

HE ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN; ACTS 1:6-11 (Ed O'Leary)

INTRODUCTION.

HEAVY TEACHING SO FAR

- ▶▶ 10 sweeping & profound assertions
- ▶▶ Own personal reconciliation. ~~ Prior. ~~ Then Fact, ~~ means, ~ result, ~ and evidence.
- ▶▶ Heavy ~~ Two week break
- ▶▶ Today, ~ the ascension of Jesus.

NOW, ~ WE DON'T FOLLOW THE TRADITIONAL CHURCH CALENDAR HERE, ~ BUT THIS past Thursday ~ was Ascension Day. ⇨⇨ 40 days ~~ Appeared over 40 day period.

- ▶▶ So, ~ This past Thursday was Ascension Day. ~~ Reason for focus today.

THE ASCENSION OF JESUS ~ IS SIGNIFICANT ~ FOR A NUMBER OF REASONS.

- ▶▶ The ascension ~~ signaled the end of Jesus' earthly ministry, ~ 77
 - ▷▷ signified success in His earthly work, ~~ & marked ~ unveiling of his heavenly glory.

- ▶▶ He ascended ~ to send the Holy Spirit.

▷▷ Nevertheless, ~ I am telling you the truth. ~~ It is for your benefit that I go away, ~ because if I don't go away ~ the Counselor will not come to you. ~~ If I go, ~ I will send him to you.

↪↪ Significant ⇨⇨ But Jesus did ascend 11 1/14

▶▶ Jesus ascended ~ to prepare a place for believers. ⇨⇨ If I go and prepare a place . . .

▶▶ He ascended ~ to exercise his high priestly ministry. ⇨⇨ we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, ~ Heb. says.

▶▶ And Jesus' ~ literal, ~ physical ascension ~ symbolized ~ his exaltation by the Father.

▷▷ The One with whom the Father is well pleased ~ was received up in honor ~ and given a name above all names. ~~ Phil. 2:9-11 (CSB)

▷▷⁹ For this reason (result of work) ~ God highly exalted him ~ and gave him ~ the name that is above every name, ~~¹⁰ so that ~ at the name of Jesus ~ every knee will bow — in heaven and on earth and under the earth ~ [everywhere] —¹¹ and every tongue ~ will confess ~ that Jesus Christ is Lord, ~ to the glory of God the Father.

↪↪ Everyone ~ whether ~ in love and gratitude, ~ i.e., ~ believers & holy angels ~~ ¶¶

→→ or in submission and stark-naked terror, ~ i.e., ~ unbelievers and evil angels.

▶▶ So, ~ we see that Jesus' ascension ~ was no minor episode ~ within God's eternal plan of redemption.

OK, ~ LET'S EXPLORE THIS FURTHER, ~ BY LOOKING AT ACTS 1:6-11. ⇨⇨ Luke's Account.

VERSE 6a. ~~ SO WHEN THEY [APOSTLES AND JESUS] ~ HAD COME TOGETHER.

OBSERVE THAT JESUS' ASCENSION WAS PUBLIC. ~~ NOT SLIP AWAY UNNOTICED.

▶▶ Christianity ~ is not just some stories made up ~ that can't be verified. ⇨⇨ Reliable eyewitness testimony.

▶▶ If these were made-up stories, ~ they could have been easily refuted. ¶¶ 2/14

AS PAUL TOLD KING AGRIPPA, ~ "THIS HAS NOT BEEN DONE IN A CORNER." ~~ IOW, ~ not hidden away somewhere.

▶▶ The life, ~ death, ~ resurrection, ~ and ascension of Jesus ~ happened ~ where everyone could see them.

WRITING IN HIS SECOND EPISTLE ABOUT THE TRANSFIGURATION OF JESUS, ~ Peter wrote, ~ ¶¶

▶▶ For we did not follow cleverly devised myths ~ when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, ~ but we ~ [i.e., ~ he & James & John] ~ were eyewitnesses of his majesty. ~~ 2 Pet. 1:16

IN HIS PROLOGUE TO HIS FIRST EPISTLE, ~ JOHN GOES OUT OF HIS WAY TO DRIVE home the point ~ ¶¶

▶▶ that he & the other apostles were eyewitnesses ~ to Jesus' life and ministry.

▶▶ What was from the beginning, ~ what we have heard, ~ what we have seen with our eyes, ~ what we have observed and have touched with our hands, ~ concerning the word of life — that life was revealed, ~ and we have seen it ~ and we testify and declare to you ~ the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us — what we have seen and heard ~ we also declare to you. ⇨⇨ Out of his way to drive point home. (CSB) 1 Jn. 1:1-3a

IN 1 COR. 15, ~ PAUL GOES THROUGH A WHOLE LIST ~ OF EYEWITNESSES THAT SAW Jesus alive from the dead.

▶▶ And in this, ~ he makes an interesting statement. ~~ Foolish if not true.

▶▶ He says that Jesus ~ appeared to over five hundred brothers and sisters at one time; ~~ ~ [and here's the interesting statement] ~~ most of them are still alive.

▷▷ IOW, ~ if you don't believe me, ~ go ask. ⇨⇨ Again, ~ foolish if not true. ¶¶ 3/14

NO, ~ "THIS HAS NOT BEEN DONE IN A CORNER."

▶▶ Christian claims are public facts, ~~ dismissed or ignored by others ~ only ~ because of their bias.

JESUS' ASCENSION WAS A PUBLIC EVENT. ~~ NOT SLIP AWAY UNNOTICED.

IN VERSE 6b, ~ LUKE RECORDS A QUESTION THE APOSTLES HAD FOR JESUS.

"LORD, ~ WILL YOU AT THIS TIME RESTORE THE KINGDOM TO ISRAEL?"

▶▶ They knew Jesus was the Messiah, ~ and that he had risen from the dead.

▶▶ In his prologue to Acts, ~ Luke notes that, ~ after his resurrection, ~ Jesus ~ 77

▷▷ was seen by the eleven apostles over a forty-day period ~ and spoke about matters concerning the kingdom of God.

▶▶ The prophets told of this, ~ and nothing had been revealed to cancel the predictions.

▶▶ So their question ~ was a natural one. ~~ It was ~ neither inappropriate ~ nor illogical.

NOTICE ~ JESUS RESPONDS TO THEIR QUESTION ~ WITH A 2-PART ANSWER.

VERSES 7-8.

▶▶⁷ He said to them, ~ [1st part] ~ "it is not for you to know times or seasons ~ that the Father has fixed by his own authority. ~~ 77

▷▷ [2nd part] ~ ⁸ But you will receive power ~ when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, ~~ and you will be my witnesses ~ in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, ~ and to the end of the earth." 77 4/14

OBSERVE WHAT JESUS ~ DID NOT DO.

▶▶ Not rebuke them.

▶▶ And did not discourage question.

NOW OBSERVE WHAT JESUS ~ DID DO.

▶▶ In the first part of his response, ~ he ~ discouraged their speculation, ~ [verse 7](#).

▶▶ In the second part of his answer, ~ he ~ redirected their focus, ~ [verse 8](#).

1st, ~ HE DISCOURAGED THEIR SPECULATION. ~~ VERSE 7.

IT IS NOT FOR YOU TO KNOW TIMES OR SEASONS ~ [I.E., ~ DATES OR TIMES] ~ ¶¶

▶▶ that the Father has fixed by his own authority.

ANY ATTEMPT ~ TO COMPUTE ~ "DATES OR TIMES" ~ MUST BE PUT ASIDE.

▶▶ The Father alone ~ has the authority to set the date and time when Jesus will set up his kingdom.

▷▷ And he has done so.

▶▶ During his earthly life, ~ Jesus had denied such knowledge even for himself.

▶▶ My . . . , ~ it is not our business ~ to know ~ when Jesus is going to set up his kingdom.

▶▶ To put it into the popular vernacular, ~ it's above our pay grade. ¶¶ 5/14

▶▶ In Deut., ~ Moses wrote, ⇨⇨ The secret things ~ belong to the Lord our God, ~ but the things that are revealed ~ belong to us and to our children forever, ~ that we may do all the words of this law. ~ Deut. 29:29

▷▷ Want to know what one of those secret things is? ~ The "when" of the kingdom.

▷▷ But everything we need to know in order to live a godly life ~ has been revealed.

↪↪ His word ~ and the Holy Spirit.

▶▶ Since the time and date of when Jesus will set up his kingdom, ~ are in the Father's hands, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ and we, ~ believers, ~ are not allowed to possess such privileged information, ~ ¶¶

↪↪ we are in no position ~ to predict the time of the end.

→→ And the timing ~ should not concern us.

▶▶ How foolishly ~ this warning from Jesus ~ has been ignored across the centuries!

▷▷ Book from 1988.

NOTICE, ~ THE TIMETABLE IS FIXED.

▶▶ In this regard, ~ we can note what Paul said ~ when he addressed the Areopagus.

▷▷ He declared that God ~ has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; ~ and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead. (Acts 17)

▶▶ It's not like the Father is up on his throne, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ trying to figure out the best time to send Jesus back and set up the kingdom.

↪↪ No, ~ it's already on the schedule. ¶¶ 6/14

▶▶ And since God is unchanging and unchangeable, ~ there's no way it will be rescheduled or canceled.

▶▶ And Since God is sovereign, ~ his end-time plan cannot be thwarted.

OK, ~ IN THE FIRST PART OF HIS RESPONSE, ~ JESUS DISCOURAGED THEIR speculation.

IN THE 2nd PART OF HIS ANSWER, ~ JESUS REDIRECTED THEIR FOCUS, ~ VS. 8.

BUT YOU WILL RECEIVE POWER ~ when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, ~ and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, ~ and to the end of the earth.

▶▶ Jesus redirects their focus to their primary concern.

▶▶ And that is, ~ to be Jesus' witnesses.

▷▷ With its background in the courtroom, ~ "witness" implies the act of testifying.

▶▶ They would testify of ~ the earthly ministry, ~ death, ~ resurrection, ~ and ascension of Jesus.

▷▷ In brief, ~ the gospel.

↪↪ As eyewitnesses ~ they were in the perfect position to do so.

IN DUE COURSE ~ SECONDARY WITNESSES WOULD SPREAD THE GOOD NEWS.

▶▶ That would include you and me.

▷▷ And all those to whom Jesus refers ~ in his statement to Thomas.

↪↪ Have you believed because you have seen me? ~~ Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed. ⇔⇔ You and me. ↴↴ 7/14

▶▶ We, ~ you and I, ~ testify ~ to what we have heard and believed.

▶▶ And like the apostles, ~ 77

▷▷ instead of focusing on and speculating when Jesus will set up his kingdom, ~~ our primary concern ~ is to be spreading the gospel.

→→ Top priority: ~~ testify about the earthly ministry, ~ death, ~ resurrection, ~ and ascension of Jesus.

NOW, ~ I WOULD LIKE TO CALL YOUR ATTENTION TO THE WORDING IN VERSE 8.

▶▶ The order is extremely important.

▷▷ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, ~ and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, ~ and to the end of the earth.

▶▶ Witnessing comes after receiving power from the Holy Spirit.

▷▷ It was after the Holy Spirit filled the 120 in the upper room ~ we read that Peter went out and preached boldly. (Acts 2)

▶▶ Help from God ~ is vital ~ if we are to be effective witnesses for Jesus.

▶▶ Without the Spirit ~ there can be no effective witnessing for Jesus.

▷▷ We cannot do this under our own power. ⇔⇔ Not by might, ~ nor by power, ~ but by my Spirit, ~ says the Lord of hosts.

NOW NOTICE, ~ IN VERSE 8, ~ THE SCOPE OF THE WITNESSING: ~~~ IN JERUSALEM and in all Judea and Samaria, ~ and to the end of the earth.

▶▶ This arrangement ~ probably roughly corresponds geographically and culturally ⇔⇔ to one's home city, ⇔⇔ one's nation, ⇔⇔ and then foreign lands. 77 8/14

▶▶ And suggests the priority for our evangelism.

▶▶ It's great ~ that we support missionaries overseas. ⇨⇨ Like the Bracy's.

▷▷ But ~ we have a responsibility ~ to make sure ~ we are doing all we can ~ ↴↴

↳↳ to spread the gospel ~ first ~ in the community and then in the nation ~ in which we live.

▷▷ Means ~ first and foremost, ~ here in North Hartland & surrounding towns & areas.

OK, ~ TO SUMMARIZE WHAT THIS MEANS FOR US.

JESUS CALLS ON US TO PUT ASIDE ~ ALL SPECULATION ABOUT ~ "the when" ~ of his return.

▶▶ And exhorts us ~ to focus on making disciples.

THE WORDS OF JESUS HAD HARDLY BEEN SPOKEN ~ BEFORE THE APOSTLES WERE witnessing the Lord's being lifted toward heaven.

Verse 9. ~ And when he had said these things, ~ as they were looking on, ~ he was lifted up, ~ and a cloud took him out of their sight.

JESUS HAD ARRANGED IT ~ SO THAT HE WOULD ASCEND IN THE PRESENCE OF THE eleven apostles.

▶▶ And not when they were sleeping ~ or inattentive to what was occurring.

▶▶ But when they were engaged in a conversation with him that would fix their attention, ~ and even when they were looking at him. ↴↴ 9/14

HAD JESUS VANISHED SECRETLY, ~ OR HAD HE DISAPPEARED IN THE NIGHT, ~ ¶¶

▶▶ the apostles would probably have been confused ~ and not known what to think.

▶▶ And the question of where Jesus is now ~ would nag at the back of their minds throughout their witnessing.

▶▶ And how would they respond ~ to queries from people about Jesus' location.

▶▶ But ~ when they saw him leave them in this manner, ~ rising up as they were speaking to him and watching him, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ they could not doubt ~ that he had returned to his heavenly home.

CONSEQUENTLY, ~~ THEY COULD ~ CONFIDENTLY AND BOLDLY PROCLAIM ~ THAT Jesus ascended and was exalted by the Father.

▶▶ And we ~ can confidently believe their witness.

▶▶ Consequently, ~ we too ~ can confidently and boldly proclaim ~ that Jesus ascended into heaven.

▷▷ And is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.

NOW, ~ IT'S IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER ~ THAT JESUS' ASCENSION WAS A LITERAL, ~ bodily return to heaven.

▶▶ Just as he rose from the dead bodily, ~ he returned to his throne bodily.

▶▶ And it's important to understand ~ that he did not leave his humanity behind.

▶▶ Fully God and fully man in one Person and will be so forever. ¶¶ 10/14

BEFORE MOVING ON, ~ WE SHOULD POINT OUT ONE THING THAT JESUS' ASCENSION indicates.

▶▶ And i.e., ~ heaven is a real place.

▶▶ To say that it is a real place ~ does not mean ~ that we can therefore describe it adequately, ~ even with the help of various biblical symbols.

▶▶ And heaven will not be our final home.

▷▷ John: ~~ New heaven and a new earth. ~~ New Jerusalem.

↳↳ Final home. ~~ On new earth in a brand new universe.

OK, ~ BACK TO LUKE'S ACCOUNT OF THE ASCENSION, ~ ¶¶

SUDDENLY, ~ THE APOSTLES BECAME AWARE ~ THAT THERE WERE TWO ANGELS standing by them.

▶▶ Verse 10. ~~ And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ behold, ~ two men stood by them in white robes.

THE ANGELS THEN SPEAK TO THE APOSTLES, ~ VERSE 11.

THEY MAKE A TWO-FOLD STATEMENT.

▶▶ 1st, ~ they have a word of exhortation. ⇔⇔ And 2nd, ~ they have a great promise.

THE EXHORTATION.

▶▶ They say to them, ~ "Men of Galilee, ~ why do you stand looking into heaven?" ¶¶ 11/14

▶▶ This was probably a polite way of saying, ~ 77

▷▷ "Why are you still here looking up to heaven? ~ There's work to do. ~ 77

↳↳ You have a commission to fulfill. ~ Let's get on with it."

▶▶ A lesson for us here is this.

▷▷ We are not to be preoccupied with the end times.

▷▷ We are not to dwell on ~ who's who? ~ or what's what? ~ or when's when? ~ regarding the return of Jesus.

▶▶ Rather, ~ we are to be about our Father's business.

▷▷ The angels' message is for us as well.

▷▷ There's a commission to fulfill.

↳↳ We are to be making disciples of all nations.

→→ So let's get on with it.

↳↳ And leave the timing of Jesus' return ~ in our heavenly Father's hands.

THEN THE ANGELS GIVE A GREAT PROMISE.

▶▶ This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, ~ will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.

▷▷ I.e., bodily, ~ visibly, ~ and in the clouds.

▶▶ In Rev. 1:7a, ~ John writes ~ "Behold, ~ he is coming with the clouds, ~ and every eye will see him." 77 12/14

THE RETURN OF JESUS ~ IS A PROMINENT DOCTRINE IN THE SCRIPTURES.

- ▶▶ It's mentioned more than three hundred times in the New Testament.
- ▶▶ With entire chapters being given to the discussion of it ~ and even the majority of some books.
- ▶▶ There is no disputing the promise. ~~ Jesus is coming back.

THE RETURN OF CHRIST SHOULD BE A JOYOUS ANTICIPATION FOR BELIEVERS.

- ▶▶ Because Jesus will take us to be with him forever.
- ▷▷ And because of all else that's involved for us when he returns.
 - ↳↳ It will be an immensely joyous occasion for us.
- ▷▷ When we all get to heaven, ~ what a day of rejoicing that will be! ⇔⇔ When we all see Jesus, ~ We'll sing and shout the victory!

THE PROMISE OF THE RETURN OF OUR KING ~ TELLS US ~ THAT HISTORY IS NOT chaotic and going nowhere. ⇔⇔ Although

- ▶▶ No, ~ God is in control, ~ working out his plan, ~ and moving history toward a specific point: ~~ the return of Jesus.
- ▶▶ And recall once again ~ what we said in the past about [Heb. 1:3](#), ~ where it says that Jesus "upholds the universe by the word of his power."
- ▷▷ The Greek word for "upholds" means "holding ~ and carrying ~ from one place to another." ↴↴ 13/14

▷▷ What we are saying ~ is that Jesus ~ 77

↳↳ sustains the universe in its existence and operation, ~ 77

→→ and is carrying it forward, ~ or guiding it, ~ to its divinely appointed end.

▶▶ The day will come ~ 77

▷▷ when The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ,
~ and he shall reign forever and ever. ~~ Rev. 11:15.

CONCLUSION.

AMEN. ~~ COME, ~ LORD JESUS.

LET'S PRAY 14/14