

The Ascension of Jesus

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[0 : 0 0] We're going to sing again from Psalm 68, and this is from the Scottish Psalter, the tune is Grafenberg, Psalm 68. And we're going to sing from verse 7, Psalm 68, and at verse 7, verses 7 to 11, it's on page 302.

O God, what time thou didst go forth before thy people's face, and when through the great wilderness thy glorious marching was, then at God's presence shook the earth, then drops from heaven fell, this sign I shook before the Lord the God of Israel.

O God, thou to thine heritage didst send a plenteous rain, whereby thou, when it weary was, didst refresh again. Thy congregation then did make their habitation there, of thine own goodness for the poor, O God, thou didst prepare.

The Lord himself did give the word, the word abroad did spread. Great was the company of them, the same who published. Psalm 68, verses 7 to 11, the tune is Grafenberg, O God, what time thou didst go forth.

Amen. Amen.

[2 : 1 1] ■■■■ Psalm 68, verses 8 to 11, the overt puisque of them didst go by Gabriel, O God, what time thou card O God, what time thou didst go by Rafael?

Where my love where it weary was Distantly fresh again My congregation then did me Let the invitation there Of thy own goodness For the fruit O God, thou didst prepare The Lord himself did give the heart The word of wrong did spread Great was the company of them

The same who published it Let us read God's word now in the Acts of the Apostles in chapter 1 The Acts of the Apostles chapter 1 In the first book of Theophilus I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach Until the day when he was taken up After he had given commands through the Holy Spirit To the apostles whom he had chosen To them he presented himself alive After his suffering By many proofs Appearing to them during forty days And speaking about the kingdom of God And while staying with them

He ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem But to wait for the promise of the Father Which he said You heard from me For John baptized with water But you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit Not many days from now So when they had come together They asked him Lord Will you at this time Restore the kingdom to Israel He said to them It is not for you To know times or seasons That the Father has fixed By his own authority 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 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 And while they were gazing into heaven As he went Behold two men stood by them in white robes

And said Men of Galilee Why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus Who was taken up from you Into heaven Will come in the same way As you saw him go into heaven Then they returned to Jerusalem From the mount called Olivet Which is near Jerusalem A Sabbath day's journey away And when they had entered They went up to the upper room Where they were staying Peter and John and James and Andrew Philip and Thomas Bartholomew, Matthew, James The son of Alphaeus And Simon the zealot And Judas the son of James All these with one accord Were devoting themselves to prayer Together with the women And Mary the mother of Jesus And his brothers In those days Peter stood up Among the brothers The company of Persians Was in all about A hundred and twenty And said Brothers The scripture had to be fulfilled Which the Holy Spirit Spoke beforehand By the mouth of David

[6 : 47] Concerning Judas Who became a guide To those who arrested Jesus For he was numbered among us And was allotted his share In his ministry Now this man Bought a field With the reward Of his wickedness And falling headlong He burst open In the middle And all his bowels Gushed out And it became known To all the inhabitants Of Jerusalem So that the field Was called In their own language Akeldama That is the field of blood For it is written In the book of Psalms May his camp Become desolate And let there be no one To dwell in it And let another Take his office So one of the men Who have accompanied us During all the time That the Lord Jesus Went in and out among us Beginning from the baptism Of John Until the day When he was taken up From us One of these men Must become with us A witness to his resurrection And they put forward

To Joseph Called Barsapas Who was also called Justice And Matthias And they prayed And said You Lord Who know the hearts Of all Show which one Of these two You have chosen To take the place In this ministry And apostleship From which Judas Turned aside To go to his own place And they cast lots For them And the Lord Fell on Matthias And he was numbered With the eleven apostles Amen And may God bless to us This reading of his holy word We're going to sing From Sing Psalm Psalm number 22 Psalm 22 And verse 25 The tune is finished We're going to sing To the end of the psalm Psalm 22 Verse 25 You are the theme Of all my praise Within the great assembly Lord Before all those Who fear your name I will fulfill My solemn word

The poor will eat And will be filled And those who seek The Lord Will give a shout Of joyful praise To him O may your hearts Forever live The whole earth Will remember him And turn toward The Lord their God All peoples Will bow down to him The nation Of the world abroad Dominion to the Lord Belongs And over nations He is king The rich of all the earth Will feast And worship With an offering All those Whose destiny Is dust Will humbly Kneel Before his throne They cannot Keep themselves Alive For they depend On him alone Posterity Will serve the Lord And generations Still to come Will tell a people Yet unborn The righteous acts That he has done Psalm 22 From verse 25 To the end You are the theme Of all my praise Within the grace

I stand the Lord Before all those Who give your name I will fulfill My solemn word The poor will eat That will be filled And those who see The Lord will give A shout of joyful praise To him O may your heart For ever For ever The poor will Remember him

And turn towards The Lord their God All people's will And turn towards The Lord The Lord The nations Of the world The Lord Dominion To the Lord Belongs And over nations He is King The rich upon The earth Will feast And worship With an offering All those

[12 : 07] Whose destiny Is dust Will humbly kneel Before his throne They cannot keep Themselves alive For they depend On him Alone For he is And the Lord Austerity Will stand The Lord And generations Still to come Will tell The people Yet And For the righteous Act That he Has done

Let's turn to the chapter we read In Acts of the Apostles Chapter 1 And reading again at verse 6 Acts chapter 1 verse 6 So when they had Come together They asked him Lord will you at this time Restore the kingdom To Israel He said to them It is not for you To know times Or seasons That the father Has fixed By his own authority 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 ends Of the earth Now as we know This book The book of Acts Is an inspirational book That charts A development

In the growth Of the early church And of course It was a growth And development That took place In very hostile conditions And in the forty days In which our Lord Showed himself That period From the resurrection To the ascension It tells us That he taught His disciples Many things And they were in need Of much teaching Because As the New Testament Will show us They were slow learners Now that's not a criticism They were just as we are We are also Slow learners A very important part Of teaching Of all teaching Is reinforcing Truths That have already Been taught No teacher Will take For granted That the first time They teach anything That every pupil In front of them Is going to grasp What they're saying And that they're going To understand everything Very often In teaching

You have to Reinforce Over and over And over And over again Things that have already Been taught And that is certainly True also In the realms Of the gospel That we have to be Taught things Over and over And over again And I'm sure All of us here We will say And sometimes We have to confess Before the Lord Lord I am such A slow learner I am so Slow To learn I am so Slow To take on board Some of the truths That you are teaching And we often feel Very Downcast At how Slow we are To really take on board Some of the things That the Lord Is teaching us Well It was true for the disciples And of course The Lord had to teach them To teach them many things Now of course There were Kind of two main themes Just in this little part Here it is And that is In the

The kingdom And the coming Of the Holy Spirit And power But for the disciples There was this burning question The question that was always there When was the kingdom Going to be restored Will you That's what they're asking Will you at this time Restore the kingdom To Israel Jesus gives them A kind of a rebuke And he tells the disciples That's what we see In verse 6 Or verse 7 He said to them It is not for you To know times or seasons That the Father Has fixed By his own authority And The rebuke that Jesus Gives his disciples Is one that Really we have to take On board ourselves Because so often We are wanting to know So much About the future And I suppose That's part of the Part of the success Of fortune tellers And astrologers And all that

[17:09] There is an obsession In people's hearts And minds In wanting to know The future So many people I'm not talking about the church I'm just talking about People in general They always want to know What's my future The funny thing is They tend to want to know What's my future With regard to good things They don't want to know The future regarding Bad things At the end of the day Only the Lord Knows our future And there are many things With regard to the future That the Lord has In his wisdom Hidden from us And that's one of the things That Jesus is saying To his disciples here Look It's not for you To know What the secret things are That belong to the Lord And one of the secret things That belongs to the Lord Is just this very thing And so We have to Concern ourselves With what is revealed Now again There are many people Who will tell us And they will say They're studying the Bible

And maybe in books Like Daniel And Revelation And Ezekiel And all different things And they're saying As they study And put dates And events And they're giving An ongoing Rundown And pattern Of what exactly Is happening Now While it is good To follow The events Of the world And what is happening With the Bible In one hand We're not saying That that's Not a good thing Many of the Things given to us In the word Are too difficult For us to understand And we've always Got to be wary Of people Who are Giving clear definitions And saying Well this is this And that is that And that's the next thing And so on There are times And seasons That are a mystery To us And these things Belong to the Lord Alone When the end Will come The end times Nobody knows Jesus himself said That not even The angels in heaven Know when the end Is going to be So

The future Although it intrigues us And we want to know About the future Know what the Bible Speaks to us about It's about today It's not about tomorrow Jesus often gives us Warning And he says Stop thinking about tomorrow Sufficient unto the day Is the evil thereof Concern yourself With today You're not even Promised tomorrow And the one thing I would say With regard to the future What is important To know Even although We do not know The future How thankful we are That we know Who has control Of the future And that is The living and true God And the greatest way For us To face the future Is to put our hand In his hand To put our life Into his care To walk with him Because he Has a whole Future Under his control He governs everything From beginning To end

It is all under His authority All under his control And so that is Really where we have To take ourselves And to leave ourselves And of course This world Is very uncertain And we're very aware Of how things Can change in a moment And despite all The developments And all the great Advances in technology And of how We are moving At the most incredible rate The elements The natural elements Can bring society To a standstill You look at Last winter In New York There that Buzzling city At the very forefront Of every development In this world And just the snow It You find New York Grinding to a halt Just with snow And again you Go to Japan And you see there Again at the very forefront Of technology And you look at The likes of Just the Like tsunamis

And walls of water You look at Typhoons You look at hurricanes You look at these We are Before the forces Of nature Actually We're utterly helpless And sometimes We get ahead of ourselves And we think more Of ourselves And very quickly We can be shown Hey We're not in control We're not in charge We may think we are And quite often This world is given A reality check And shown actually We are just Almost like little Corks bobbing about In the ocean But we're not There is a pre-planned Determined Focus In the hand of God That is bringing everything To its ultimate conclusion So that is why It is so important That we fix our eyes Upon the Lord That we depend upon him And that we live In him So we find here That the disciples Are so concerned About the kingdom Now of course They were thinking With regard to the kingdom

[22 : 13] They were looking At the restoration Of the kingdom Of Israel It was one of the Great themes In fact even this morning As we're going through The gospel of John We saw how Jesus was almost Demilitarizing The situation When he came in On the little Cold The little donkey Because they were Seeing him As the king of Israel And Jesus is showing That his kingdom Is not one Of military prowess But that it is An altogether Different type Of kingdom So the disciples In keeping with All the sort of Jewish traditions Of the time Is that when the Messiah would come That he would Deliver them And that the kingdom The great kingdom Of Israel Would be restored They would once again Have their own Identity Their own national Pride They would be The people And so they're Asking Jesus Will you at this Time Restore the kingdom But Jesus

Is showing them That the kingdom Is spiritual In its character It's not the kind Of kingdom They think The kingdom of God Is spiritual In its character We live in Just now We live in The united kingdom And if somebody Says Can you show us The united kingdom You get out a map And you can show You can show In Scotland You can bring them To the western Islands And you can point To the particular Location But the kingdom Of God Is different You can't take out A world map And say Well See there That's the kingdom Of God Because the kingdom Of God Is spiritual It isn't Centred in one Particular place And that was One of the things That the disciples Hadn't understood Because Jesus Is showing them That the kingdom Of course Is tied in To the coming Of the Holy Spirit The Holy Spirit Was always Ministering and working But the Holy Spirit Was going to come In particular power

At Pentecost And it was through The great ministry Of the Holy Spirit That they were going To reach out And that the Gospel of Jesus Christ Was going to go Into all the nations At that time They were locked Into this Their own little thinking Israel Israel They weren't Seeing beyond It's very interesting That Jesus mentions In the spread Of the kingdom My witness In Jerusalem And in all Judea And Samaria Samaria Oh You remember How When they walked Through Samaria And when Jesus Met with a With a woman Of Samaria They were amazed In fact the woman Herself was amazed That Jesus spoke To her How is it that you Being a Jew Speak to me As a Samaritan They couldn't She couldn't Couldn't grasp it And Jesus is showing That when the Holy Spirit Comes there's going to be This development This growth This movement out And again Jesus is showing

The spiritual nature Of the kingdom So often when we Think of a kingdom We think in terms of Of power Of military power We think in terms Of resources Of economic growth Of natural resources That a kingdom has We think of Political power We think of its place Within the international Community We look on The growth of a kingdom In these ways But Jesus says No That's not the way My kingdom Is going to grow Again Sometimes you see Ideologies Or movements And they're They're movements Of violence In where they're Trying to conquer By violence You see in the Extreme form Of fundamental Islamic movement Like with Al-Qaeda Or what is happening In Syria and Iraq Where in extreme Forms there It is with the sword With intimidation By fear That they're trying To Trying to conquer

And rule And Jesus is showing It's not with Military power It is not taking Up of arms It is by the Holy Spirit And it is Individual It is personal And the amazing Thing is that It's not through Soldiers Because Jesus Tells them That the way it is It is to be Through them But you will Receive power When the Holy Spirit Has come upon you And you will be My witnesses That's How the gospel Is going to spread As Jesus Deals with a soul When you Came to faith In Jesus Christ You became You entered The kingdom The moment a person Is born again They enter The kingdom Of God And the moment You enter The kingdom Of God You become A witness To the kingdom And it is Through your witness And through the witness Of every believer That the kingdom

[27 : 16] Grows And develops And the beautiful Thing is that often You're not even aware Of that witness You're not even aware Sometimes Of how God Is using you That will be one of the Great discoveries On the great day Because it's very clear From the Bible That on that great day When everybody Is brought before The judge And remember that Passage in Matthew Chapter 25 And Jesus is saying When you did this And when you did that In my name And his people Are going to say When did we do this When did we do that And Jesus is going to say As much as you did it To one of these The least of my brethren You did it unto me So there are lots of things That we do That we're not aware That we are actually doing By faith to the Lord And for the Lord But this is all part Of the witness And I'm sure

That when you look back Tonight if you're a Christian You will be aware As you look back Over your life The influence That certain people Had to play In your life And sometimes The people Who had the greatest influence Were unaware That their life By what they were saying And what they were doing Was actually influencing You for good But that's the way it works So Jesus is saying That his people Are going to be witnesses In Throughout all the earth There's this gradual development So the kingdom Is not only spiritual But it's also International That it's Right throughout This whole world And that's one of the most The beautiful things About it Is that there are no There are no barriers There should never be a barrier Through age Or status Or race Or sex Or creed Or any of these things But that there's this Unifying

In the Lord Jesus Christ And so we find That this great Focus is placed here Upon the work Of God's people And Jesus said to them 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 ends of the earth Jesus had before Told them in In Mark That they were to preach The gospel to every creature In Matthew We're told to go and teach All nations So at this moment As Jesus is speaking To them in this way They would have been Their minds would have been I could just picture it They'd be running The mind Would be active And they'd be thinking We spent three years With Jesus We've seen him do this For three years We've heard him preach For three years We've listened to his teaching For three years

We've seen The way he operated Of how he His heart went out To people We've seen him Embrace The socially awkward Those who are ostracized The outcasts Those who are The very furthest out Parts of society That others would walk away from Who will pass by On the other side Jesus reached out He touched the lepers He engaged with people That no other religious people would And they're realizing At that moment This is the way it's to be This is Christianity And this is This is where its power Is experienced And so they were aware of this But the other side of that Was I'm sure they felt We're completely unable To do this I would well imagine That as Jesus is telling them You're going to You're going to be my witnesses But I'm going to go away I would imagine That there would be a

A kind of crisis Going on in their mind Because always They were relying on him He had always been with them And I'm sure They would feel At that moment Vulnerable and alone But you know my friends That's often how we feel But you know The great thing is They were never going to be On their own Never And neither are we But there are times We feel that we can't do it How often in the Christian life Do you say I can't do that The Christian life Is full of choices And it's full of challenges The easy thing is to say I can't do it So I'm not going to do it Well if we go down that road We can forget it That all the time We're going to be faced With choices and challenges And the Lord expects us To embrace the choices And challenges And to move forward Depending upon Part of the problem With the church And part of the problem

[32 : 20] When we break down the church As two individuals Is that far too often We try to do things On our own In our own strength And you know We're not going to manage It's the very same With temptation You cannot Fight temptation On your own We often do Are we successful?

No A hundred times Out of a hundred If you try and fight Temptation on your own You'll fail It is only Through the enabling power Of the Lord And we've got to We've got to be Leaning upon him And seeking him And seeking for his guidance And his strength And his help And that's the only way That we can witness And I'm sure In the very same way As so often I feel inhibited I feel I can't do You're dead right I can't But the Lord Is able To do in us And for us Far and beyond Anything that we could Ask or think If we all thought I can't do And we don't do Then nothing gets done But Jesus says Look All power is given And he is He is equipping His people With all the different gifts And all the necessary gifts For the growth And for the development Of the church

And so this is What we must be seeking This enabling And so we find then That he says 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 ends Of the earth Of course this was An amazing moment here Because Jesus was just about To be parted from them Of course that was Necessary He had told them Before it was necessary It was necessary Because he said I have to go And I'm going to send The comforter The Holy Spirit And again it was necessary That he was going to go Because he was going to heaven To make continual intercession For his people He was going to heaven To prepare a place Which of course He has done On the cross This is all part of it His humiliation His death His resurrection His ascension It's all part of

The preparation Of this way And then He's going to come again And take us To be With himself And so we have This amazing moment When Jesus As he is speaking To them We find 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 It wasn't that he Just disappeared It wasn't that he Like Was there And then he wasn't It was completely different To the way that Jesus arrived Into the room Remember when they were In the upper room Or when they were In the room After his death And he appeared He just It says And he appeared In their midst He just It's like He just arrived Well This moment Was not a disappearance It wasn't like He just Disappeared He physically Rose up Before them And they watched him They were They were looking

As he rose up And it wasn't like He disappeared Through a cloud In the way that You'll see a Plane or a helicopter Going and then It goes into the cloud He rose up It tells us And he was lifted up And a cloud Took him Out of their sight He was lifted up And of course This wasn't just An ordinary cloud We find this Is a cloud That is always Speaking of the Manifestation of The glory of God Like you have The cloud That led Israel Through the wilderness You have the The cloud At the dedication Of the temple You have the cloud On the mount Of transfiguration And here is Jesus Going up In Into the cloud And so as they're Gazing up into heaven That must have been One of the most Amazing moments Two men stood by them In white robes And said Men of Galilee Why do you stand Looking into heaven Well I'm quite sure If I had been there Or you had been there That's exactly What we would have been doing

[36 : 43] This Jesus Who was taken up From you Into heaven Will come in the same way As you saw him Go into heaven We didn't see The ascension Of Jesus But we might See the return Of Jesus I don't know The one thing Scripture tells us Is It's in such An hour As you think not That the son of man Will come And he will Just as he Ascended into heaven He will Descend From heaven When he ascended Into heaven Only Only his own people Could see him Doesn't tell us ever That anybody Bar his own Saw him After After he rose From the dead But when he returns Every eye Will see him There will be There won't be anybody Who won't

And you know On that moment There won't be one atheist Or one agnostic Or one infidel Or one person Who says There is no God Who is Jesus Christ They'll all see him And they'll all know him But there's going to be Two totally different reactions As we think Of the returning Jesus This is a question I want to leave with you How do you feel about it?

How do you honestly feel About the returning Jesus? If he returns tonight How do you feel about it? Are you able to say Like the church did At the end of Revelation Ah Even so Come Lord Jesus That's what the church said Why did they say that?

Because they were ready They were waiting They were longing That's That's the response That's the response Of the heart That's ready Or is it possible tonight You're saying Oh Oh no Don't come tonight Lord I'm not Ready Well it's time you wear And tonight Is the time to get ready Because Jesus is here Not tonight as judge But as saviour And he's inviting you To come And to receive him As your Lord And your saviour And all he's saying to you Is ask me Seek me And if you ask me And seek me You will find me That's his promise So tonight Will you ask This Jesus Who has ascended Who is alive Who is reigning Who is ruling But who is going To return Will you ask him Tonight To be your Lord And your God Let us pray Oh gracious

And ever blessed Lord As we come under Your word And as we reflect Upon things That have been And things That will be We pray that In everything Our focus Will be upon Jesus We give thanks For this gospel We give thanks Lord For being in a place Where the gospel is And although There are many Who treat it lightly And ignore it And despise it We give thanks Oh Lord That you have Drawn us under it And we pray Lord For those tonight Who don't think About it Oh Lord Touch their hearts For good So that there will be Many who will come Seeking the Lord Oh open the windows Of heaven Lord And pour yourself Down in blessing We need you Because we can't Do ourselves Watch over us And take us To our homes safely Bless us And keep us And shine your face Upon us Take away our sin

[40 : 33] In Jesus name Amen Our concluding Psalm is from The Scottish Psalter In the second version Of Psalm 145 And the tune is Walton Psalm 145 And the second version Of the Psalm And we're going to sing From verse 9 To verse 15 Four stanzas Good unto all men Is the Lord O'er all his works His mercy is Thy works all praise To thee afford Thy saints O Lord Thy name will bless The glory of thy kingdom Show shall they And of thy power tell That so men's sons His deeds may know His kingdom's grace That doth excel Thy kingdom Hath none end at all It doth through ages All remain The Lord upholdeth All that fall That cast down Raiseth up again The eyes of all things Lord Attend And on thee wait

That here do live And thou in season Jew does send Sufficient food Them to relieve Psalm 145 It's on page 444 From verse 9 To verse 15 Good unto all men Is the Lord For all his works His mercy is Thy works of praise To thee Of all my saints O Lord Thy name shall bless The glory of thy kingdom Show

Shall they adore Thy potassium Thy Dynasty Thy skins Thy kingdom sgrid God Butler Like kingdom Life Thy kingdom Thy kingdom CHOIR SINGS

Eyes of all things, Lord, attend, And only wait the tears to live, And love in season due does send Sufficient good than to reveal.

Now may the grace, mercy, and peace of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit rest and abide upon each one of you now and forevermore. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[44 : 25] Thank you.