

# JESUS' ASCENSION FROM THE MOUNT OF OLIVES

BIBLE TEXT : Acts 1:1-26

LESSON 253 Junior Course

**MEMORY VERSE:** "While they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight" (Acts 1:9).

## BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

### Acts 1:1-26

<sup>1</sup> The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach,

<sup>2</sup> Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen:

<sup>3</sup> To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:

<sup>4</sup> And, being assembled together with *them*, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, *saith he*, ye have heard of me.

<sup>5</sup> For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

<sup>6</sup> When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?

<sup>7</sup> And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.

<sup>8</sup> But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

<sup>9</sup> And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received

## BIBLE REFERENCES:

### NOTES:

#### The Acts

The first four Books of the New Testament are called the Gospels. They tell the good news of salvation. They tell about Jesus and His life. During the time that Jesus lived here upon the earth, He chose disciples and taught them His plan for Christian living. Jesus taught by giving the example in His own life. Jesus did not teach one thing and do another thing. He taught, and then practiced what He said, to prove that His Word is true. He taught His disciples by being with them, and showing them how to be Christians.

Jesus taught by parables, in a simple way that even the common people and children could understand. "Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people" (Matthew 4:23). Jesus performed great miracles, showing His power over all things. "The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them" (Matthew 11:5).

The fifth Book of the New Testament is called "The Acts of the Apostles." It tells us about the work of Jesus' disciples and their obedience in teaching Jesus' commandments. Jesus taught and worked with His disciples "until the day in which he was taken up." That day He ascended into Heaven. His ascension was His leaving the disciples and going into Heaven, as He told them He would do. Jesus said, "I go to prepare a place for you that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:2, 3).

#### Resurrection

After Jesus rose from the grave on the first Easter morning, He appeared to His followers at different times over a period of forty days. During that time He gave proof that He had risen from the dead. The things that Jesus did after His resurrection proved that He was alive. There was a sureness about His resurrection, and Jesus gave the disciples no chance to be mistaken about His being alive.

The disciples knew that Jesus was alive because He appeared and showed Himself to them. Not once, but several times! Not only to one person, but to groups of His followers! (**1 Corinthians 15:5-7** <sup>5</sup> And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: <sup>6</sup> After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. <sup>7</sup> After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles.). Jesus walked and talked with them (**Luke 24:13-27** <sup>13</sup> And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem *about* threescore furlongs. <sup>14</sup> And they talked together of all these things which had happened. <sup>15</sup> And it came to pass, that, while they communed *together* and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them. <sup>16</sup> But their eyes were holden that they should not know him. <sup>17</sup> And he said unto them, What manner of communications *are* these that ye have one to another, as ye

him out of their sight.

<sup>10</sup> And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;

<sup>11</sup> Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

<sup>12</sup> Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey.

<sup>13</sup> And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James *the son of Alphaeus*, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas *the brother of James*.

<sup>14</sup> These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

<sup>15</sup> And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty,)

<sup>16</sup> Men *and* brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus.

<sup>17</sup> For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry.

<sup>18</sup> Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out.

<sup>19</sup> And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field is called in their

walk, and are sad? <sup>18</sup> And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? <sup>19</sup> And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: <sup>20</sup> And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. <sup>21</sup> But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done. <sup>22</sup> Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre; <sup>23</sup> And when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive. <sup>24</sup> And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found *it* even so as the women had said: but him they saw not. <sup>25</sup> Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: <sup>26</sup> Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? <sup>27</sup> And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. **He ate with them (Luke 24:41-43)** <sup>41</sup> And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat? <sup>42</sup> And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. <sup>43</sup> And he took *it*, and did eat before them). **He showed them the wounds of the nails in His hands, and the place where the spear pierced His side (John 20:20)** <sup>20</sup> And when he had so said, he shewed unto them *his* hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord). Jesus talked to the disciples about their work for the Kingdom of God **(Luke 24:44-49)** <sup>44</sup> And he said unto them, These *are* the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and *in* the prophets, and *in* the psalms, concerning me. <sup>45</sup> Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, <sup>46</sup> And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: <sup>47</sup> And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. <sup>48</sup> And ye are witnesses of these things. <sup>49</sup> And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high. **Matthew 28:1-20** <sup>1</sup> In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first *day* of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre. <sup>2</sup> And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. <sup>3</sup> His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: <sup>4</sup> And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead *men*. <sup>5</sup> And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. <sup>6</sup> He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. <sup>7</sup> And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you. <sup>8</sup> And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word. <sup>9</sup> And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him. <sup>10</sup> Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me. <sup>11</sup> Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done. <sup>12</sup> And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers, <sup>13</sup> Saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him *away* while we slept. <sup>14</sup> And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you. <sup>15</sup> So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day. <sup>16</sup> Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a

proper tongue, Aceldama, that is to say, The field of blood.

<sup>20</sup> For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishoprick let another take.

<sup>21</sup> Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us,

<sup>22</sup> Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.

<sup>23</sup> And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias.

<sup>24</sup> And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all *men*, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen,

<sup>25</sup> That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.

<sup>26</sup> And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

mountain where Jesus had appointed them. <sup>17</sup> And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted. <sup>18</sup> And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. <sup>19</sup> Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: <sup>20</sup> Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen.). All these things gave evidence that Jesus was living.

### The Comforter

Before Jesus had been crucified, He had talked to His disciples about leaving them. He comforted them by saying that He would come again to receive them (**John 14:2-4** <sup>2</sup> In my Father's house are many mansions: if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. <sup>3</sup> And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, *there* ye may be also. <sup>4</sup> And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know). Jesus said that the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, would be sent to the disciples. After Jesus left, they would not be alone, because the Comforter would abide with them and in them (**John 14:16-17** <sup>16</sup> And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; <sup>17</sup> *Even* the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. **John 14:26** <sup>26</sup> But the Comforter, *which* is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.). Jesus mentioned some of the things that the Comforter would do: teach the disciples (**John 14:26** <sup>26</sup> But the Comforter, *which* is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.), guide them (**John 16:13** <sup>13</sup> Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.), testify of Christ (**John 15:26** <sup>26</sup> But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, *even* the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:), and reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment (**John 16:8** <sup>8</sup> And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment).

At another time Jesus told the disciples what their work was to be. They were to teach the Gospel in all the world. In our preceding lesson we read about this commission that Jesus gave His disciples. But before they went out into the world to preach, they were commanded to receive the Comforter, which was the promise of the Father (**Luke 24:49** <sup>49</sup> And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high). The time had now come for Jesus' departure. He had given the disciples their instructions, along with a promise to be with them (**Matthew 28:20** <sup>20</sup> Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen).

### The Mount of Olives

The last that Jesus talked with His disciples was at Bethany, at the mount of Olives (**Mark 11:1** <sup>1</sup> And when they came nigh to Jerusalem, unto Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount of Olives, he sendeth forth two of his disciples, **Luke 19:29** <sup>29</sup> And it came to pass, when he was come nigh to

Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount called *the mount of Olives*, he sent two of his disciples, **Luke 24:50** <sup>50</sup> And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them.). The disciples asked Jesus if He would restore the kingdom to Israel at this time. It had been promised by God that the kingdom of the Jewish people would be restored. "I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning" (**Isaiah 1:26** <sup>26</sup> And I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning: afterward thou shalt be called, *The city of righteousness, the faithful city*). "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth" (Jeremiah 23:5).

At this time they were under the government of the Romans. They longed for the day when the promise would be fulfilled. The disciples expected Jesus to set up an earthly kingdom when He was upon earth. They thought He would restore the Jewish kingdom then (**Luke 24:21** <sup>21</sup> But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done.). Jesus did not say He would not be the ruler of all the people. To this day the promise has not yet been fulfilled; but we, too, are looking forward to the time when the "kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever" (Revelation 11:15).

No one knows the day when Jesus will take His place as "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS" (Revelation 19:16). Only God the Father knows when that time will be. Jesus told His disciples, which includes us, that it was not for them "to know the times or the seasons." They had work to do. It was for them to prepare for Jesus' return and to spread the Gospel. Jesus commanded the disciples to wait for the "promise of the Father" about which He had told them. The disciples were commanded not to depart from Jerusalem, because there was a wonderful blessing in store for them. Jesus told them that they were to receive another baptism other than that of John the Baptist. In a few days they would be baptized with the Holy Ghost.

### Water Baptism

John the Baptist baptized in water and preached "the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins" (Mark 1:4). When the people went to John to be baptized, he told them that they must first repent, then they could be baptized. John said, "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance" (Matthew 3:8).

Some people wondered if John the Baptist was the Christ and Messiah who was promised. John was not Christ. John was the forerunner who prepared the way for Christ. John testified of Christ and said: "I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire" (Luke 3:16).

### Witnesses

In order to be a follower of Jesus, one must truly repent as John taught, and as Jesus taught (**Luke 13:3** <sup>3</sup> I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.). When one has repented and knows that his sins are forgiven, he is saved. He then should consecrate his life to the Lord and pray that God will take out the root of sin in his life that he may be sanctified. "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification" (I Thessalonians 4:3). Jesus suffered and shed His Blood that His people might be



sanctified — cleansed from inbred sin (**Hebrews 13:12** <sup>12</sup> Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.). Jesus prayed for His disciples to be sanctified. He said, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (John 17:17).

In order for Jesus' disciples properly to witness for Him, they were commanded to receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost. They would receive power which would make them witnesses and enable them to "preach the gospel to every creature" as they were commanded.

After they were baptized with the Holy Ghost, which gave them power, they were to witness for Jesus. They were to start in Jerusalem, where they would receive God's promise. From there they would witness in all the land about, in all Judea, and in Samaria. They were to witness not only in their own land and continent, but God's people were to spread the Gospel and witness to the uttermost parts of the earth.

### Ascending into Heaven

As Jesus was talking to His disciples, He lifted His hands and blessed them (**Luke 24:50-51** <sup>50</sup> And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. <sup>51</sup> And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.). As He did so, He began to rise, higher and higher, into the sky. As the disciples watched, a cloud gathered about Jesus — and they saw Him no more. Jesus had ascended into Heaven. He was not snatched away by angels nor in a chariot. He did not disappear when the disciples' backs were turned. They saw Him ascend to Heaven. There He sat down at the right hand of God the Father (**Mark 16:19** <sup>19</sup> So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. **1 Peter 3:22** <sup>22</sup> Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him) and there Jesus is interceding for men (**Romans 8:34** <sup>34</sup> Who is he that condemneth? *It is Christ* that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. **Hebrews 7:25** <sup>25</sup> Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.).

As the disciples continued to watch the cloud, two men in white garments stood by them. They asked the disciples: "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." The disciples realized that Jesus was gone. Now they had work to do in spreading the Gospel, but they remembered to follow Jesus' instructions. They went to an upper room in Jerusalem. They tarried there, and continued in one accord and in supplication. About 120 of Jesus' followers, including His mother and brethren, gathered to pray.

### Matthias

Peter brought to their attention the fact that someone must be chosen to fill the place left vacant by Judas, who had betrayed Christ. Judas had been one of the disciples (**Matthew 10:4** <sup>4</sup> Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him. **Luke 6:16** <sup>16</sup> And Judas the brother of James, and Judas Iscariot, which also was the traitor.). He forsook Christ and the other disciples. He sinned by selling Christ for thirty pieces of silver. But he cast the money down in the Temple, saying, "I have betrayed the innocent blood" (Matthew 27:4). Since it was

unlawful for the chief priests to put blood money into the treasury, they agreed to buy a plot of ground with it. It was called the "potter's field," and was a place in which strangers were buried. To return the money neither blotted out Judas' sin nor restored him to a place among the disciples.

The great place of duty and privilege which Judas left when he forsook Christ was soon filled. Matthias was numbered with the eleven. Matthias had been with the others all the time that Jesus was with them, from the time of John's baptism even until Jesus' ascension. The disciples prayed to ask the Lord to choose, and the lot fell upon Matthias. Later on Paul was called to be the Apostle (**Romans 1:1** <sup>1</sup> Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, **Galatians 1:1** <sup>1</sup> Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;)).

### Watching for Jesus' Return

Jesus had left His disciples, as He had said. They waited in the appointed place for the Comforter. No doubt, in their hearts was a great joy, because they would see Jesus again. Jesus said: "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:3).

The disciples had been told to watch and pray because no man knows the day nor hour when Jesus will come again (**Matthew 25:13** <sup>13</sup> Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh. **Mark 13:32-33** <sup>32</sup> But of that day and *that* hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. <sup>33</sup> Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is.). They were told to take heed lest the day of Jesus' return come upon them unawares (**Luke 21:34-36** <sup>34</sup> And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. <sup>35</sup> For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. <sup>36</sup> Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.). Jesus said, "What I say unto you I say unto all, Watch" (Mark 13:37). What does it mean to "watch"? Someone has said: "To watch means to believe that He will come, to love His appearing, to think always of His coming, and to realize that the time is near." Are you watching? Are you prepared and waiting for Jesus' coming? The return of Jesus will be a great joy to those who are watching, and it will be a sad day for those who are not prepared.

### QUESTIONS

1. What was the work of John the Baptist?
2. What did Jesus do besides teach?
3. What proof did Jesus give that He was alive after rising from the grave?
4. Why did not Jesus set up an earthly kingdom at that time?
5. What is the difference between water baptism and the baptism of the Holy Ghost?
6. What was the promise of the Father?
7. Where and how did the disciples wait for the promise of the Father?
8. Tell about Jesus' ascension.
9. What were the words of the two men in white apparel?
10. Who was chosen to take Judas' place?