

Looking at the Ascension

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[0 : 00] Chapter 1, we read the first 11 verses. Acts chapter 1, coming into that chapter at verse 1. Acts chapter 1, we read the first 11 verses.

To them he presented himself alive after his passion by many proofs, appearing to them during 40 days, and speaking of the kingdom of God.

And while staying with them, he charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which he said, You have heard from me.

For John baptized with water, but before many days you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit. 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 the times or seasons which the Father has fixed by his own authority, but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth.

[1 : 38] And when he had said this, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. And while they were gazing from 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 you saw him go into heaven.

Amen. May the Lord bless us. May the Lord bless you.

May the Lord bless you.

May the Lord bless you.

[3 : 45] The life and teaching of Jesus. But it's now expressed through you and me, the Christian church. The acts and the teachings of Jesus.

And the event which separates the Acts of the Apostles from the Gospel of Luke is the Ascension. And there are only two places where you get detailed treatment of it.

The first of these is at the very end of Luke's Gospel, verses 25 to 53. And the second is in this passage we're now looking at now.

So we come to the fact of the Ascension. The second occurrence is in verse 9.

And right at the end of Luke's Gospel, verse 10. And right at the end of Luke's Gospel we read, And he led them out as far as Bethany.

[4 : 52] And lifted up his hands, he blessed them. Well, he blessed them. He parted from them and was carried into heaven.

Now, one of the things you discover about the Gospel of Luke is that this is a work of pure research. The very beginning of the Gospel of Luke, Inasmuch as many have put it in hand to compile a narrative of the things which have been accomplished amongst us, It seemed good to me also, having traced out all things accurately for some time past, To write an orderly account for you, That you may know the truth concerning the things of which you have been informed.

So it's a work of pure research. Where does he get it all from? In verse 3 of Luke's Gospel, He says, It seems good to me also, Having traced out all things accurately for some time past, To write an accurate account for you.

So he's traced all this out, And he's traced it out, From those who were eyewitnesses, Or ministers of the word.

[6 : 24] The eyewitnesses were undoubtedly the Virgin Mary, Undoubtedly Peter, And at a later stage, Paul. And so he's written all about this.

And so he tells you in Luke's Gospel, chapter 3, verse 1, That in the 15th year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Now historians tell us today, That that was the year A.D. 29, And in that year,

Came the ministry of John the Baptist, Came the teaching of Jesus.

So, we come to this idea of the ascension. And when we come to it, And we think of it as being unique, And it is unique.

But there are precedents, Examples, In the Old Testament. The first example, Is the example of Enoch.

In Genesis 5, verse 24, We read this, That Enoch walked with God, And he was not, For God took him.

[7 : 45] In other words, Enoch had this close walk with God, Listened to his voice, Prayed to this God, And one day, He left this earth, And walked right into heaven.

He was not, For God took him. Now whether it was an ascension like that of Jesus, The scripture is silent, So we can't say.

However, There is a second one. And this is the case of Elijah, Who was carried into heaven, In a manner like that of Jesus. So we read in 2 Kings 2, verse 11, As they, That is, Elijah and Elisha, Went on and talked, Behold, A chariot of fire, And horses of fire, Separated the two of them. And Elijah went up by a whirlwind, Into heaven. Elijah, Elijah never saw death, Was transported by means of this chariot, Right into heaven itself.

So what Luke is saying is, This is exactly true, Of Jesus. True it is of Jesus, That he died, Was buried, And was risen on the third day, In accordance with the scripture.

[9 : 12] True it is, That following that, And his resurrection, He ascended, Into heaven itself. Now there are implications for this, For you and me.

One of these implications, Is found at the very end, Of Mark's gospel. So then the Lord Jesus, After he had spoken to them, Was taken up into heaven, I.e. the ascension, And sat down, At the right hand of God, And they, The disciples, The apostles, Went forth, And preached everywhere, While the Lord with them, And confirmed the message, By the signs, That attended it.

So this work of redemption, Carried out by Jesus, In his incarnation, And on his death on the cross, This is now finished.

This will never ever, Be repeated. It's finished, Once and for all. And he today, Is exalted, At God's right hand.

Think what Paul says, To the Philippians, God has highly exalted him, And bestowed on him, The name which is above every name, That at the name of Jesus, Every knee should bow in heaven, And on earth, And every under the earth, And every tongue confess, That Jesus Christ is Lord, To the glory of God the Father.

[10 : 55] This is the word that was on the lips, Of the New Testament believers. Jesus Christ is Lord, To God's own glory.

So we have the fact, Of the ascension. We come to the proof, Acts chapter 1 verse 8, You shall receive power, When the Holy Spirit has come upon you, And you shall be my witnesses, In Jerusalem, And in all Judea, And Samaria, To the end of the earth.

Now, what is being said here, In this verse, Is that the coming of the Spirit, For these early disciples, Is yet future.

It's not happened yet. And if you want to know why it's not happened, We go to John 7, Where Jesus is, In one of the feasts, Is preaching in the temple.

This he said about the Spirit, Which those who believe in him, Were to receive. For as yet, The Spirit had not been given, Because Jesus, Was not yet glorified.

[12 : 17] So the Spirit of God, Was not coming, In the fullness of its sense, Until Jesus, Was glorified, And exalted, To the right hand of God.

This can be regarded, As the proof, Of the ascension, For believers. Jesus said, In John's gospel, I tell you the truth, It is to your advantage, I go away.

For if I do not go away, The counselor, The Holy Spirit, Will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you.

The giving of the Spirit, To these early believers, Described in the upper room, By Jesus, Before he died, Is the proof, That he's not buried, In a tomb somewhere, He is at God's right hand.

To return to Acts chapter 1, Here, In his teaching, He refers them, To the ministry, Of John the Baptist.

[13 : 41] While staying with them, He charged them, Not to depart from Jerusalem, But to wait, For the promise of the Father, Which he said, You have heard from me.

For John baptized with water, But before many days, You shall be baptized, With the Holy Spirit. Now what had John said, About the coming, Of the Holy Spirit?

Quoting from Luke, In 3, Verse 16, John answered them all, That is, All the crowds, Who were coming, To his baptism, To see what was going on, Out there.

I baptize you with water, But he who is mightier than I, Is coming, The thong of whose sandals, I am not worthy to untie, He will baptize you, With the Holy Spirit, And with fire.

In other words, What John is saying, To those that were listening to him, Is that the Holy Spirit, Is the spirit, Of promise.

[14 : 55] In a passage, Which Daniel, Mentioned last week, Preached on last week, And I'm not adding to that, I'm just commenting on it. In him you also, Who have heard the word of truth, The gospel of your salvation, And have believed in him, Were sealed, With the Holy Spirit, Of promise.

Now this is a very interesting phrase, Because it actually occurs again, In Galatians 3, Where Paul is defending, Salvation by faith, And he says, It is through Christ, We've received, The promise, Of the spirit.

Now, When we go to the Ephesians, We find that, When Paul got there, In Acts 19, He found, Some disciples, Now when you, Examine the discussion, What they have to say, It's clear, It's clear that, What they are disciples of, Is the teaching, Of John the Baptist, And so, When, Paul talks to them, And speaks about, The coming of the Holy Spirit, They don't end about that.

So, Obviously, He interviews them again, And upon their confession of faith, He prays for them, And they receive this, Spirit of promise.

Now, When he met, The believers, As I've just said, Did you receive, The Holy Spirit, When you believed? Now, The answer to that question, Was in the negative, And it is because, They only knew, The baptism, Of John the Baptist.

[16 : 51] When Paul laid his hands upon them, The Holy Spirit came upon them, And they spoke with tongues, And prophesied. Now, That verse records, The historical situation, When the believers, At Ephesus, Made the coming, Of the Holy Spirit, Their practical, Experience.

And we are commanded, In the epistle to the Ephesians, Be filled, With the Spirit. That's something, We have to do.

And he tells you, How to do it. Singing to yourselves, Psalms and hymns, And spiritual songs, Always giving thanks, In the name of God the Father. These exercises, Are not just written there, For our entertainment.

They're written there, That you can act upon it. Now, I want to conclude, By thinking of something else. And that is, The hope, Of the ascension.

While they were gazing into heaven, As he went, 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.

[18 : 17] So, Not only is the ascension, The proof, That Jesus, Is not lying, In a tomb, But indeed, Has been exalted, To God's right hand, It's also, A great hope.

And when you look, Around the world today, That is, Something is totally absent, From what we can see, In the news, Ukraine, Russia, And all the rest.

This Jesus, Who was taken up with you, From you into heaven, Will come, In the same way, As you saw him go, Into heaven.

This is, A visible event. And so, Revelation 1, Verse 7, Right at the beginning, He is coming, He is coming with clouds, And every eye, Will see him, Everyone who pierced him, And all the tribes, Of the earth, Will cry, On account of him, Even so.

Amen. A public, Coming. Just as the first coming, Of Jesus was public, So this second coming, Will also be public, And what this, These verses in Acts 11, One, Tell us, They tell us, Where, This coming will be, The account of the ascension, There is no place actually named, But in the, The verse, The verse immediately following, We read, The journey to Jerusalem, From the mount called, Olive, Olive it, Which is near Jerusalem, A Sabbath day's journey away, So, The place of the ascension, Was the mount of olives, To that place, He will return, Publicly, Zechariah chapter 14, Verses 3,

[20 : 31] And 4, Then the Lord will go forth, And fight against those nations, As when he fights, On a day of battle, On that day, His feet shall stand, On the mount of olives, Which lies before Jerusalem, On the east, And the mount of olives, Shall be split in two, From east to west, By a very wide valley, Then the Lord you'll, God will come, And all his holy ones, With him.

Now this obscure scripture, Contained in Zechariah, Affirms, That Jesus Christ will come back, To the place, He left this world from, The mount of olives, It is a fact, That every pious Jew, Wants to be buried, On the mount of olives, And the late, Robert Maxwell, Although one could, Not really describe him, As a pious Jew, But we are told that, Religion was very important to him, Was buried, On the mount of olives, One day, He will return there, Now, It shouldn't be thought strange, That the prophets, Identify places, For example, It is the prophet Micah, Who identified Bethlehem, As the place, Of his incarnation, But you,

O Bethlehem, If Rasha, Who are to be little, Among the clans of Judah, From you, Shall he come forth, Who is to be a ruler, In Israel, Whose origin is from old, From ancient days, Now you will remember, That when, Jesus was born, The wise men, The astrologers, Came from the east, And came to Herod, And asked him, Where is he, Who is born, King of the Jews, And we are told, That Herod was troubled, And all the important people, In Jerusalem with him, And so he summoned, The scribes, Those people who know, The intimate details, Of the law, And asked them, Where is Christ to be born, And they came up, With the answer, In Bethlehem, For thus it is written, By the prophet, Now you see, Herod, Herod the great, He had,

A whole lot of, Psychological problems, Because, He was, Always suspicious, Of his sons, In case they wanted, To usurp him, From his throne, So in actual fact, To prevent this happening, He killed them, This got to the ears, Of Julius Caesar, Who once said, I would rather be, Herod's pig, Than his son, Because he always, Murdered them, And of course, That was the intention, That Herod had, You go to Bethlehem, And send me word, And I'll come and worship him, No he won't, He'll come and kill him, That's what he was about, So, The hope, He comes back, To the Mount of Olives, And when he comes back, To the Mount of Olives, War will cease,

There will be, Ultimate peace, There will be, Salvation, For all peoples, Hope, For the future, Paul also speaks, About this hope, For in this hope, We were saved, Not by the hope of salvation, Now hope that is seen, Is not hope, For who hopes, For what he sees, But if we hope, For what we do not see, We wait for it, With patience, Now it is a fact, That the early church, Thrived, On the hope, Of the second coming, Now if you read, One Corinthians seven, Paul there, Obviously thinks, At that stage, In his life, That this coming, Is imminent, He says three things, He's advising them, [25 : 14] What to do about marriage, In view, He says, Of the present, Distress, In view of the fact, That the time, Has grown, Very short, In view of the fact, That the outward form, Of this world, Is passing away, And so beyond, Beyond all of these things, He holds out to them, The hope, Of the Lord's coming, In Titus 2.13, Awaiting our blessed hope, The appearing of the glory, Of our great God, And Savior, Jesus Christ, Now this is the nature, Of the thing, But I want you, To understand this, That in the teaching, Of Jesus, Yes he does talk, About the signs, Of the end, But he talks more, About the need,

For readiness, You also, Must be ready, For the son of man, Is coming, At an hour, You do not expect, So when he talks, About the hope, The coming again, His own coming again, He makes clear, That we are to, Take it so seriously, We are to be, Ready for it, So this teaching, That we are to receive, The grace of God, And be ready, For the second coming, He also puts it, When he's talking to, The Corinthians again, In second Corinthians six, Working together, With him then, We entreat you, Not to accept, Except the grace of God, In vain, For he says, At the acceptable time, I have listened to you, And helped you, On the day of salvation,

Now, Is the accepted time, Now, Is the day of salvation, And so, In reminding ourselves, Of this great truth, Of the ascension, We can celebrate, Its fact, We can see, What it proves, And more importantly, We can appreciate, And take for ourselves, The hope, That it brings, Amen, In line with that, We will sing, Look ye saints, The sight is glorious, See the man of sorrows now, Gracious and eternal God, We thank you, That our Lord Jesus Christ, Has ascended to heaven itself, Whom then he will come, To judge the living, And the dead, And he gives us, That great hope,

We pray your blessing, On what has been said, And ask that you would help us, To retain it, Act on it, And preach it, For your name's sake, Amen, And preach it, OK, First reaction, Like, For your name's sake, To young people, In line with that, And he is righteous, And, And he is a greatühl, For your name's sake, See the Solutions, And he says, Kind of almost, And he is old,■■■■ the living, And now, So you know, Here to bill, And it has done, To figure it out, And this is a straight Colin, There's all, And this.

Same things, And then, It may bear, And this is two, I guess, Here.