

TIME OF REFLECTION

“To those who ask us whence we have come or whom we have for a leader, we say that we have come in accordance with the counsels of Jesus to cut down our warlike and arrogant swords of argument into plowshares, and we convert into sickles the spears we formerly used in fighting... We have become sons of peace for the sake of Jesus, who is our leader.”

~Origen Adamantius, Christian theologian (185-253 AD)

“In the beginning there is struggle and a lot of work for those who come near to God. But after that there is indescribable joy. It is just like building a fire: at first it is smoky and your eyes water, but later you get the desired result. Thus we ought to light the divine fire in ourselves with tears and effort.”

~Amma Syncletica, author and teacher (293-373 AD)

“The Christians... worship a man to this day – the distinguished personage who introduced this new cult, and was crucified on that account.... You see, these misguided creatures start with the general conviction that they are immortal for all time, which explains their contempt for death and self-devotion.... their lawgiver [taught] they are all brothers, from the moment that they are converted, and deny the gods of Greece, and worship the crucified sage, and live after his laws. All this they take on faith.”

~Lucian of Samosata, Greek author (120-180 AD)

“Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace. Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus, and a most mischievous superstition, thus checked for the moment, again broke out not only in Judaea, the first source of the evil, but even in Rome, where all things hideous and shameful from every part of the world find their center and become popular.”

~Tacitus, Roman historian (56-120 AD)

SERMON – “What Was Impossible Became Possible” – *Lindsay Whaley*

SERMON PASSAGE – *Acts 1:1-10 (NIV)*

¹In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach ²until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. ³After his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. ⁴On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. ⁵For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”

⁶Then they gathered around him and asked

him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?”

⁷He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

⁹After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

¹⁰They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them.