

44-01-01.wpd—Online with Heaven

Christ's Ascension, kingdom of God, Holy Spirit

Acts 1:1-11

Christ went back to Heaven to connect believers with Kingdom power.

### INTRODUCTION:

—A Personal Computer is like a person. It has a brain with memory. Its receives input from various sense organs, such as a keyboard, a mouse, disk drives, scanners and recording microphones. All are connected to a nervous system called a motherboard. A computer communicates to us through its monitor, its printer, and its speakers. There's another way a computer is like a person. With a modem it can get online with the gigantic world of the Internet. A modem is similar to a person's spirit. As spirit beings, we can go beyond our earthly limitations by connecting with the spiritual world. But there's a risk involved, just like in being online. Cruel pranksters on the Internet create computer viruses that crash people's systems. In the spiritual world is a worse enemy, Satan, who tries to control our lives and destroy the happiness God wants for us. Our key to safety & fulfillment is to connect & stay online with Heaven.

—**Title:** the story of Christ's Ascension, in which **HOM.idea**.

—**Luke's 2 books:** the Gospel—the story of Christ; Acts—the story of us, the Church. The connecting point of these two stories is the ascension of Christ (**read v.1-3**); “*all that Jesus began to do and to teach*” (the Gospel)—“*instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen.*” (the Church). *What does it mean to be connected, or “online with Heaven”?*

### **I. It Means to Understand “the Kingdom of God,” v.3**

A. God wants Christians to get their message straight! (40 days of instruction about “*the kingdom of God*”!)

1. The message is *the King Himself*, not just His teachings, or His example, or even His activity in our personal lives (as important as these all are) — Our message is ALL ABOUT HIM!
2. We proclaim *the Conquering King!*— **Rev 1:18**, I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades. (He came from eternity to become human, and now as a Human King, He holds the future in His hand!)

B. The *Gospel of the Kingdom* is that God came down to live with us, died for our sins, rose from death, and ascended to begin His reign.

**TRANS:** To understand the Kingdom of God, you must realize that it is the future. Our King is the future King who came from the future into

our present age, which has not submitted to the rule of our King. The Church is like a small battalion forming a beachhead in enemy territory. It's why we sing “*Onward Christian Soldiers*.” It's why we on earth are called *The Church Militant*, and those in Heaven are called *The Church Triumphant*. We are part of an army from the future by pledging our allegiance to this heavenly King. But to fight “the good fight of faith” in this present age, we must be connected and stay *online with Heaven*.

### **II. It Means to Get Connected with the Kingdom, v.4-5**

- A. Don't rush off on your own steam (Don't just go; be sent!)
  1. The disciples had 3 years of practical training and 40 extra days of personal instruction from Christ, but that wasn't enough.
  2. They needed power— **Luke 24:49 (ESV)**, “...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.” (They had *Kingdom principles to share*, but they needed *Kingdom power to share them*.)
- B. Jesus was very concerned about this issue (v.4), “*Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised*”), because He not only wanted us empowered by the Holy Spirit, but led by the Spirit, exactly as He was during His earthly ministry— **John 20:21b (ESV)**, “As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.”
- C. Don't settle for initiation (“*baptized with water*”), as important as that is, but get totally online with Heaven (“*baptized with the Holy Spirit*”).

**TRANS:** Christ went back to Heaven to connect believers with Kingdom power. But that isn't like getting plugged into an electric outlet. Its having the power Generator inside of you. Jesus the King IS the power of the Kingdom, and by the Holy Spirit, He resides in us. This what it means to be online with Heaven. Also....

### **III. It Means to Abandon the Old for the New, v.6-8**

- A. We're slow to switch to a new program, even God's: the disciples asked, “*Are you...going to restore the good old days?*” (Where in the OT are the good old days? No everlasting reign of holiness there!)
- B. Bible prophecy is not about knowing the *when's* (“*times or dates*”), but the *what's* (what God will do “*by his own authority*”)
- C. Christ brought a new view of that authority— not political control over people (“*the kingdom to Israel*”), but people spiritually changed

through a God-empowered message– John 16:7-8, But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment.)

**TRANS:** *Christ ascended to Heaven to get us online with Kingdom power. What then does it mean to be online with Heaven?*

#### **IV. It Means to Serve a Heavenly King, v.9-11**

- A. An earthly focus clouds our spiritual eyes– 2Co.5:16, So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. (We need a heavenly focus in all earthly activity, but especially in Kingdom work on earth.)
- B. The angels asked, “Why do you stand here looking into the sky?” (Angels coming to earth, they may remind us of our heavenly goal, but their mission is to spur us on in doing God’s will on earth.)
- C. What earthly motivation should Christ’s ascension instill in us?  
 “This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven” to reign as our heavenly King, “will come back” to fulfill the future Kingdom which we now serve and participate in through the Holy Spirit.

#### **CONCLUSION:**

–Heb 4:14, Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess.

–The Ascension paved the way for God’s to empowerment Kingdom living [closing poem: “*Before the Throne of God Above*” by Charitie Lees Bancroft

Before the throne of God above	Behold Him there! the risen Lamb!
I have a strong, a perfect plea;	My perfect, spotless Righteousness,
A great High Priest, whose name is Love,	The great unchangeable I AM,
Who ever lives and pleads for me.	The King of glory and of grace!
My name is graven on His hands,	One with the Lord, I cannot die;
My name is written on His heart;	My soul is purchased by His blood;
I know that while in heav’n He stands	My life is hid with Christ on high,
No tongue can bid me thence depart.	With Christ, my Saviour and my God.]

When Satan tempts me to despair,  
 And tells me of the guilt within,  
 Upward I look, and see Him there  
 Who made an end of all my sin.

Acts 1:1-11 ( NIV )

1In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach

2until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen.

3After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.

4On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about.

5For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”

6So when they met together, they asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?”

7He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority.

8But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

9After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

10They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them.

11“Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.”