

LESSON TWO

THE ASCENSION OF JESUS

TEXT: Acts, Chapter One.

A. INFALLIBLE PROOFS:

The Acts of the Apostles might have received a better name if the book had been called "The Acts of the Risen Christ." The Gospel of St. Luke gives the acts of Jesus up to the resurrection; the book of Acts simply continues the story but now it is the story of the Acts of the Risen and Ascended Jesus.

It is stated (verse 3) that Jesus showed Himself alive by many infallible proofs. At the beginning of His earthly ministry Jesus showed Himself as the CONQUEROR of Satan by decisively defeating the devil during the forty days of temptation in the wilderness. At the beginning of His heavenly ministry Jesus again showed Himself as the CONQUEROR of Satan by showing Himself ALIVE on the earth for the same period of time - FORTY days.

We should not attempt to list all of his appearances here, but we should note several of them:

To Mary Magdalene	- John 20:14-18.
To the women	- Matthew 28:8-10.
To Peter	- Luke 24:34.
To the Emmaus Disciples	- Luke 24:13-31.
To the Apostles	- Luke 24:36-43.
To the Apostles except Thomas	- John 20:19-24.
To the Apostles on the shores of Lake Galilee	- John 21:1-23.
To the Apostles on a mountain in Galilee	- Matthew 28:16-20.
To about five hundred at once	- I Corinthians 15:6.

The key word in Acts 1:3 is the word "alive." Jesus showed Himself ALIVE. What were some of the INFALLIBLE proofs that He was ALIVE?

1. He was seen.
2. He spoke to them concerning the Kingdom of God.
3. He walked with them.
4. He ate and drank with the disciples.
5. He blessed His disciples and ministered to them.
6. He restored Simon Peter.
7. He dried Mary's tears.

B. THE KINGDOM:

In Acts 1:6 we read the last question the disciples asked Jesus before His ascension: "*Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the Kingdom to Israel?*" This shows that their minds were still groping between the natural expectations and the spiritual realizations. They still did not understand all that Jesus had taught them concerning the Kingdom. Their hopes for a material,

political kingdom had been dashed to the ground at Calvary, but now they knew that all things were possible to their Lord who had conquered death. They still thought that Christ's greatest purpose would be to rid Israel of the Roman yoke and to establish David's earthly kingdom in power.

The student should especially note the difference in their understanding of the kingdom as soon as they received the Holy Ghost. Even being a witness of Calvary and the resurrection was not sufficient, they had to receive the Holy Ghost (I Corinthians 2:10-16).

C. **THE GREAT COMMISSION:**

In Acts 1:8 we have the commission given for the final time. It would seem that this was the theme of His conversations to His disciples during His forty day ministry after His resurrection. He gave the Commission at least upon three occasions, and it is quite probable that He spoke it many times that are not recorded. During this period of time it was His greatest concern that His disciples should understand clearly their marching orders.

The three occasions recorded are as follows:

1. At meat in Jerusalem - Mark 16:14-18; John 20:22-23.
2. On a mountain in Galilee - Matthew 28:18-20.
3. On the Mount of Olives before His Ascension - Luke 24:45-51; Acts 1:6-9.

The commission gave the Apostles their marching orders which were to be obeyed explicitly without hesitation nor questioning. It also gave them their authority to act on behalf of Jesus Christ. There were five commands included in the commission: Go; Preach; Teach; Baptize; Observe all things.

In Acts 1:8 there are THREE words we should note especially:

1. **POWER:** The Greek word here is the same root word from which we get the words "dynamite." It speaks of an explosive power which will cause the gospel message to literally explode around the world.
2. **WITNESSES:** The Greek word here is the same root word from which we get the English word, "martyr." To be a witness we must have the spirit of a martyr.
3. **BOTH:** This word simply means that the church was to witness in all the world. There was no choice given.

D. **THE PROMISE OF THE FATHER:**

The promise of the Father (verse 4) was, of course, the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

"Which ye have heard of me" refers back to the many promises Jesus gave them of the coming of the Comforter (John 14:16-26).

We should note that Jesus COMMANDED them to remain in Jerusalem until the Holy Ghost came. This shows that they were given no choice in the matter; we are still COMMANDED today - we must obey.

The early church had to tarry until (Luke 24:49). The reason for this was that the Day of Pentecost had not yet arrived. Today it is no longer necessary to tarry; anyone may receive at any time as soon as he meets the conditions.

The question sometimes is asked regarding whether the disciples tarried seven days. However, according to Leviticus 23:15, Pentecost came fifty days after the wave offering which corresponds to the resurrection. Therefore, they tarried in the Upper Room for a period of ten days.

E. THE PROMISE OF CHRIST'S RETURN:

In Acts 1:11 we have the promise of Christ's return given to the amazed disciples by two angels. This promise states clearly that "this same Jesus" shall come in "like manner." It tells us that Jesus will come: visibly, in bodily form, and in the clouds.

F. THE ASCENSION:

Four times it states that Jesus "was taken up." (Acts 1:2,9,11 & 22). In verse 10 we read that he went up. There is no question about the fact that Jesus ascended by His own power. Being "taken up" may refer to and suggest that Jesus was accompanied by a mighty host of angels. At any rate His ascension was glorious and it holds out the hope that the rapture of the church will also be glorious.

He ascended from the Mount of Olives which was about six-tenths of a mile (a Sabbath day's journey) east of Jerusalem. When Jesus returns to establish His Kingdom He will once again stand on the same mountain (Zechariah 14:4).

G. JUDAS ISCARIOT:

In this chapter we are given the horrible end of Judas who betrayed Jesus for thirty pieces of silver. This reveals the terrible remorse that Judas must have suffered before he committed suicide. Judas hanged himself, then falling with his bowels gushing out, is a true picture of the wages of sin.

H. THE TWELVE:

In Acts 1:13 is given the list of the eleven apostles. This list is given in three of the gospels as follows:

<u>MATTHEW</u>	<u>MARK</u>	<u>LUKE</u>	<u>ACTS</u>
Simon Peter	Simon Peter	Simon Peter	Peter
Andrew	James	Andrew	James
James	John	James	John
John	Andrew	John	Andrew
Philip	Philip	Philip	Philip
Bartholomew	Bartholomew	Bartholomew	Thomas
Thomas	Matthew	Matthew	Bartholomew
Matthew	Thomas	Thomas	Matthew
James, son of Alphaeus	James, son of Alphaeus	James, son of Alphaeus	James, son of Alphaeus
Thaddaeus	Thaddaeus	Simon, the Zealot	Simon Zealotes
Simon, the Cananaean	Simon, the Cananaean	Judas, son of James	Judas-brother of James
Judas Iscariot	Judas Iscariot	Judas Iscariot	

When Judas fell it left only eleven apostles and it was necessary to appoint a man to take his place. The early church nominated two candidates for the office, Joseph called Barsabbas and Matthias. Why were only two men considered? Undoubtedly, the reason for this was that they were the only two present who met the qualifications necessary:

1. Must have been a disciple of our Lord from the very beginning of His ministry;
2. Must have been a witness of Christ's resurrection.

They placed the two names in an urn and the first name which fell from the urn was taken to be the Lord's Choice. After that Matthias was numbered as one of the twelve and will be included in the fulfillment of such promises as Matthew 19:28 and Revelation 21:14.

LESSON TWO

SELF HELP TEST

A. What is the Great Commission?

B. Name the three occasions recorded that the commission was given.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

C. Give the FIVE commands included in the commission.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

D. Name the TWELVE APOSTLES.

E. What were the two qualifications necessary for apostleship?

1. _____
2. _____

F. Why was the choice limited to just Barsabbas and Matthias?

G. Name at least FOUR of the INFALLIBLE PROOFS of the resurrection.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____