

# Wednesday with the Word

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WAIT... #Thereismore.

Acts 1:1-11 New International Version (NIV)

## Jesus Taken Up Into Heaven

**1** In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach **2** until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. **3** After his suffering, he presented himself to them 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. **4** On 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. **5** For John baptized with[a] water, but in a few days you will be baptized with[b] the Holy Spirit.” **6** Then they gathered around him and asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?” **7** He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. **8** But 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.” **9** After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. **10** They 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.”

**The writer Luke starts off, with a recollection of his former book (Luke) and acknowledgment of Theophilus.**

- Let's take a moment to recall a few bible studies back when we focused on the book of Luke (John The Baptist Foretold) in the lesson titled "The Message, before the move". You see, here we have the author yet again addressing the audience (us), and Theophilus about the teaching and actions of Jesus.
- It is important to recall the message (instructions, prophecy). Many times you'll find new details, and even a deeper meaning in a previous foretelling/prophetic message because the lens from which you are looking at the event/experience is much wiser and clearer.
- You see, I believe that as we dive deeper into this text we will begin to see that **"Getting closer to the manifestation of an encounter you've been waiting on isn't to be compared to finishing or coming out of a thing"**
- I believe this is because there's not just more for you when you come out of this wilderness-like experience... but there is so much more you can understand while you endure through this wilderness-like encounter.

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

- As always, I would like for us to take a closer look at the start of verse 2. It not only flows perfectly with the end of verse 1... but the keyword for me here is **UNTIL**.
- Let's connect the messaging of **UNTIL** with the first verse and read it like this: "I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach, until the day he was taken up to heaven...."
- How profound is this that literally up **UNTIL** Jesus' crucifixion he gives a series of instructions through the form of messages that some scholars would like to argue were examples by way of the "Holy Spirit" to the apostles (the disciples/us) his chosen people. Jesus does this while experiencing a gruesome and painful death.

**Can I offer to you, that no matter how painful it may feel, no matter how gruesome the experience is, you must continue to trust and serve God even when it feels uncomfortable. God already has orchestrated a plan for your situation and has given us the blueprint in the instructions. This is why I feel the author has placed this verse here specifically to allow**

us to understand that the wounds, crucifixion, persecution, and affliction all have a purpose in the grand scheme of things.

*Verse 3: After his suffering, he presented himself to them 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.*

- Now let's dive into the rest of the text. In verse 3 Luke makes known that this is post-resurrection, post the suffering, that Jesus has presented himself to them as convincing proof that he was alive. **FOR 40 DAYS: making an appearance to speak about the kingdom of God (Heaven)...**

**How else do we know that heaven is real? How else do we know we are serving the one who's overcome the world?**

- I believe it is here we see that the deed isn't finished just because physical proof has presented itself. I think it's important to note that just because something has physically manifested or been fulfilled does not mean more work is not at hand. Truthfully speaking I feel you know #Thereismore to be done, said, and experienced once you have exited the persecution connected to the promise.
- Sometimes we can find that many of us get discouraged by a result of something and because of said result, we don't wait for the outcome. **Understand that result... isn't the outcome.**

**What if I told you that the outcome is a direct reflection of what it is that heaven already had waiting for you all along!**

**Let's make it a little plainer:**

**Imagine standing your ground at work/internship and you get laid off. Now you "needed" this job/internship to fulfill the requirements of your degree program and you're heartbroken, shattered and hurt by the result. And yet, not too long after you find the strength to continue the pursuit of finishing the program by going after a position that was in need of creating the exact program you'd just been laid off from. Not even realizing that what you were looking for was right there all along. You graduate having created**

something that will last for years and years after you've gone and ascended to the next season/place God has called you to.

**BUT** what if you got caught up in the result? Would you have made the experience the outcome... I believe this verse highlights these sentiments beautifully!

Verse 4-5: **Instruction...**

*4 On 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. 5 For John baptized with[a] water, but in a few days you will be baptized with[b] the Holy Spirit."*

- This very important and note-worthy instruction Jesus gives to the disciples comes with such an awesome layered foundation.
- Jesus specifically instructs them to not leave Jerusalem; which isn't just any place but the place in which he was both crucified and resurrected. And yet, 40+ days which is all we can account for (who knows how long this was) Jesus still instructs them to not leave Jerusalem.

**Transliteration: Hierosoluma**

**Phonetic Spelling: (hee-er-os-ol'-oo-mah)**

**Location: Jerusalem, the capital of united Israel and Judah**

**Definition: "dwelling of peace," referring to the city of peace**

(Let's keep this in mind as we enter into verse 6 shortly): God tells the disciples to WAIT... DO NOT leave Jerusalem.

**How often is it that we want to abandon the things that have caused us the most grief? How often is it that we want to terminate the missions or events in our lives that we've endured the most painful experiences?**

- And yet, here we have Jesus the one who's experienced this public and intense betrayal that leads to such a monstrous death telling the disciples to **WAIT?**

- But that's not all, Jesus follows up with more... he REMINDS them of the promise his Father has given unto us the chosen people that he has been speaking about. This necessary reminder that he states 'I have been telling you about'... reminds us of where we've all first heard it from:

Here's a Flashback from John back in **John 1:32-33**

***32 Then John gave this testimony: "I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. 33 And I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.'***

What I love so much about this part of the text is the reminder and encouragement provided to us that:

- Yes, we will have to endure some things...
- Yes, we may have encountered what seems to be some setbacks as a result of this pandemic.

**BUT, don't move prematurely ... don't move because it's trending... don't move because you are getting restless, and don't move because THERE IS MORE!!!**

- I believe here we see Jesus saying this is what I have been preparing you for..... this is why I needed you to walk closely beside me because there is more and I need you to TELL it.

**Flashback to the book of John:**

- Jesus recalls and recites back the prophecy spoken at this point in now; 3 years and 40+ days later and here they were yet again in what can be presumed as a wilderness-like moment of waiting.
- Waiting can always seem/feel long but it's important that we remind ourselves as Jesus does with the disciples in this text that the promise indeed still stands!!

- It's important that we remind ourselves that we aren't just waiting on anybody. That even now in this pandemic, with all that is going on... this discussion of "opening up" outside. We must remind ourselves of who it is that we are waiting on-- I will say for me, I am waiting on the One who has overcome the world.
- I mean just think about it, Jesus is doing all of this after he predicts to them his death 3x's after he's predicted his betrayal, after he's released his betrayer, after he's predicted Simon/Peter's denial, after the physical manifestation of the crucifixion, and after he's been RESURRECTED!

**And guess what there is still MORE...**

**After all that's been done, what more is there for you?**

- Even with all that was going on, they weren't just waiting idly. They were waiting in the presence of Jesus over the past 40 days. (Do not forget the three years of preparation up to this point)
- We see such an awesome illustration here of what it looks like when you wait on your official release date from God. (You lose no time! )

**God's intended purpose is STILL manifesting!**

**Jesus's death wasn't in vain because there's proof not just of his death but of his resurrection. There's proof of the Heaven in which He ascends to.**

**During this time of quarantine, I challenge us all to acknowledge the things we too are dying from and of, and begin to rest in this time of waiting as God produces more out of us. When it's all said and done this will be your proof, this will be your evidence.**

**May I offer to you that if you wait and really stand still to listen... you'll find that the answer to whatever it is you've been seeking has already been given unto you.**

**Verse 6: Seeking Wise Counsel**

**The disciples do something so essential in their unprecedented and uncertain time of need, they seek Jesus for wise counsel! The text says they gathered around Jesus to ask about the restoration of Israel.**

- I love how this verse gives us further insight into the current state of Israel. That even after the resurrection the climate of the people wasn't one of peace.
- I love this because it gives us some understanding that restoration doesn't mean things will be perfect but instead it gives us this example to turn to the **Perfect One**. It is in our seeking and inward journey to Christ that we discover/receive RESTORATION.
- You see, restoration may not show up in the way in which you seek it, but listen, if you just seek him! (\*does a lap around the church)
- Restoration requires trust and obedience. These two things cannot be accomplished through pride and ignorance. Restoration takes time, and time requires waiting... because #Thereismore.

**Verse 7-9: Even while waiting... Be A Witness.**

As the text comes to a close we see yet another flashback to the book **John 1:32-33**

***32 Then John gave this testimony: "I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. 33 And I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.'***

- A prophecy foretold with an extension being connected to it. Not only have we come to witness Jesus being indwelt with the "Holy Spirit" but now the disciples (us) will receive the power of the "Holy Spirit" right in Jerusalem (Purpose).
- If you can remember I said we'd be back discussing the importance of Jerusalem and the clear instructions given unto them to not leave Jerusalem... this place where so much purpose has transpired. A place where chaos has happened and yet, in this prophecy, Jesus indirectly answers how God intends to restore it.
- Jerusalem wasn't just any capital it was the capital of Israel and Judah! A city whose name means peace surrounding chaos. How is this possible? How is it possible that even now with all that's going around us we can still have peace? Is this the gift of the Holy Spirit? (Romans 5:1-5)

- Jerusalem, the place in which God's chosen people were and yet still not at peace. Could this be God's way of restoring peace by extending the gift of it?
- And yet, Jesus makes it known that the disciples will be the witnesses of this freely given gift to all WHO BELIEVE.

**There is power in the witness and its fuel comes from leading by example.**

- Georgia is said to be opening and I am not sure if many of you have seen the number of disparities and death tolls of African American's and NOW MORE than ever we as the church have to be the example, we HAVE to be the witnesses.
- I loved looking at Jerusalem through the lens of each and every one of our own sacred places...a place of peace, a place where we can find rest in the comfort of Jesus.
- Being a witness isn't the same as being a timekeeper. God never intended for it to be this way but instead as disciples we don't keep the score we spread our own beautiful testimonies as a witness of God's hand on our lives.

**Verse 10-11: Peace proceeds restoration.**

After this final and major instruction, Jesus is taken up yet again only this time his departure is more subtle and peaceful. Jesus has spent 40 days with the disciples telling them all about heaven, given them many convincing proofs that he was indeed alive. Leaving behind the many wonderful testimonies, and life-changing lessons that have since then change the trajectory of Christianity in which we know it today. ***"This is the proof, This is the evidence."***

Perhaps Jesus is the first real example of the purpose of legacies...

What I love as the text comes to a close are the two men that appear in white come and tell the disciples ***10 They 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."***



- It's not about the results at the moment in time of Jesus's second departure but it's about the outcome that has transpired because of his obedience to go forth and live out the purpose in which he was called.
- Jesus has a track record of showcasing to us the importance of not just waiting but waiting on purpose. What if he rushed out of Jerusalem and never returned? Jesus is the example of what it looks like to wait, and see the manifestations of a legacy that is left behind years upon years later... And yes, it was tough. Yes, it has been tough for us all but oh the joy that comes in the morning!!!
- Let Jesus's second departure be a direct reflection of the peace that will hit us when we begin to see restoration hit our homes, and lands in the time that is to come. Let this moment be a reminder of the peace given to us right here on earth!

*All of this happened because of the level of waiting that took place.*

***WAIT... YALL, THERE'S MORE!***