

Ascension 2020
The Good News of the Ascension
Acts 1:1-12

I. Jesus' resurrection changes everything. But ... Jn.20:11-18

- A. Mary thought that Christ's resurrection was the end of the story.
 - 1. But it was the beginning of a new chapter.
- B. Something was unfinished that Mary didn't comprehend.
 - 1. *The Lord is always doing something we do not understand.*
- C. Let's meditate on what Mary Magdalene did not understand...
 - 1. The ascension of Christ.

II. Acts 1:6-12. Picking up where he left off in Luke.

- A. A good question about Israel's restoration. 6
 - 1. Jesus does not say that Israel is off the grid.
 - 2. But he does say that preoccupation with the timing is the wrong mind-set.
- B. A promise of God's own Spirit within them. 8
 - 1. A new sort of life, eternal life, personally regenerating and empowering them to do what God has called them to do.
- C. A clear commission to take the message to the world. 8
 - 1. Who Jesus is and what he has done.
 - 2. Repentance/faith and total forgiveness.
- D. A physical transfer into the other dimension. 9-11
 - 1. The cloud is probably like the cloud at the transfiguration (Lk.9:34-35)

III. Four things the Ascension tells us and they are all great news.

- A. The Mission is clear and it is not about the end times. 7
 - 1. *It is not for you to know the times or seasons.*
 - a) Chronos or Kairos. The elements of timing
 - b) God is not taking a vote on any of the end-time things.
 - 2. *But you will receive ability to take my message to the world.*
 - a) The mission is to bear witness of Jesus's risen and gracious lordship.
 - 3. *We are to be ready for the Lord's return at any time, not because we have figured out when it will occur, or how close we are to it, but because we want to be busy in the mission and not sleepy in the world.*
 - 4. *Make a distinction between end-time speculation and gospel-preaching.*
 - 5. *Good news because it allows us to be ready without being ridiculous.*
- B. The Plan is in place and it ends well. Eph.1:3-11
 - 1. *The Lord is coming back physically.*
 - 2. We are moving through the time when he is calling his people from all over the world.
 - 3. *Good news because we are specific and chosen participants of an eternal and joyous plan, not random sparks of accidental consciousness winking in and then out in the vast icy darkness of vacuous space.*
- C. The Lord is in charge and there are no accidents. Eph.1:20-23
 - 1. *He has physically ascended to the right hand of the Father. Eph.1:20.*
 - 2. He is right now, as a resurrected human, running the world from the headquarters in heaven.
 - 3. *Nothing happens on earth that he does not ordain and use for the furtherance of his plan for his people. Matt.10:29-30; Rom.8:28. Acts 4:28*

D. The Grave is a door and we know what's on the other side—freedom and life. **2 Cor.4:18-5:10**

1. *He is resurrected, material, physical in a real dimension more real than this one.*
2. Heaven is more real than this world.
 - a) Tangible and solid in another dimension.
3. Heaven is a parallel universe where God rules and controls the cosmos. (Matt.6:10)
 - a) When we die, our permanent self enters that dimension.
4. Heaven is just the beginning.
 - a) The universe will be resurrected along with us (Rom.8:18-25; Rev.21-22) and the invisible and visible realms will be joined permanently, where spirit beings and humans created in God's image will experience real life forever.
5. ***It used to be prison, but now it is glorious freedom because of what Jesus has done. Rev.1:18***