

**Vicarious Sacrifice: The Ascension of Christ: Jesus & Disciples Travel to Bethany where He Ascends, Luke 24:50–51; Luke Introduces the Book of Acts, Acts 1:1–5; the Disciples Do Not Know What Time It Is, v. 6; They Should Have Known of Tribulation from Daniel 9:27; Jesus Had Told Them in Detail in Matt 24 about the Tribulation, vv. 9–14; 21–22 & His 2d Advent, vv. 27–31; Jesus Prophesies the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, Acts 1:7–8**

### The Ascension of Christ:

#### Luke 24:50–53; Acts 1:8–11

- (1) The previous appearance of the Lord occurred in Jerusalem. He then left the city and crossed the Brook Kidron which flows between the eastern walls of Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives.
- (2) The disciples accompanied Him to the community of Bethany, the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. This village was less than a mile from Jerusalem located on the southeastern slope of the Mount of Olives.<sup>1</sup>
- (3) It was from this general location that Jesus had His last meeting with the disciples. He is about to ascend into heaven, but before doing so He had final words for them recorded in Acts 1:1–11.
- (4) A less detailed passage occurs at the close of Luke in Luke 24:50–53, although both accounts were written by Luke.

**Luke 24:50** - And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them.

**v. 51** - While He was blessing them, He parted from them and was carried up into heaven.

- (5) This is just a summary statement; the specifics are revealed in the Acts passage. Here are the first five verses:

**Acts 1:1** - The first account I composed [Gospel of Luke], Theophilus \the-of-i-lus\,<sup>2</sup> about all that Jesus began to do and teach,

**v. 2** - until the day when He was taken up to heaven, after He had by the Holy Spirit given orders to the apostles whom He had chosen.

**v. 3** - To these He also presented Himself alive after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of forty days and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God.

**v. 4** - Gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, "Which," He said, "you heard from Me [ see John 14:16–17, 26 ];

**v. 5** - for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

- (6) This prologue introduces the last comments by Jesus to His disciples and His last moments in the Incarnation.
- (7) Jesus again reminds the disciples of the coming of the Holy Spirit's power which would occur ten days from then.

<sup>1</sup> E. W. B. Masterman, "Bethany," in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1956), 1:442.

<sup>2</sup> "In the style of the more learned people of the time, it was the custom to honor the sponsor in the prologue (of the funded work), in this case Theophilus who was a knight of the Roman Empire and therefore very wealthy" (R. B. Thieme, Jr., *Acts* [Houston: R. B. Thieme, Jr. Bible Ministries, 1965], 402-001).

- (8) The disciples still do not understand the mission they are to undertake or the dispensational significance of what is about to occur. This is revealed by the last question they posed of Jesus:

**Acts 1:6** - So when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, "Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?"

- (9) These eleven men are being tasked with the responsibility of forming the New Testament church, to teach, instruct, and lead converts, yet they simply cannot remember what time it is.
- (10) In every biblical passage one must always be aware of what time it is. For the disciples, it is the dispensation of Israel with ten days left to run.
- (11) But they do not know this yet nor do they discern that in ten days the dispensation will go into what has become a two-thousand-year hiatus.
- (12) So they ask Jesus if He is about to restore the kingdom. They inquire this after having followed Him around for three years, completely forgetting the multiple prophecies about which they should be recalling.
- (13) Jesus told them in Matthew about his Second Advent in verses 27–31, an event that is preceded by the seven-year Tribulation which He covered in verses 9–26.
- (14) The length of the tribulational period is mentioned in Daniel's Seventy Weeks: Daniel 9:24–27, specifically in verse 27.
- (15) Events that transpire in the latter half of the Tribulation are the subject of Ezekiel 38–39, Joel 2, and Zechariah 12.
- (16) Yet to be written is John's Apocalypse or *The Revelation of Jesus Christ* chapters 6–19, a full analysis of the seven-year cataclysm that is initiated largely by the removal of Church Age believers at the Rapture (see 2 Thessalonians 2:1–12).
- (17) The eleven disciples should have been aware of this prophesied time of trouble, but they either ignored it or assumed Jesus would preempt it.
- (18) Principle: Prophecy cannot be preempted. It is in the divine decree because it was determined in eternity past that it would occur.
- (19) Biblical prophecy is actually a printout from the computer of the divine decree reporting what will occur at some future time.
- (20) So the Lord gives them His one last piece of advice and mentions for the third time that they will receive the power to understand these things very shortly:

**Acts 1:7** - He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority [ **the computer of the divine decree: ROM chip** ];

**v. 8** - but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you [ **the divine power system** ]; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.

- (21) These eleven men are commissioned to represent Jesus Christ in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, and the world.

- (22) There are three Pentecosts which are accomplished in the Book of Acts:  
**(1)** Jewish (Acts 2:4-11), **(2)** Samaritan (Acts 8:5-17), and **(3)** Gentile (Acts 10:44-11:18).