

I Never Saw That Before

Written by Bill Perkins

One of the most memorable learning experiences of my life occurred when Professor Howard Hendricks required all of his students, including me, to come up with 25 observations from Acts 1:8. As a first year seminary student the assignment seemed impossible. After all, how much can be seen in a single verse? Yet, after hours of work, I returned to class with a smile. After commending his students for a job well done, Prof, as he was affectionately called, gave an impassioned exposition of Acts 1:8. Listening to him speak, I realized there was more in that single verse than I ever imagined. I felt humbled by the depth of Dr. Hendricks' insights. When he finished his lecture, Prof said, "Now go and find 25 more observations." His words stunned me. And you can imagine how I felt when he gave the same assignment after the third class. Seventy-five observations later, I realized I could never mine the depths of God's word. That experience recently came to mind as I considered the effect of reading all four Gospels 33 months in a row. When I decided in April of 2012 to read them for the remainder of that year, I had no idea I would continue reading them for two more years. Amazingly, I see something new every time I read the story of Jesus. For instance, just the other day I noticed that after the Lord's desert temptation we are told, "And when the devil had finished every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time" (Luke 4:13). I wondered when the opportune time would occur. And then I spotted it. It took place after Jesus healed a man born blind. And after Peter told him he was the Messiah the Son of the living God. It occurred after Jesus praised Peter's answer and said he received it from God not man. Following this amazing miracle and Peter's God-inspired affirmation, Jesus told the disciples, "The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and teachers of the law. He must be killed and on the third day be raised again" (Matthew 16:21; Mark 8:31-32; Luke 9:22). It was then Peter pulled Jesus aside and rebuked him to his face, "God forbid it Lord, this will never happen to you" (Matthew 8:32; Mark 16:22). Instead of thanking Peter for his concern, Jesus said, "Get behind me, Satan! The opportune time came after a spiritual and relational mountaintop. It came when the nation had seen his power and the disciples acknowledged his divinity. Just as I realized this connection, I saw something else I hadn't seen after reading that story 32 times. Next week I'll share that with you. And let me tell you . . . it's a life changer. Because I want you to share in the miracle of the Jesus story and experience what's it like following him around every day, I hope you'll join me in reading through the Gospels this year. Give it a try. Read all four each month or read one Gospel a month. And [join my new Facebook group](#) and share what you're learning with me and others. Discover what we're learning. The group has been going a week, and it's a blast. Let's see how many observations we can get from the Jesus story.