repent and return to the Lord. The brethren needed strengthening. Sometimes we have a tendency to excuse our lack of courage and our unwillingness to do the things God has called us to do by thinking, I'm not great like the apostles were; I can't do that. But God takes Peter not because he was strong, but because he can be an example to every one of us that our denials of Christ can be forgiven, and our weakness and fear can be overcome. This is the man who would lead the charge of this motley group whose goal had been given to disciple the nations. The church was successful not because Peter built it (as the Romanists say), but because Christ built it. And there was a lot of building that needed to be done because there were so very few disciples to start this new community. It starts off as small as a mustard seed, but in the book of Acts it grows from few to many, to multitudes, to myriads, to a great company that is turning the world upside down. Now listen to this. It's the revelation of the Father and that alone that makes Peter, the apostles and the prophetic company that would be formed in chapter 2 into a foundation for the church. And that revelation which has been preserved for us in the Scriptures continues to be rock solid as the foundation for our faith. So Peter the foundation-stone stands up in the midst of the disciples...

Continuing in verse 15: "altogether the number of names was about a hundred and twenty." He doesn't say 120 persons, but 120 names. Just like every other detail in this chapter, that detail is significant. 120 was the minimum number of males needed to constitute an official Jewish community complete with a ruling council. And they had to subscribe their names, and thus the mention of the names here. Ten men could form a synagogue, but we have enough men here to form twelve synagogues. And I believe Luke gives us hints that while the twelve were all from Galilee, that the 120 were men representing every tribe in the nation of Israel. So this really was the beginning of the new Israel. I'm not going to beat this to death, but turn with me quickly to Luke 22. These are the words of Christ at the last supper. In Luke 22:28-30 He tells His disciples:

But you are those who have continued with Me in My trials. And I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed one upon Me, that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom [so's He's not talking about something in heaven. He's talking about eating the Lord's Table in the kingdom – "that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom"], and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

James (which is addressed to believers) addresses the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad. The early church was composed of the remnant of Israel, just as Ezekiel prophesied.

And so, back to our text in Acts 1. Ten males were the minimum to form a synagogue, and 120 were the minimum to form a Jewish community complete with a ruling council. If all twelve tribes were represented as Luke has already hinted, then this has huge significance. Do you remember Christ's words that He would take the kingdom from Israel and give it to a *nation* [not nations, but to a nation] bearing the fruits of it (Matthew 21:43). That's exactly what He is doing here. Just as the tiny remnant of Israel in Babylon became the New Israel of God (a new nation), and what was left in the land was called Sodom and Egypt, the tiny remnant of Israel here becomes the New Israel of God, and the book of Revelation refers to Jerusalem, where also our Lord was crucified, as Sodom and Egypt. And so there is a significance to the 120. A new nation was being formed. Who were we Gentiles grafted into? Into the Olive Tree; into the Israel of God. Just as many Gentiles in the book of Esther became Jews, every time a Gentile comes to faith today He becomes a spiritual Jew; he becomes a part of the New Israel of God. That is why the church is called the Israel of God several times in the New Testament. And this gives great significance to why there is such a debate over circumcision later on in this book. You have a handout in your hands that shows how every name that was given to Israel of Old is given to the church. This new Israel was the beginning of the kingdom.

And Peter addresses this assembly of 120 men who had subscribed their names in these words: "Men and brethren..." I have a commentary that is troubled over Luke's words and claims chauvinism. It's really not. The commentary says, "An insoluble obstacle to any translation hoping to be gender inclusive is Luke's persistent habit of using 'men' (andres – which means males) so frequently in Acts narrative, as here." This is just assuming patriarchy. The men voted as leaders of their households. The women and the children did not vote. And in our church we really need to be biblical.

This is biblical patriarchy. There was one vote per household. All through this passage he is addressing the heads of households. But it is not as if he is neglecting the women. They were present in addition to the 120. They have already been mentioned as being present in verse 14, and we looked at the significance of that fact. But the reason Luke switches exclusively to the men here is because this is the formation of a new community under community heads. This was the leadership. Don't think that the 120 constitutes the whole church. 1 Corinthians 15 says that there were over 500 believers who met with Christ on one occasion just prior to His ascension. There were far more believers than the 120. These names were the men and brethren who were leaders in the New Israel. These were the men who continued with Christ from the beginning. This included the 70 disciples sent out just like the twelve. And I believe that all the Scripture writers, the prophets came from this group of disciples (with the exception of Paul who calls himself an apostle born out of due time, and as being the last of the apostles). Why does he say that his apostleship was out of due time? Because Pentecost was the due time when this foundation was laid.

Now with that as a background, I think you can understand why Peter was not out of line when he said that a replacement for Judas had to be made before Pentecost. They could not wait. Prophecy indicates that the Spirit would be poured out upon a new Israel, under twelve new princes. And remember that we've already read in Luke 22 that Jesus calls the apostles princes (if they are sitting on thrones they are princes) judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And so, let's look at the question of Matthias. Let's read verses 16-22 again.

Men and brethren, this Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke before by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus; for he was numbered with us and obtained a part in this ministry. (Now this man purchased a field with the wages of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his entrails gushed out. And it became known to all those dwelling in Jerusalem; so that field is called in their own language, Akel Dama, that is, Field of Blood.) For it is written in the book of Psalms: 'Let his dwelling place be desolate, And let no one live in it'; and, 'Let another take his office.' Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection.

Let me point out that many, many people have taught that Peter was mistaken in doing this; that he was running ahead of the Lord. And their proof is that Paul was the last apostle, and that Paul needs to be counted as one of the twelve. After all, they say, there are only twelve gates on the new Jerusalem with the names of the twelve apostles written on them. And because of this controversy, I want to spend a little time explaining why I believe this was perfectly proper and in accord with God's will, and why the symbolism of the twelve was needed before Pentecost, not much later when Paul was converted. Let me give you six reasons why I think Matthias was the twelfth apostle.

Why the choosing of Matthias was right

He was following the Scripture's authority - "this Scripture had to be fulfilled" (v. 16). Based on Psalm 109:8 Peter says, "therefore... one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection." This would be a witness against Israel by the new Israel, and the symbolism needed to be present when Pentecost came.

First, I think it's important to see that Peter thought that He was following Scripture's authority. He says in verse 16: "this Scripture [and he's referring to Psalm 41:9- this Scripture] *had to* be fulfilled." He saw no option. Based on Psalm 109:8 Peter says in verse 22, "therefore... one of these *must* become a witness with us of His resurrection." Matthias was needed as a witness against apostate Israel as a new Israel, a faithful Israel was formed to replace the old.

There is not the slightest hint from Luke that what they did was wrong.

Second, there is not the slightest hint from Luke that he thinks what Peter did was wrong. He reports Peter's words as authoritative words. There is no apology, no retraction or other indication that this was a bad move. Keep in mind that Peter had been trained for forty days in the Scripture "with his mind opened." Luke 24:45 says about Jesus during that 40 day period, "And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures." Peter knows what he is talking about. He already has the Spirit breathed upon him provisionally. So when Luke records this as if everything is hunky dory, we should assume it was hunky dory.

Luke refers to Peter being "with the eleven" (2:14) after this. Compared with the same language in 1:26 it is clear that Luke considers Matthias to be part of the twelve.

Thirdly, there is not just silence on Luke's part, but positive affirmation that Matthias was one of the twelve. Look at verse 26:

And they cast their lots, and the lot fell on Matthias. And he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

So with Judas gone, the twelve has diminished to eleven, and Matthias is numbered with those eleven bringing it up to twelve. Now compare that with what Luke says in Acts 2:14. "But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice..." Earlier you have Matthias with eleven. Now you have Peter with the eleven. The word "with" indicates that there are eleven beside him. Well, if there are eleven besides Peter, you have to count Matthias.

Luke refers to "the twelve" (6:2) long before Paul's conversion.

But there is further confirmation. Look at Acts 6:2. "Then the twelve [not the eleven, but "then the twelve"] summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, 'It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables.'" Luke is not recording that they

thought there were twelve apostles. By inspiration he records that there were twelve apostles. And this was before Paul was converted. So Matthias is clearly God's choice.

Paul was unique in his apostleship as one appointed "out of due time" (1 Cor. 15:8-9). He sees his apostleship as being on a different plane than the others, though of equal authority.

Fifth, if you look at 1 Corinthians 15:8-9 you will see that Paul distinguishes his apostleship from the twelve, even though it has the same authority.

After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.

He was an apostle born out of due time, because according to Peter's criterion, you had to have been with Christ for three years and have witnessed His resurrection and have been appointed by Christ. Well, Paul goes on to say that he has those criterion, but in a different time than the others. He was called by Jesus, visibly saw him and was trained in seclusion by Jesus for three years in Saudi Arabia according to Galatians. So Paul hints that he doesn't see himself as fitting in with the twelve, even though he has apostolic authority.

The lack of mention of Matthias later in Acts is immaterial since the only mention of any apostles after this are Peter, James, John and Philip.

Sometimes people bring up the objection that if Matthias was indeed an apostle, why was he not mentioned later in the book of Acts? Well, we already saw that he is mentioned in chapter 2:14 and in chapter 6:2. But even if he had not been, it doesn't matter. After chapter 2, with the exception to the reference to the twelve that I just mentioned, there is no mention of the names of any of the apostles except Peter, James, John and Philip.

So I think that what was happening here was this: There were 82 apostles altogether, plus Paul. Let me tell you how I arrive at that. Luke 9 mentions the twelve being commissioned as apostles to speak in Christ's name. When they speak, it is Christ speaking. They represent Him, and He charismatically gifted them in Luke chapter 9 so that they could heal, cast out demons, and do miracles. The next chapter, in Luke 10, He does exactly the same thing with 70 additional people who were commissioned to speak in His name. In other words, they were apostles. And they do indeed speak in Christ's name and have the same authority to so speak in Luke 10:16. Here's what Jesus says: "He who hears you hears Me, he who rejects you rejects Me, and he who rejects Me rejects Him who sent Me." This is infallible representation. It says that just as Jesus represents the Father, these 70 represent Jesus. And so in every sense of the term, the 70 were apostles. That's why there are several apostles in Acts besides the 12. They were charismatically gifted in the same way that the twelve were. But the key thing is that they speak for Christ and represent Him.

So, when Judas loses his office as being among the twelve, one of those 70 was chosen (Matthias). And the reason I say it was one of the seventy is because of verses 21-23. Acts 1:21-23:

'Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection.' And they proposed two: Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias.

That's as clear an identification of Matthias being of those 70 as you could get.

So now we have twelve apostles who can each represent one of the twelve tribes of Israel that was represented there. But that leaves an uneven number of charismatically endowed leaders in the second group. In the Old Testament there were not only the twelve princes of Israel, but there were the 70 elders who had the Spirit come upon them and prophesied. But now the 70 of Luke 10 has diminished to 69 if Matthias becomes one of the twelve. I believe that, to make up the 70 elders of Israel, Paul was chosen by God about six months later. So the number of the twelve is complete and Paul fills up the number of the 70. But he is still born out of due time because the due time for all who would bring inspired revelation was at Pentecost.

So if you ever wondered, "Why could Mark and Luke write Scripture when they weren't one of the twelve?" we can say, "Because they were part of the band of seventy apostles." Both Luke and Mark were Levites who were included the 70 apostles. Either Luke, Mark, Barnabus (who was also a Levite) or perhaps all three, were likely candidates to have reserved Solomon's porch for Jesus to preach in throughout the Gospels. How in the world was Jesus able to reserve that porch? You had to have a Levitical connection. As a Levite, any of the three of them would have been able to do that. If Luke was one of the 70, then He spoke for Christ just as surely as the twelve did, according to Luke 10. And in case you've forgotten what I have read, let me read it again. Jesus told the 70 in Luke 10, "He who hears you hears Me, and who rejects you rejects Me, and he who rejects Me rejects Him who sent Me." That's infallible representation. Five verses later Jesus says:

I thank You Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them to babes. [They were vehicles of revelation. And again, they are weak and babes in themselves. It's only as vehicles of revelation that they are foundation stones. He goes on in the next verse] Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight. All things have been delivered to Me by My Father [So Jesus was the primary vehicle of revelation – He was the chief cornerstone. But the sentence goes on to say], and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.

And then Jesus goes on to say how many prophets and kings wished they could have what these 70 were receiving. So there is no trouble with Luke writing the Scripture. Luke has apostolic infallible function because he was one of the 70.

So you have the twelve, and you've got the seventy. But there's still more in this group of 120 men. What happens to them? The rest of them— every one of them — were turned into prophets according to Acts 2. If you wondered, "Why can James and Jude, both of whom were brothers of Christ, write Scripture? They weren't part of the twelve or the seventy!" We can respond, "Yes, but they were constituted as part of the inspired prophetic band at Pentecost. They were all part of the revelational foundation of the church of Jesus Christ."

Notice that verse 14 lists the brothers of Jesus as different from the apostles, yet they were present. And what happens to them in Acts 2? They are constituted prophets. Look at Acts 2:1. The last phrase says that "they were all with one accord in one place." So all were present. Verse 4 says, "And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." So all were given utterance by the Spirit. And look at the interpretation in verses 17-21.

And it shall come to pass in the last days... [notice the context is last days, and I believe he is referring to last days of the Old Covenant; last days of Israel as a nation; last days of the temple, the priesthood. This is an Old Testament prophecy and you've got to read it from their perspective of last days not from our perspective, but last days of their economy. 'And it shall come to pass in the last days'], says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams. And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; and they shall prophesy...

We will look at this more at a later date, but it is clear that every person was a prophet just as surely as Old Testament David is called a prophet in verse 30. Why is that significant? It's because charismatic, Wayne Grudem, claims that the New Testament uses the term "prophet" in a totally different way than the Old Testament did. He claims that the apostles are the only ones who are inspired like Old Testament prophets and that New Testament prophets are not inspired. They receive revelation, but they can make mistakes. Absolutely not. We will be seeing that Acts intermixes references to Old Testament prophets and New Testament prophets as if they were exactly the same type of office. So James and Jude, the brothers of Jesus were turned into prophets, infallibly speaking the Word of God. No problem in their bringing Scripture.

Ephesians 2:20 describes the church as "having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone." Jesus is the final revelation according to Hebrews 1, and He commissions a group of 120 foundation stones to speak and write in His name. Once that foundation is laid, the only authority that the church can go to is the Scriptures.

Next week I will try to finish off chapter 1. There is a lot of material that we have not been able to cover. But let me end today by giving at least a couple Old Testament references that prophesied that before the last days of Jerusalem and its destruction, God would close off all inspired revelation and finish off His book the Bible. This is not an academic question. This lies at the heart of the sufficiency of Scripture, the infallibility of the Scripture and the cure to so many errors that have infected the church. This is not to say that God does not continue to reveal Himself in various ways to people. He does.

There is ongoing revelation, but no more inspired revelation. The law written on pagan hearts is general revelation. The knowledge of God implanted in the heart is general revelation. But inspired revelation such as the apostles and prophets had was only for the period of the foundation.

Turn first to Daniel 9. Because of time, I am going to have to be brief. Daniel 9:2 starts with Daniel realizing that the 70 years of prophesied exile have come to a close. They were in exile one year for every Sabbath year that Israel failed to let the land have its Sabbath rest. So there were weeks of years, with every seventh year being a Sabbath year. Now in verses 24 and following another prophesy is being made. "Seventy weeks are determined..." Almost every Bible believing commentary agrees that in context he is talking about weeks of years, not weeks of days. Or as the margin words it, seventy sevens are determined. If the weeks are periods of seven years, then seventy sevens means 490 years that are being prophesied about. The end of that period is the destruction of Jerusalem in verses 26-27, and that destruction happened in 70 AD. Now look at verse 24 again. Here are six things that must happen before Jerusalem is once again destroyed.

Seventy weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city, [1] to finish the transgression, [2] to make an end of sins, [3] to make reconciliation for iniquity, [4] to bring in everlasting righteousness, [5] to seal up vision and prophecy, and [6] to anoint the Most Holy.

The phrase "to seal up vision and prophecy" speaks of the ending of all inspired revelation. Literally it is "to seal up vision and prophet" so that both the vehicle of revelation (that's the prophet) and the prophecy itself (that's the vision) would be closed up. The word "seal up" is the same word used three phrases earlier, where it is translated "to make an end of." So you could translate this, "to make an end of vision and prophet." In any case, here is a clear prophecy to the cessation of prophecy before 70 AD. The complete and final foundation had to be established in the first century.

Turn to Isaiah 8. Isaiah 8 & 9 are quoted over and over again in the New Testament as having reference to the first century AD, and Isaiah 8 is especially quoted with reference to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. IN that context, Isaiah 8:16 says, "Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples." Testimony and law are synonyms in the Bible for inspired revelation. And this passage says that it will be bound up and sealed or closed or ended in the first century AD. After the war of 70 AD that is described, verse 19 says that any claimed inspired inspiration is demonic. Then verse 20 says,

To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.

The Scriptures will forever after be the only judge of truth. Nothing else will be able to be a judge. So even the revelation of God's law which is written on our hearts and even on pagan hearts, is not the judge of the Bible, but the Bible is the judge of the revelation in our conscience. Why? Because the subjective revelation of the law in our hearts can be so easily rationalized and misunderstood. And so this verse says,

To the law and to the testimony! [which has already been sealed up, right?] If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.

There are other Old Testament passages which we could point to such as Zechariah 13 which promises "the prophets... I will cause to pass away from the earth" and then it goes on to say that anyone who claims to be a prophet after that time will be treated as liars. Or Joel 2 which says that before the destruction of Jerusalem, during the last days God would pour out a last period of prophesy. And so it is significant that Hebrews 1 says, "God who at various times and in different ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son." And of course when the apostles speak, Christ speaks. They are His direct representatives. The first century was an expected period of final prophecy.

There are many other similar passages. But turn to one last one: 1 Corinthians 13:8-10. This is the great love chapter.

Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail [literally, "they will cease or completely pass away or be done away with." He goes on and says,] whether there are tongues, they will cease [And the Greek word for cease there is different and may indicate a more gradual ceasing. He goes on] whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away.

And the kind of knowledge he is referring to is the revelational knowledge of verse 2 – the communication of propositional statements such as prophets received. In any case, there is another clear statement that at some point prophecy will cease.

For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when that which is perfect [or as the margin words it, "when that which is complete"] has come, then that which is in part will be done away.

I believe the "complete" is the the completion of the canon. But even if you don't buy that, here is a Scripture that interpretes Isaiah 8 and Daniel 9. So it still has to refer to 70 A.D.

I am not one who believes that all spiritual gifts have passed away. Only the foundational ones. And Ephesians 2 makes it clear that apostleship and prophecy were part of the foundation, not part of the later building of Christ's church.

What difference does this make? First, it keeps us from getting sucked in and deceived by all the supposed prophets that you find in the States. Some charismatic churches have apostles that you do not question – I mean, they almost treat them as infallible. There are prophets in Kansas City that impose God's will upon people and who prophecy future events. The problem is that even the best of these prophets gets their prophecies wrong quite frequently. I'm sorry, according to the Scripture, that automatically makes them false prophets. I don't know of any claimed prophet in America that even claims to have a 100% accuracy record. But Deuteronomy 18, 1 Thesalonians 5 and other passages clearly require 100% and says that so-called prophets who make errors are to be treated as false prophets. If we realize that the offices of prophet and apostle have ceased and are foundational, we don't have to mess with that any more.

Second, it encourages us that God has not shortchanged us with the Bible. It is a wholly adequate foundation for every area of life. As 2 Peter 1 says, the Bible gives to us all things that pertain to life and godliness. We don't need any supplemental information. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 says, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." Not barely equipped, but complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. There isn't anything we need beyond the Bible to equip us for Christ's kingdom. And part of my mission is to teach the kingdom principles for every discipline and every walk of life. So the second application is that God has not shortchanged us by not allowing us to be part of the foundation. Peter, the apostles and the prophets were adequate and more than adequate as a foundation for life.

A third difference that this makes is it forces us take more seriously the study of the Bible. Too many people depend on subjective feelings. That's not to say that God doesn't give subjective feelings and other means of working in our lives. But it does mean that nothing but the Bible is infallible, and we need to take seriously the study of that Bible. Even while Paul was continuing to give new revelation to the church, he wanted them to realize that nothing could be added to the foundation stones that God had already established. Once they died, there were no more foundation rocks. In 1 Corinthians 4:6 Paul said, "that you may learn in us not to think beyond what is written." Those are pretty radical words. Even the Corinthians in the first century were not supposed to add one word to what was being given by the 120 foundation stones. No more foundation stones were needed, not even from Corinth. If they wanted to learn something, they could go to the 120 prophets or to what they had written. And Paul especially admonished them, "that you may learn in *us* not to think beyond what is written."

Fourth, if God was establishing the New Israel, then we should expect continuity between Old and New Testaments. We should expect that God does not have two peoples and two Scriptures and two ways of salvation. Instead, one would expect that there would be a unity of people, a unity of Scripture and a unity of salvation. It means that we need to take Israel's kingdom principles seriously in the Old Testament. What was the only Bible Peter, Paul, and others used in the book of Acts? It was the Old Testament. They didn't have a New Testament to teach from for several years. Don't toss out the Old Testament. The blank page between the Old Testament and the New was not added there by God, but by man. You can tear it out of your Bible's without offending God.

We've been taking this first chapter rather slowly because what you believe about chapters 1 and 2 will affect your view of the rest of the book. This is an incredibly exciting book. It is a foundational book for the Christian faith. And as we delve into its kingdom principles more and more in coming months, it is my prayer that our church will be energized to expect great things from God and to attempt great things for God. And to Him be all the glory. Amen.