

May 12, 1977

Acts 1:1-12

2

(4) the ascension, v.9. "When He had spoken these things, which they beheld He was taken up and a cloud received Him out of their sight." Just imagine their surprise. Imagine as they listened to him as He talked with them, before this He had suddenly appeared at times, and suddenly disappeared. But now instead of suddenly disappearing as He had done during these 40 days, as they talked He began to rise up toward the sky. As they looked He went up and up and up. As they watched spellbound they saw His body moving up up into the air. Then the clouds received Him out of their sight. What an experience that was for them. It was different from any of the previous experiences. They wondered, Is this the end? ~~THEY~~ These wonderful 40 days when he's appeared and talked with us, when he has appeared and disappeared, when we've had this wonderful fellowship with Him, is this the end? What does this mean?

(5) The outlook. "As they looked steadfastly toward heaven he went up . . . two men stood by them in white apparel. Obviously two angels, but simply described as two men in white apparel. "Which also said, Ye men of Galilee; why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which was taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." What could be more specific than this? This very specific definite promise given to His disciples. He will come back as He went into heaven. He will descend as He ascended. The Christian world has been looking for, watching for, and waiting for that great event ever since.

Now we take a closer look at certain vital factors in this passage. So first of these I call your attention to the relation to the Gospels. Notice it begins "The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and to teach." Certainly the suggestion is that Acts is going to tell about what He continued to do and teach! He doesn't say, I told you about Jesus in the book of Luke; now I'm going to tell you about what the apostles did afterwards. That's the book about Jesus; this is the book about the Apostles. No! Those are the books that tell about what He began to do, and began to teach. This is a book that tells of what He continued to do, and what He continued to teach. It is very important we recognize this. We do not worship a dead Christ. We worship a living Christ. We worship a Christ who is Christ in us the hope of glory! The One who continues to do and to teach.

Among some Christians there is sometimes a tendency to not give the full importance they should to the Gospels. It is important we defend their authenticity, it is important we stand for the fact they are free from error. But we don't give as much attention perhaps as we should to the teachings that they contain. Jesus was the greatest teacher that ever lived. And in the Gospels He has given us truths; He has dealt with all manner of things that are important for our lives.