

STUDY NOTES

The Acts of the Apostles

A MESSAGE SERIES AT NEW CITY CHURCH (Spring 2016)

WWW.NEWCITYPHX.COM/SERMONS - BRIAN KRUCKENBERG

The following content is based on the message “The Ascension” spoken on 01/31/16 by Brian Kruckenberg at New City Church in Phoenix, AZ. The following is not meant to be a full synopsis of the message but rather a brief look at the main ideas. To use this Study Guide effectively you must listen to the message found at <http://newcityphx.com/sermons/>.

Leaders using these Study Notes for group study and reflection should read the Biblical text thoroughly before beginning, using this resource as assistance and not relying solely on this material for insight. We encourage all leaders to pray and ask the Spirit for revelation as they lead their respective communities.

The Scripture:

6 So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” 7 He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” 9 And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. 10 And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, 11 and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.” 12 Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day’s journey away.

What the Ascension Brings

From the Scripture above we can see a scarcity mindset reflected in the question of the disciples. They wanted to know if Jesus was going to restore the Kingdom to **Israel**. What Jesus had to remind them was that the Kingdom was for ALL who call on His name.

The ascension does not lead to the absence of Christ but rather the increased and intensified presence of Him.

How have you seen a scarcity mindset affect how you live?

How does that mindset impact your walk with God? How you parent? How you serve in the church? How you give?

The Ascension of Jesus means that we can “have our cake and eat it too.” Because Jesus Ascends into heaven the Holy Spirit is sent to all who believe and there is no shortage of the Holy Spirit. There’s always enough...for everyone!

It is this Holy Spirit that allows the church to be on mission to the world. We might say it this way:

The ascent of Jesus and the resulting descent of the Holy Spirit compels the mission of the church!

Powerful Witness

Jesus says that we will be His witnesses when we receive the power of the Holy Spirit.

A witness is one who provides information about a person or an event concerning which he or she has direct knowledge of or about.

You can only testify reliably about what you’ve personally experienced or someone you actually know. For instance, if you’ve seen LeBron James play basketball in person, it will likely make you a more qualified witness as to just how good he is at the game. In order to be a witness for Jesus, we must have personal knowledge about Him.

How have you experienced Jesus?
What have you seen Him do?

We gain further understanding about being a witness when we understand the original Greek term that we’ve translated into the word witness. The Greek word is “martyr.” It is where we get our word martyr!

Being a witness in our culture WILL cost you. It may not cost you your life, but it will COST you.

Are we willing to have our witness for Jesus cost us?

Being a witness doesn’t mean being an expert. It means being ready to tell someone about who Jesus is and the hope you have.

“in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; of the hope you have in Christ; yet do it with gentleness and respect.” -1 Peter 3:15

In John 14 Jesus promises us that always there and is our, witness, actually better than that, He is our Advocate or Lawyer. Jesus will give us the words when we don't have them.

Get to Work, Until Jesus Returns

When the disciples saw Jesus ascend to heaven they stood there gazing into heaven. We have to remember that sometimes:

we can be so heavenly minded that we are no earthly good.

We can just stand and wish. We must always pray but we also must get involved and act on what we know. If this was just about "getting to heaven" then we'd just be taken up right away. But, Jesus teaches us to pray this:

Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be your Name. Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

We pray that the Kingdom will come to our homes, our schools and our communities and we get involved in making that happen!

Why do we tend to "heaven gaze" instead of carrying out the mission of God on the earth?

How can we be a part of seeing heaven come to earth?

Jesus promises us that He's coming back to restore it all, perfectly. He'll take our efforts of renewal, restoration and He'll make it amazing and when He comes back He's coming to judge as well.

"11 Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. 12 His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. 13 He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. Revelation 19:11-12.

Notice that Jesus comes back as the Judge, but He is our advocate/attorney. If your attorney is also the judge in the case then you are not going to lose! Not only that, Jesus knows we are guilty, but He as the judge steps down from his throne and pays the penalty for our sin. He convicted HIMSELF and He acquits us!

Do you believe that Jesus will be a fair judge when He returns?
Have you asked Jesus to be your advocate?