

JESUS' ASCENSION

Luke 24:50-53; Acts 1:3-11

STRUCTURE

Key-persons: Jesus, and the disciples

Key-locations: Jerusalem, Mount of Olives

Key-repetitions:

- Holy Spirit: the Father promised the Holy Spirit (Ac 1:4); Jesus commanded his disciples to wait for the promised Holy Spirit (Ac 1:4); Jesus promised that the disciples would be baptized with the Holy Spirit (Ac 1:5); the disciples would receive power when the Holy Spirit came on them (Ac 1:8).
- Commands: Jesus commanded the disciples: don't leave Jerusalem (Ac 1:4); wait for his Father to give them the Holy Spirit (Ac 1:4).
- Promises: The Father promised the Holy Spirit (Ac 1:4); the disciples would be baptized with the Holy Spirit (Ac 1:5); the Holy Spirit would give them power (Ac 1:8); they would be Jesus' witnesses (Ac 1:8); two men dressed in white promised that Jesus would return in the same way as he went up (Ac 1:11).

Key-attitudes:

- Disciples' curiosity about the time when Jesus would establish his kingdom.
- Jesus' authority when he gave orders to his disciples.
- Disciples' admiration and fear when they observed Jesus being taken up into the sky.
- Hope given by the promise of Jesus' return.

Initial-situation:

After his resurrection, Jesus appeared to his followers over a period of forty days and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive.

Initial-problem:

Jesus told his disciples to not leave Jerusalem until they received the promised Holy Spirit.

Final-situation:

Jesus was taken up into heaven where he received all power in heaven and on earth. He will return and everyone will see him.

BIBLE STORY

After his resurrection, Jesus appeared to his followers over a period of forty days and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. On one occasion, he gave them this

command, "Don't leave Jerusalem. I've told you that my Father promises to give you the Holy Spirit. Wait for my Father to give you the promised Holy Spirit. John baptized with water, but in a few days you'll be baptized with the Holy Spirit" (Ac 1:3-5).

The last time Jesus was with his followers, he led them out to the vicinity of Bethany to the hill called the Mount of Olives (Lk 24:50; Ac 1:12).

The disciples asked Jesus, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"

Jesus answered, "You're not going to receive the times or dates. The Father is the one who has authority to set the time. But the Holy Spirit will come upon you and give you power, and you'll be my witnesses to tell everyone about me in Jerusalem, all over Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Ac 1:6-8).

Jesus raised his hands and blessed the disciples. While he was blessing them, he left them and was elevated up to heaven (Lk 24:51).

The disciples watched as Jesus was lifted up and a cloud hid him from their sight. They stood staring up into the sky. Suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand here looking up at the sky? Jesus, who was taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way as you saw him go up to heaven" (Ac 1:9-12).

GENERIC DIALOGUE QUESTIONS

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| 1. What catches your attention in the story? | 5. How did the characters face their problems? |
| 2. Is there anything in the story that is hard to understand? | 6. How have you faced similar problems? |
| 3. Who are the main characters in the story? | 7. Is there someone in the story who is similar to you or who is different from you? |
| 4. What problems did the characters face? | 8. What does the story tell about God? |

SPECIFIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. On the occasion of his ascension, what task did Jesus give to his disciples?
2. Describe how Jesus ascended into heaven.
3. What did the angels tell the disciples after Jesus had ascended into the clouds?
4. What are some reasons we have to expect Jesus to return?
5. What application does the ascension have for our lives?

LIFE-LESSONS

1. **The commandment to be witnesses in Jerusalem, in Judea, in Samaria, and to the end of the Earth specifies the geographical and cultural areas that are to be evangelized (Ac 1:8):**
 - Jerusalem specifies people of the same geographical area who are of the same culture.

- Judea specifies people from a large geographical area who are of the same culture.
 - Samaria specifies people from a nearby geographical area, but who have a different culture.
 - To the end of the Earth specifies people from all geographical areas and from all cultures.
2. **The follower of Jesus should trust God's timetable for worldwide, national, and personal events.** The disciples wanted Jesus to free Israel from Roman power, and then become their king. Jesus told them that God the Father sets the timetable for all events (Ac 1:6-7).
 3. **Being a witness for Jesus involves: receiving power from the Holy Spirit; telling others the Bible stories about Jesus; telling them the stories of one's own experiences with Jesus** (Ac 1:8).
 4. **Jesus is more concerned that his followers understand their responsibilities than that they know the future.** The disciples wanted to know when Jesus would return the kingdom to the people of Israel. Jesus answered that it was not for them to know the times or dates the Father had set; however, they had the task of being witnesses for him (Ac 1:7-8).
 5. **Some benefits of Jesus' ascension are:**
 - **The pouring out of the Holy Spirit** (Ac 2:38). While he walked in Palestine, Jesus was limited by his physical body and could only be in one place at a time. Now the Holy Spirit, with his power and blessing, has come to live inside each person who is a believer in Jesus.
 - **Jesus went to prepare a place for his followers** (Jn 14:2).
 - **Jesus is the Christian's lawyer in heaven.** Jesus defends his followers before God (1 Jn 2:1).
 - **In heaven, Jesus intercedes to God in favor of those who believe in him** (Heb 7:25).
 6. **Some reasons to believe Jesus will return are:**
 - **Jesus promised to return** (Jn 14:3).
 - **Angels said he will return** (Ac 1:11); they were right when they predicted his birth (Lk 1:30-33; Mat 1:20-22).
 - **God, speaking through the Old Testament prophets, said that he will return** (Zec 14:1, 3-4; Mal 4:1-2).
 - **The Holy Spirit, speaking through New Testament writers, said he will return** (1 Th 4:16; He 9:28; 10:37).

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Twitter Prayers (short, concise prayers):

Invite listeners to pray about the story in “twitter” length prayers. Tell God:

- How they feel about Jesus’ ascension and the promise that he will return.
- Decisions they need to make as a result of hearing the story.
- Jesus gave his disciples both commands and promises. Tell God about God-given commands they need to obey and God-given promises they need to trust.
- How the story helps them to know God better.