

“The Beginning to the End” | Rev. Tim Frickenschmidt | May 16, 2021

Old Testament Reading: [Daniel 7:9-14](#)

“As I looked, thrones were placed, and the Ancient of Days took his seat; his clothing was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames; its wheels were burning fire. 10 A stream of fire issued and came out from before him; a thousand thousands served him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him; the court sat in judgment, and the books were opened.

11 “I looked then because of the sound of the great words that the horn was speaking. And as I looked, the beast was killed, and its body destroyed and given over to be burned with fire. 12 As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, but their lives were prolonged for a season and a time.

13 “I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. 14 And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.”

Reading from the Acts of the Apostles: [Acts 1:6-11, 28:28-31](#)

So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” 7 He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. 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.” 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. 10 And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, 11 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.”

28:28 “Therefore let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will listen.”

30 He lived there two whole years at his own expense, and welcomed all who came to him, 31 proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance.

Introduction

Acts’ main message is the message of the Ascension: Jesus is the world’s rightful Lord. We must overcome some common errors and return to this message so we can boldly and without hindrance seek God’s kingdom.

Background

1. **Our Errors**

- a. We mistake heaven (the realm of God) for “the heavens” (part of the material world). Jesus ascended to God’s realm by God’s power; the cloud in Acts 1:9 is God’s presence ([Exodus 13:21](#), [Mark 9:7](#)).
- b. We err in reading the text as a deist would, thinking God is distant and has no demands. Jesus calls his disciples friends and lays down his life for them ([John 15:13-15](#)). He has full access to God’s power for us. We need not fear, because Jesus has gone to God’s realm by God’s power for us.

2. **The Original Readers**

- a. The original readers would have thought of the book of Daniel. The one dwelling in heaven rules the earth ([Daniel 3:25, 7:13](#)).
- b. Roman readers would have thought much the same. They worshiped Caesar as God. Jesus’ ascension makes him Caesar’s rival.
- c. Jesus’ ascension reveals his divinity. Jesus is the world’s rightful Lord.

3. **The Last Word**

- a. Jesus’ disciples receive power to be his witnesses. Jesus’ answer to their question of whether he would restore the kingdom is yes, but not in the way they imagine ([Acts 1:6](#)).
- b. Jesus establishes the kingdom of God on earth through his faithful people: diverse Christians willingly sacrifice, serve, and suffer. The church grows; Jesus is unhindered ([Acts 28:28-31](#)).
- c. We must be bold in faith to announce the kingdom of God, watch the kingdom of God come in power, and risk the consequences.

Discuss

1. Who or what is supreme in your life? Whom or what do you celebrate? Whom or what do you fear? For whom or what would you die? How can we focus on God as supreme?
2. What should our expectation be in this life if Jesus really is king?
3. What does it look like for God to rescue and redeem the world through his people whom he calls witnesses?
4. What happens to Jesus’ witnesses in Acts?

Conclusion/Application

We make errors while reading of the Ascension: we mistake heaven for the heavens, and we think as deists. To correct these errors, we remind ourselves that heaven is the realm of God, and Jesus’ ascension means he has gone to God’s space by God’s power for us. Therefore, we are bold to announce the kingdom of God, watch his kingdom come, and risk the consequences of faith. How we live displays who we believe actually rules.

Prayer

Heavenly Father,
Thank you for sending your son, and thank you for his ascension and coming return. Please give us boldness to announce your kingdom, watch your kingdom come, and risk the consequences of living and working for your kingdom. Let us serve you as the one who demands our allegiance and submission. Let us honor Jesus as the world’s rightful Lord and look forward to his return in our speech, thoughts, action, and worship.

Gospel Reading: [Luke 24:44-53](#)

Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." 45 Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, 46 and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, 47 and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. 48 You are witnesses of these things. 49 And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."

50 And he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them. 51 While he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven. 52 And they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, 53 and were continually in the temple blessing God.