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The Ascension of Jesus

There are several references in the New Testament regarding the ascension of Jesus to Heaven after His resurrection. We are told that He spent 40 days on earth instructing the Apostles before He was taken up. So the following is a short list of some of the references of that momentous event. What a day that was when Jesus was taken up! Jesus Himself spoke of it as a marvel when He challenged some of His followers in John six, "What then, if you would see the Son of man ascending up where He was before?"

THE ASCENSION OF JESUS IN MARK

The first ascension story we note is in Mark, "So then the Lord Jesus, after He had spoken unto them, was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word by the signs that followed." Amen.

When the Lord Jesus Christ ascended into Heaven and sat down at the right hand of God, His work continued on earth as the Apostles went forth and preached the gospel. But Jesus was more than a passive observer of the activity of the Apostles as they preached the Word. Mark tells us that He worked with the Apostles from Heaven confirming the Word by the signs that followed.

The signs that He gave them were casting out demons, speaking in new tongues, taking up serpents, and immunity from drinking poison. The speaking in tongues were fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost when the Apostles were heard by sixteen different tongues. Many instances of casting out demons are mentioned in the Book of Acts, and while no example of immunity from poison is mentioned, we do have one example of Paul taking up a poisonous serpent and suffering no ill effects from snakebite.

The Lord confirmed the Word by the working of these signs. Although we do not need to confirm the Word today, since it has already been confirmed there is no need for these miracles today as worked through the hands of men.

Some today may not agree, but it seems they are selec-

tive in the signs given the Apostles they want to duplicate. I know of some who think they can speak in different tongues as they did on the Day of Pentecost, but not many try their hand at taking up serpents.

I heard a song one time that told of a man who attended a snake-handling service. As they passed the rattlesnake from person to person this particular man got nervous and inquired, "Where is the back door?" He was informed there was none. He said, "Reckon where would they want one?"

However the Lord is still busy today working with those who preach the Word as found in the Book of Acts. In His providence, Jesus brings together both the preacher and audience to hear about the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord and the response that He requires, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. Repent ye and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit. And they went down into the water both Philip and the Eunuch and he baptized him. Many of the Corinthians hearing believed and were baptized. Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins. And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes and was baptized he and all his household straight way." The emphasis on the ascension in Mark is on evangelism.

THE ASCENSION OF JESUS IN LUKE

The account of the ascension according to Luke tells us, "And He led them out until they were over against Bethany: and He lifted up His hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while He blessed them, He parted from them, and was carried up into heaven. And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: and were continually in the temple, blessing God." The emphasis on the ascension of Jesus according to Luke seems to be more on the personal worship of the Apostles. They worshiped Him and were continually in the temple blessing God.

Today we need to worship in the temple. We do have a temple. Paul speaks of that temple when he says, "Know ye not that your body is the temple of God therefore glorify God in your body." Our worship in the temple is a day-

by-day experience of glorifying God in the life-style of the Christian. Jesus said, "Ye are the light of the world; a city set on a hill cannot be hid." The Christian by his life should be just as conspicuous as a light on a hill. Our worship also includes the gathering of the members of the local congregation together according to Acts 20:7, "And upon the first day of the week when we were gathered together to break bread." Our observance of the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week is a continual reminder to the world that Jesus died on the cross, was buried, ascended and is coming again.

Then again the emphasis of worship on the Lord's Day is a challenge to any serious-minded follower of the Lamb according to Hebrews chapter ten. There it is stated, "Not forsaking our own assembling together, as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another; and so much the more as you see the day drawing nigh."

And then this somber warning to those who misuse the day of worship, "If we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment of fire that shall devour the adversaries." According to that statement, a person who deliberately avoids the worship service is an adversary of God.

Furthermore the warning is even more disturbing when the inspired Word states, "You have trodden underfoot the Son of God and counted the blood of the covenant wherewith you have been sanctified an unholy thing;" and then beyond that it is said, "You have done despite to the Spirit of grace." Listen again to that awful pronouncement, "Adversary of God—trodden underfoot the Son of God—counted the blood of the covenant an unholy thing—done despite to the Spirit of grace."

This warning is emphasized and in addition to all this is the warning, "As ye see the day drawing nigh. The Christ who ascended is coming again and He Himself has said, in an hour when ye think not the Son of man cometh." And if that is not enough to light your fire finally there is the awful statement, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

THE ASCENSION OF JESUS IN ACTS

In the ascension of Jesus according to the Book of Acts the Lord was on the Mount of Olives with the Apostles. He had just told them, "...would be His witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. And when He had said these things as they were looking, He was taken up and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they were looking steadfastly into heaven as He went, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; who also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye looking into heaven? This Jesus who is received up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye beheld Him going into heaven."

In this account of the ascension of Jesus, it is emphasized that this same Jesus will return in like manner as He was seen going into Heaven. The Second Coming is predicted in this account of the ascension.

One day He will come in like manner as He was received up into Heaven was given by the Lord Himself when He told Caiaphas at His trial, "Henceforth ye shall

see the Son of man coming sitting at the right hand of power and coming on the clouds of Heaven. He shall come in like manner as He was received up into Heaven."

Another is what John said in the first chapter of Revelation, "Behold, He cometh with the clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they that pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth shall mourn over Him."

Not only will Caiaphas see Him, but also every eye shall see Him all at the same time. Those who crucified Him or rejected His blood sacrifice will mourn at the sight of the victorious Christ coming in the clouds of Heaven. He shall come in like manner as ye beheld Him going into Heaven.

Another statement about His coming in like manner as He was received up into Heaven is in First Thessalonians, "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we that are left alive unto His coming shall together be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." He shall come in like manner as ye beheld Him going into Heaven.

Then another reference that informs us that He will come in like manner as He ascended into Heaven is in Second Thessalonians when Paul speaks of the revelation of the Lord Jesus from Heaven with the angels of His power in flaming fire, rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that have not obeyed the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Notice that Paul tells of angels in flaming fire in the Lord's return. That reminds us of the translation of Elijah. He was taken up in a chariot of fire. The chariot of fire must have been a company of angels that carried him up. In Hebrews chapter one, we learn, "He maketh his angels winds and His ministers a flame of fire." The angel that appeared to Gideon ascended back to heaven in a flame of fire. Jesus did not need a fiery chariot to take Him up to Heaven; He ascended under His own power, but when He comes again the angels will return with Him in flaming fire. He shall come in like manner as ye beheld Him going into Heaven.

Then this statement of encouragement for the Christian as Mark records these words of Jesus regarding His coming in like manner as He was received up into Heaven, "And then shall they see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. And then shall He send forth His angels, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven." He shall come in like manner as ye beheld Him going into Heaven.

THE NARROW GATE

And then there was one who asked, "Lord are there few that shall be saved?" Jesus ignored the question but did say: "Strive to enter in through the narrow door: for many shall seek to enter in and shall not be able." It appears that some are trying to carry too much baggage through the narrow door and like at the airport, when some try to go through security check, the buzzer sounds and an examination of their baggage reveals they are trying to carry their unrepentant sins into Heaven with them. Many

will argue, "We ate and drank in Thy presence, and Thou didst teach in our streets." Is that not true with many today? We eat and drink the Lord's Supper in His presence. We hear the teaching of Jesus and yet something is lacking and He shall say, "I know not whence ye are; depart from Me all ye workers of iniquity." Evidently, something more is required for being a Christian than having a speaking acquaintance with the Holy Spirit and a familiarity with Jesus.

*The easy roads are crowded and the level roads are jammed
The pleasant little rivers with the drifting folk are crammed.
But off yonder where it's rocky where you get the better view
You will find the ranks are thinning with the never wavering few.
Where the goings smooth and pleasant you will always find the throng
For the many mores the pity seem to like to drift along
But the steepes that call for courage and the task that's hard to do
In the end results in glory for the never wavering few.*

- Author unknown

And this is the message that needs to be preached as we journey on to the New Jerusalem. An Excerpt from Ed Bousman's Sermon.

A Church of Christ evangelist of many years ago wrote a gospel song that tells about the ascension of Jesus. The lyrics of one verse tells us, "At His feet on old Olivet's Hill they say, Cloud chariots halted, took Christ away; Then the angels came and to wondering disciples said, He'll come and earth and sea shall yield up their dead. I am so happy in Jesus, captivity's captor is He; angels rejoice when a soul's saved, some day we like Him shall be. Sorrow and joy have the same Lord, valley of shadows shall sing; death has its life, its door opens in heaven eternally, Christ is King."

LETTERS

Thank you very much for all that you do. The studies that you send have truly helped me and I feel closer to the Lord than ever before. I can honestly say that even though I am locked up, I am free. Jesus has not only given me my freedom (forgiveness), but he has promised me a place in heaven. He has changed my life, to where I am now walking in the light. That light gets brighter with each passing day. Thank you Jesus! God bless you and your ministry.

William Buster Cole State Jail, Bonham, TX

Mr. Bousman,

What a wonderful pleasure it was to catch your broadcast on 1170 am out of Wheeling WV the other night. I would like to request a copy of your sermon written involving one of the topics "How Be It." I would love to read and study it along with sharing it with a few friends. Dad is finally home after 88 years, praise God! Please pray for my family especially my 83 year old mother, Betty. You see we just lost my dad recently and it is really hard on my mother; they were married 57 years. Also as you see, I am in jail until August 2016. Any other writings you feel may help would be greatly appreciated.

In His service, Timothy in St. Clairsville, OH



Dear Naomi,

I am writing this letter to thank the Ed Bousman Ministry for the Bible and the Studies that you sent me when I was in jail. Well I'm no longer locked up and I'm very thankful that our heavenly father has helped me through my struggles in life. I've learned to let go and let God He is my light in life and I know that he will lead me on a good path so that I can do the things that please Him and not myself. God has given me so much understanding and now I see life in a whole new meaning. Please keep me and my family in prayer if there are any more Studies, please send me more. Thanks for the monthly newsletters. I wish I could thank you personally. May God continue to bless your ministry.

Anthony from Elgin, TX

Dear brother in Christ,

I was just talking with a new Christian brother that told me about your wonderful program you have for providing indigent prisoners with Bibles. What a blessing it would be if I could receive an NIV giant print Bible. I'm unable to see any smaller print because of a serious eye disorder. If an NIV is not available any KJV would be fine. Thank you so much for what you are doing to help spread His word to people in need.

Sincerely, Robert; Ramsey I unit, Rosharon, TX

Thank you for these wonderful Bible Studies. They are illuminated timeless Bible truths on and in my soul. Thanks Bousman Evangelistic Assn. My soul is and will be eternally grateful.

Chris from Wrightsville, AR

My Father, Charles is pastor of Evergreen Church in Springdale, AR and I would like for you to send him a newsletter. Chris

Hello,

I'm writing cause I have four years left on my sentence but I am eligible for Judicial Release and I ask if your church would pray for my family? I live in Peebles, OH and once I'm released I would like very much to attend the services there in the Church of Christ. I do thank you for these Bible Studies cause they've really gotten me close to the Lord, and if you knew my past life you would be absolutely amazed by how much I've changed! I thank you sir for your time, and hope to hear from you soon. God bless you and the GIJAPA ministry. Please pray for my three daughters, age 10, 12, 15.

Sincerely, Jimmy in the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction - London Correctional Institution, London, OH

Dear Mrs. Naomi,

I pray that this letter reaches you in well respected hands in the name of Jesus. Yes, I am Mark P. writing because I was interested in Mr. Bousman's Bible Study lessons a friend in here showed me the lessons and went over - I enjoyed the lessons. I want to know if I could start on some lessons so I could get closer to my Father in Heaven. I love to read the Word and I am very interested in the Studies to strengthen my faith. Could I please have a Bible dictionary also because there are some words I don't

understand. God bless you Mrs. Naomi! I also need a KJV of the Bible too.

To Naomi,

My name is Jesus Jimenez. I'm an inmate in Travis County Jail, Austin, TX. I just want to better myself in life and for my family I have five kids - four girls and one boy. I want to be a better father to them and show them the right way to live. Unlike me, I grew up in a bad place in Austin, TX. I never finished school. I had to take care of my sister and my mom. I grew up in a fast life but we found God in our life. I just want to ask you if I can have a KJV Bible so I can show my kids the right way to live and walk the right path in life so we can be a family of God. I want my family to see me and my wife can come as one for God and show the kids the way to live instead of the wrong way. God bless and thanks again.

Dear Naomi,

Our brothers and sisters at the Church of Christ would like to thank you for your continued service spreading God's word. In recent years, our small church has suffered the loss of several members and many of our members have retired from working. The Church is still going strong, but we are not receiving the financial support that we once were; because of this we will no longer be able to send financial support. We will continue to pray for the continuation of Ed's program - GIJAPA.

In Christian love a small church in Virginia

I get letters like this every day, and I always stop and ask God's blessings on these that have stopped their support and bless them. When one stops it seems that God always raises up another one to replace that one we've lost. I know this work is in God's hands as it has always been for the past 54 years; and He will be the one to decide when it is no more; not any of us. Pray daily for GIJAPA that through you God will continue to provide our every need according to His riches in Christ Jesus. We need the Lord like we've never needed Him before and GIJAPA is one way to spread

the gospel throughout the world!

Thank you and God bless. Naomi

WEAK AND SICKLY

Communion Meditation

Not many families eat together anymore, but the few of us who do and some of the older ones who remember will understand when I refer to that quaint custom when families used to sit down together to eat something called supper.

Now suppose on that far off day that used to be; some member of the family did not eat any supper. The rest might suppose he was just not hungry. But if it happened day after day they would reach the conclusion that he must be sick. His body begins to waste away and they are saddened to learn he is anorexic.

Now if a physically well Christian misses the Lord's Supper one time in most cases no one is disturbed. If fact, he may not even be missed. If he misses week after week or comes to the table once in a while the obvious conclusion has to be, he is sick. He may regard himself as a well-fed Christian, but He has become an anorexic Christian. He is sick of the Lord's Supper, sick of the Lord's word, and sick of the Lord's people.

Paul comments on this situation in I Corinthians 11:30, "For this cause many among you are weak and sickly and not a few sleep." The question could be asked, "Does Paul mean they get physically sick and fall asleep if they are indifferent to the Lord's Supper, or does he mean they are spiritually sick and spiritually asleep?"

My personal view is, what difference does it make? To abuse the Lord's Supper and get sick physically and fall asleep because of it, would be one of the worst ways to die that I can think of. To be spiritually sick and fall asleep spiritually and die is no improvement.

There is one bright spot in the question. Paul did not say all that are physically sick or spiritually sick would die. He said, "Not a few sleep." A great many will die or fall asleep. There are a few who will wake up before it is too late. EB



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