

LUKE 24:50-53

Luke finishes his record of the life of Jesus Christ with a simple yet profound record. Jesus was carried into heaven; this seemingly anti-climactic event is one of the most profound in the history of mankind.

Most agree that the most important events in human history are Creation, the Fall, the Sacrificial Atonement of Jesus Christ, and the Resurrection.

I will attest that the Ascension also should be part of that list.

The Ascension is attested to in greater detail in Acts chapter 1. The chapter begins with a recap of the 40 days between the Resurrection and the Ascension.

ACTS 1:1-5

Verses 1-5 speak of Jesus and the disciples traveling from Galilee back to the outskirts of Jerusalem. Jesus teaches them about the Kingdom of God. There are no details, but the conversations lead to a proclamation and a question.

The proclamation speaks of the promise of the Holy Spirit. This is the promise of the Spirit in power giving the apostles the tools and credentials necessary to carry out the mission set before them.

The question is then discussed in verse 6.

ACTS 1:6-11

Verse 6 - "Lord is it at this time that You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?" This question comes on the heels of Jesus speaking of things concerning the Kingdom of God.

The verb *asking* is in the Imperfect Tense; this indicates a continuous action in the past. This should be translated, "they were constantly asking Him...." Observations can be made.

1. The forty days that Jesus was with them and speaking about the Kingdom of God did not include timing.
2. Jesus did not speak of the new administration, the combination of Jews and Gentiles working together under the banner of Jesus Christ for God, later to be known as "the ekklesia - the Church."
3. What did they think they would be doing if they were not told to "build the New Administration?" They were still preparing believers and pleading with Israel to prepare for their Messiah to return, this time as Judge.
 - a. What was before the return of the Messiah to judge?
 - b. The Time of Jacob's Trouble, Daniel's Seventieth Week

Notice that the apostles were asking Jesus to restore the Kingdom to Israel. They were not asking if they were to restore the Kingdom. What were they asking Jesus to do?

To restore the Kingdom, Jesus must take the throne.

We must place ourselves in the mindset of the apostles. They followed Jesus for 3-plus years, He was crucified, and now they have been talking to the resurrected Jesus Christ for 40 days while walking from Galilee to just outside Jerusalem. What do you expect next?

Verse 7 - After repeatedly asking Jesus about the timing of the Kingdom, Jesus answered them, it is not for you to know the times or the epochs.

Times – χρόνος *chronos* – this is the same word as the question and means “a point of time consisting of an occasion for some event or activity.”

Epochs – καιρός *kairos* – “moment or period as especially appropriate or a defined period for an event.” This word is used 85 times in the Greek New Testament; how many times is this translated “epochs?” Twice (1 Thessalonians 5:1).

These two words simply indicate that it is not for the apostles to know the point of time or the defined period of time when the return of Jesus Christ will happen. Using two words that are virtually synonymous is probably a parallelism.

The meaning of these two terms is not complicated, but some want to make this into a puzzle and try to figure out the return of Christ. A couple of points on this:

1. This is about the Kingdom not about the Rapture
2. Telling them they will not know the time of the return also tells us we will not know the time of the rapture
3. “Epochs” is a poor translation that can cause confusion (so is “seasons”).

The timing of the Kingdom’s restoration is privileged information for the Father only. This is Jesus telling them the when is not their concern.

Verse 8 – The conjunction here is “ἀλλά *alla*” which is a large contrast. Jesus just told them some very disappointing news. *BUT* you will receive power.

In contrast to the very disappointing news, they receive some very good news.

Power is “δύναμις *dunamis*.” This word means potential for functioning in some way; ability to carry out something.

This word is used for “supernatural ability” (miracle) in 15-20 of the 119 uses (Matthew 11:20; Acts 2:22). How this word is used is determined by the immediate context (Acts 3:12, 4:33, 19:11).

Now we know that the Holy Spirit did amazing miracles through the apostles. But is that what is meant by “you will receive δύναμις dunamis?” I do think that they received certain abilities, but I think that the primary ability given through the Holy Spirit was understanding and communicating the Word of God.

This is not when they received the Holy Spirit (John 20:19-23), but they will receive the Holy Spirit with not only authority but also with ability.

And you shall be My witnesses...

The ministry of the apostles was to proceed from Jerusalem, Judea, and outward.

Verses 9-11 – The implication is that Jesus was leading them from Galilee through Bethany and was heading to Jerusalem by way of the Mount of Olives. I imagine they are cresting the mountain and see Jerusalem when the conversation in verses 6-8 occurs. Then Jesus just ascends. There does not seem to be any warning of Jesus leaving at this time, and they seem to have forgotten that He has to leave for the Holy Spirit to come (John 16:5-7).

Is the spiritual heaven “up?” Everything we know about the heavens is that there are two physical heavens (atmosphere and outer-sphere), then there is a third heaven (2 Corinthians 12:1-4). Since we only relate to the physical, God gives a directional reference. There is no indication that heaven is a parallel realm, meaning that it is right here. Spiritual Heaven is completely distinct: different realm and location.

Jesus Christ changed His location (Hebrews 1:13). He is the rightful King, but He is not yet throned as the King. Currently, He is our High Priest (Hebrews 4:14-16), and we wait for Him to come (Revelation 22:20).

In Acts 1:9-11, we have one of the most comedic situations found. Eleven or more are standing watching Jesus ascend; after He is gone, they remain in that stupor, looking, gazing intently into the sky. Then two men (probably spiritual angelic beings) shake them from their trance and ask them a question?

“Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky?” Conversation is usually condensed for the readers’ sake. I wonder if they answered the angels.

The final remarks demonstrate a promise that believers have held on to since the apostles. “This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven.”

As the New Administration, our gathering will be different than what is prophesied here, but we look forward to both our departure and His return.

Many have attempted to allegorize this verse. The most popular is that Jesus did come back in the form of the Holy Spirit, and so, since we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, Jesus is back in our hearts.

This verse does not imply a non-physical reality in the rest of Scripture. Jesus is at the right hand currently, and He will return bodily, visibly, and with a different purpose. When Jesus comes again it will be to save believers and judge the rest.

IMPLICATIONS

Key Benefits and Implications

1. **Completion of Redemption and Exaltation of Christ** – Jesus finished the work of atonement. “When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.” (Hebrews 1:3) “But He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God.” (Hebrews 10:12)

Implication: Our forgiveness rests on a finished sacrifice. We do not add to it; we receive what Christ has already accomplished.

2. **Continual Intercession for Believers** – Jesus actively represents us before the Father. “Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.” (Romans 8:34) “He always lives to make intercession for them.” (Hebrews 7:25)

Implication: When we fail or face accusation, our perfect Advocate speaks for us. We are never without representation in heaven.

3. **The Sending of the Holy Spirit** – Jesus told the disciples it was to their advantage that He go away. “If I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.” (John 16:7)

Implication: The Ascension opened the door for the Holy Spirit to come in power to have the witnesses give the proper testimony, record the life of Jesus Christ, establish the doctrines under the economy of grace, and provide prophecy.

4. **Our Present Position and Future Hope** – “God raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” (Ephesians 2:6) “I go to prepare a place for you... I will come again and receive you to Myself.” (John 14:2-3)

Implication: We are already positionally seated with Christ in heaven, and He is preparing our eternal home. His return is certain, just as the angels promised.

5. **Equipping the Church for Ministry** – “When He ascended on high, He led captive a host of captives, and He gave gifts to men.” (Ephesians 4:8)

Implication: The ascended Christ gives the church what is necessary to function in His absence (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers) to build up His church until we reach maturity.

Impact – Because Jesus has ascended, we can:

- Live with confidence, not anxiety: your salvation is secure and defended in heaven.
- Rely on what the Holy Spirit provided – the Word of God (objective truth).
- Serve faithfully in the body of Christ.
- Look forward with hope to His promised return.

The Ascension does not mean Jesus is distant. It means He reigns, He intercedes, He equips, and He will come back. Let this truth anchor our lives as believers.

The Ascension: Why It Matters

The Final Instruction (Acts 1)



Power Over Timing

Jesus redirects the disciples from questioning "when" the kingdom returns to receiving "power" to witness.



Dunamis: Supernatural Ability

The Holy Spirit provides the ability to understand and communicate the Word of God effectively.



A Promise of Bodily Return

Angels confirmed Jesus will return in the same visible, physical manner in which he left.



Greek Term	Meaning Provided in Context
Chronos	A point of time or an occasion for an event.
Kairus	A moment or defined period especially appropriate for an event.

Spiritual Implications for Today



The Finished Work

Christ's seat at God's right hand proves our purification from sin is complete and final.



Our Heavenly Advocate

As our High Priest, Jesus actively represents and intercedes for us before the Father.



Equipping the Body

The ascended Christ provides the gifts (pastors, teachers) necessary for the Church to reach maturity.