

Jesus - A King Worth Following

Acts 1:9-14

Taken up / Cloud / Heaven

Heaven and earth - two halves of God's created world.

Heaven - God's space Earth - Our space

Heaven and earth are two interlocking spheres of God's reality.

Our final destination, as children of God, is not heaven.

Before Jesus' return, heaven is a temporary home from this present life, but our ultimate destination is the new heaven and the new earth.

vs. 10, two men in white clothes (Angels)

Resurrection

Luke 24:4-9 While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men stood by them in dazzling clothes. **5** So the women were terrified and bowed down to the ground. "Why are you looking for the living among the dead?" asked the men. **6** "He is not here, but he has risen! Remember how he spoke to you when he was still in Galilee, **7** saying, 'It is necessary that the Son of Man be betrayed into the hands of sinful men, be crucified, and rise on the third day?'" **8** And they remembered his words. **9** Returning from the tomb, they reported all these things to the Eleven and to all the rest.

Ascension (Acts 1:10-12)

- Two men - description of clothing
- *Question*: Why are you looking for the living among the dead? / Why do you stand looking up into heaven?
- *Explanation*: He is not here, but he has risen! / Jesus has been taken from you into heaven, but will return!
- Return to Jerusalem

Cloud - clouds were often present when speaking of a deity. It was common to describe deities hiding in the mist.

What connections are the original audience making? Why did Luke point out the cloud?

Exodus 13:21-22 The Lord went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to lead them on their way during the day and in a pillar of fire to give them light at night, so that they could travel day or night. **22** The pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night never left its place in front of the people.

Exodus 40:34-35 The cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. **35** Moses was unable to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud rested on it, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.

Luke 9:34 While he was saying this, a cloud appeared and overshadowed them. They became afraid as they entered the cloud. **35** Then a voice came from the cloud, saying, "This is my Son, the Chosen One; listen to him!" **36** After the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. They kept silent, and at that time told no one what they had seen. (Transfiguration)

"A human figure, who had suffered at the hands of the evil powers of the world now being exalted into the very presence of God himself, there to receive kingly power." ~ NT Wright

Is this real time fulfillment of Daniel's vision? How could anyone grasp the mysteries of God? Luke seems to be pointing his readers to the unveiling of God's salvation plan.

Daniel 7:13-14 I continued watching in the night visions, and suddenly one like a son of man was coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was escorted before him. **14** He was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, so that those of every people, nation, and language should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will not be destroyed.

We have already been given three promises in **vs. 4-11**.

Holy Spirit (vs. 5)	Happens - 2:4
Witness beyond Judea (vs. 8)	Takes place in Acts and continues today.
Jesus returns (vs. 11)	Not yet, but certain.

He will return!

Luke 21:25-27 “Then there will be signs in the sun, moon, and stars; and there will be anguish on the earth among nations bewildered by the roaring of the sea and the waves. **26** People will faint from fear and expectation of the things that are coming on the world, because the powers of the heavens will be shaken. **27** Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

Zechariah 14:3-5 Then the Lord will go out to fight against those nations as he fights on a day of battle. **4** On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east. The Mount of Olives will be split in half from east to west, forming a huge valley, so that half the mountain will move to the north and half to the south. **5** You will flee by my mountain valley, for the valley of the mountains will extend to Azal. You will flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of King Uzziah of Judah. Then the Lord my God will come and all the holy ones with him.

How does all of this stack up to the Greco-Roman world?

Luke is making a GIANT and direct point!

Jesus conquered death. He is really alive. Jesus is embodied in his transformed resurrected body.

Jesus is the true and rightful King.

He is greater than any Roman Emperor.

Any earthly ruler is an inadequate and flawed substitute.

vs. 12-14, Continually united in prayer

They listen to Jesus, gather together, and process through prayer.

Men and women who are Jesus people, deeply informed by faith, diligent in studying scripture, come together for worship and prayer.

Question: Is the gathering of God’s people important to you? Do you make it a priority in the rhythm of your life? Who can you encourage to join you in this necessity?

Prayer -> a small glimpse of heaven and earth coming together. Prayer moves us to take a glimpse and share in the life of heaven, where Jesus is.

- Prayer is an important reality in the story of Acts. Prayer is present in almost every important turning point of God’s redemptive actions.
- Very ordinary people with complex and difficult lives continuing to tether their lives to Jesus (their Savior) through prayer.
- Prayer bridges both dimensions of heaven and earth.

The resurrection, ascension, and the coming of the Holy Spirit has changed everything.

Jesus is enthroned and we are now the temple (**1 Corinthians 3:16**).

- We are the heralds (witnesses) of the king.

Why do we gather as the people of God?

- We gather to pray and worship, celebrating the unity that comes through the filling of the Spirit.
- Communion invites us to participate in the sharing of life with one another and reminds us of our allegiance (abiding).
- All of these things energize our *life of heaven* on earth!

All of this is absolutely essential because there are a lot of earthly things that compete for our attention / allegiance / devotion (other gods, kings, etc.)