

November 5, 2023

God's Good News Story

50 Days of Amazing Events

Post Resurrection, Ascension & Pentecost

In our year long series '*God's Good News Story*' we have traced the work of God to bring mankind into a right relationship with Him. It has been a story of God's '**Scarlet Thread of Redemption**' where He has persistently and graciously sought to 'seek and save the lost'.

Last week we storied our way through the last month of Jesus' life up to His resurrection. Let's quickly review the events of Sunday, Resurrection Day and then we will walk our way through the fifty days that followed...50 Amazing Days!

Jesus' Appearances After His Resurrection

Here's a list of Jesus' post-resurrection appearances recorded by the Gospel writers:

- **To Mary Magdalene at the empty tomb in Jerusalem (Mark 16:9; John 20:11–18).**
- **To other women at the empty tomb (Matt. 28:1–10).**
- **To two followers on their way to Emmaus (Mark 16:12–13; Luke 24:13–32).**
- **To Peter, apparently in Jerusalem (Luke 24:33–35).**

- **To ten of His disciples in Jerusalem, Thomas absent (Luke 24:36—43; John 20:19–25).**

This appearance to 10 of the disciples appears to have been on what we would call Sunday night. Jesus supernaturally appeared in the room with them and said simply "***Peace be to you***". He exhorted them to not be afraid and to see His hands and side and to touch Him for He was flesh and bones. He even asked for some fish and ate it in front of them. Jesus then proceeded to teach and enlighten them on why He had to suffer and die in order that repentance and remission of sin be made possible and that they were to preach that message to all the nations. Jesus states in **John 20:21**... "***As the Father hath sent me, so send I you***".

- **To the eleven disciples in Jerusalem, Thomas present (John 20:26–29).**

Jesus then tells them to wait, and He will soon send the Holy Spirit to them. Sometime that night or the next few days Thomas, who had not been there with them came and the disciples excitedly told him that Jesus had been raised and appeared to them. Thomas doubted and could not bring himself to believe unless he saw firsthand and touched Jesus himself. Well, eight days after that 1st group appearance, all the disciples were gathered together again, this time with Thomas present. Jesus, again appears to them and says again, "***Peace be to you***" then Jesus addresses Thomas directly and says "***Reach here your finger, and see my hands. Reach here your hand and put it into my side. Don't be unbelieving but believing.***" (**John 20:27**). Then Thomas makes his statement of faith and says "***My Lord and my God***"

- **To His disciples at Lake Galilee (John 21:1–14).**

At some point in the following 20-30 days, a seven of the disciples (Simon Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, James & John, and two others) made their way to Sea of Galilee/Tiberias and were staying there. If you remember Jesus had told Mary Magdalene and the other women to tell them to go to Galilee and wait for Him. That is what they did. While they waited for Jesus, Peter and the others went fishing one day and caught nothing, at nightfall as they were drawing near the shore and someone (later they discovered it was Jesus) and asked if they had any fish. They responded sadly “No”. He said cast your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some. They did as He said, and they drew in a large number of fish (153 to be exact). Peter then realized and exclaimed “It is the Lord”, He jumped into the water and swam ashore to meet Jesus. The other disciples tugged the heavy net ashore and joined Jesus for a wonderful reunion and fish dinner. This was the third time that Jesus had appeared to the disciples as a group.

At some point Jesus pulled Peter aside and asked him three times the same question “**Simon, son of Jonah, Do you love Me**”? Each time Simon Peter responded in the affirmative and Jesus responded with a call to ‘**Feed My sheep & feed My lambs**’. Peter was saddened by the same questions being answered but it appears that Jesus was allowing Peter to recant the three previous times he had denied he knew Christ in the courtyard at Jesus’ trial. Then Jesus confirmed the call on Peter to “Follow Him” and be His witness.

At some point Jesus gathered with all 11 of the remaining disciples and gives them (and us) what is known as ‘**The Great Commission**’

Matthew 28:18... ¹⁸ *Then Jesus came up and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”*

- **To His disciples at His ascension near Jerusalem (Acts 1:4-8; Mark 16:19—20; Luke 24:44–53;).**

Around day 35-40 after Jesus’ resurrection the disciples made their way back to the area around Jerusalem and to wait for the promise of The Holy Spirit.

Acts 1:4-8 ...⁴ *Gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, “Which,” He said, “you heard of from Me; ⁵ for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”⁶ So, when they had come together, they began asking Him, saying, “Lord, is it at this time that You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?” ⁷ But He said to them, “It is not for you to know periods of time or appointed times which the Father has set by His own authority; ⁸ but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and Samaria, and as far as the remotest part of the earth.”*

In this passage (Acts 1) Jesus again made the task of witnessing the Key Point of His message to them. Then Jesus and a group of believers gathered outside Jerusalem near a place called Bethany near or on the Mt. of Olives (Olivet) and Jesus gave His final words and ascended into heaven.

Listen to this Harmony of Passages in chronological order...

Lk 24:50 *Then Jesus led them out as far as Bethany. Acts 1:6* *So when they had gathered together, they began to ask him, “Lord, is this the time when you are restoring the kingdom to Israel?”⁷ He told them, “You are not permitted to know the times or periods that the Father has set 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 farthest parts of the earth.”⁹ After He had said this, Lk 24:50* *He lifted up his hands and blessed them.⁵¹ Now during the blessing, Acts 1:9* *while they were watching, He was lifted up and a cloud hid Him from their sight, Lk 24:51* *as He departed and was taken up into heaven. Acts 1:10* *As they were still staring into the sky while He was going, suddenly two men in white clothing stood near them¹¹ and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand here looking up into the sky? This same Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven will come back in the same way you saw Him go into heaven . Luke 24:52* *So they worshiped Him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy,⁵³ and were continually in the temple courts blessing God.*

In 1 Corinthians 15 the Apostle Paul states that a group of 500 people saw Jesus after the resurrection. It is likely that this is the same appearance a of the large group of people who were at the ascension of Jesus.

After this group of believers witnessed the miraculous ascension of Jesus they returned to Jerusalem with great joy and they worshipped continually in the temple.

The Ascension of Jesus Christ is meaningful for several reasons: (gotquestions.org)

- 1) It signaled the end of His earthly ministry. God the Father had lovingly sent His Son into the world at Bethlehem, and now the Son was returning to the Father. The period of human limitation was at an end.
- 2) It signified success in His earthly work. All that He had come to do, He had accomplished.
- 3) It marked the return of His heavenly glory. Jesus' glory had been veiled during His sojourn on earth, with one brief exception at the Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-9).
- 4) It symbolized His exaltation by the Father (Ephesians 1:20-23). The One with whom the Father is well pleased (Matthew 17:5) was received up in honor and given a name above all names (Philippians 2:9).
- 5) It allowed Him to prepare a place for us (John 14:2).
- 6) It indicated the beginning of His new work as High Priest (Hebrews 4:14-16) and Mediator of the New Covenant (Hebrews 9:15).
- 7) It set the pattern for His return. When Jesus comes to set up the Kingdom, He will return just as He left-literally, bodily, and visibly in the clouds (Acts 1:11; Daniel 7:13-14; Matthew 24:30; Revelation 1:7).

Acts 1:12-14 gives this account after the Ascension...

12 Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mountain called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away. 13 When they had entered the city, they went up to the upstairs room where they were staying, that is, Peter, John, James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas the son of James. 14 All these were continually devoting themselves with one mind to prayer, along with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.

For the next nine-ten days (day 40-day 49 after the resurrection) they worshipped and waited in Jerusalem. During this time, they chose a replacement for the betrayer Judas to make a complete Twelve (12) disciples. They chose a man named Matthis.

On Day fifty, known to us as the “Day of Pentecost” a group of believers (possibly around 120) were gathered in an upper room and there was a sound from heaven like a mighty rushing wind, then tongues of fire appeared and rested on them and they were filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues by the Spirit. A large host of people were nearby, and Peter began to preach to them the Gospel of Jesus and about 3000 people were saved that day.

Acts 2: 1-24... ¹When the day of Pentecost had arrived; they were all together in one place. ² Suddenly a sound like that of a violent rushing wind came from heaven, and it filled the whole house where they were staying. ³ And tongues, like flames of fire that were divided, appeared to them and rested on each one of them. ⁴ Then they were all

filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different languages, as the Spirit gave them ability for speech.⁵ There were Jews living in Jerusalem, devout men from every nation under heaven. ⁶ When this sound occurred, a crowd came together and was confused because each one heard them speaking in his own language. ⁷ And they were astounded and amazed, saying, “Look, aren’t all these who are speaking Galileans? ⁸ How is it that each of us can hear in our own native language? ⁹ Parthians, Medes, Elamites; those who live in Mesopotamia, in Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, ¹¹ Cretans and Arabs—we hear them speaking the magnificent acts of God in our own languages.” ¹² They were all astounded and perplexed, saying to one another, “What could this be?” ¹³ But some sneered and said, “They’re full of new wine!”¹⁴ But Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice, and proclaimed to them: “Men of Judah and all you residents of Jerusalem, let me explain this to you and pay attention to my words. ¹⁵ For these people are not drunk, as you suppose since it’s only nine in the morning. ¹⁶ On the contrary, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: ¹⁷ And it will be in the last days, says God, that I will pour out My Spirit on all humanity; then your sons and your daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, and your old men will dream dreams. ¹⁸ I will even pour out My Spirit on My male and female slaves in those days, and they will prophesy. ¹⁹ I will display wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below: blood and fire and a cloud of smoke. ²⁰ The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the great and remarkable Day of the Lord comes. ²¹ Then everyone who calls on the Name of the Lord will be saved.

The Importance of Pentecost For Us Today

➤ Pentecost Proves Jesus' Promises are Trustworthy.

“Jesus had told his disciples that the Holy Spirit would come to them. He would come to be their comforter, to remind them of everything that he had said, to speak through them the words that God had for them to share. Here Jesus fulfills that promise too. The Holy Spirit transforms these men from nervous people hiding in locked rooms to boldly proclaiming the good news about Jesus to the world. The Holy Spirit turns Peter's impetuosity into confidently sharing Jesus' forgiveness with all”. Adapted from:

<https://www.gdluth.org/blog/2019/6/9/sermon-what-does-pentecost-mean-acts-21-21>

➤ Pentecost Reminds Us of the Real and Powerful Presence of God In Our Lives

“On the day of Pentecost, seven weeks (50 days) after the resurrection of Jesus, the Holy Spirit was poured out upon those followers of Jesus who had gathered together in Jerusalem. Christians are meant to live in the presence and power of the Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit helps us to confess Jesus as Lord (1 Cor 12:3), empowers us to serve God with supernatural power (1 Cor 12:4-11), binds us together as the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:12-13), helps us to pray (Rom 8:26), and even intercedes for us with God the Father (Rom 8:27). The Spirit guides us (Gal 5:25), helping us to live like Jesus (Gal 5:22-23). Adapted from:

➤ Pentecost Reveals To Us the Vital Role that the Church Has In God's Plan to Build and Extend His Kingdom

Some Christian scholars believe that Pentecost is the Birth of the Church. Whether that is the case or not, it does show that God has appointed the Church (the people of God) and given us the power and purpose to reach the world by sharing Christ. We should join together with other believers in relying on the power of God to accomplish '*great and mighty things*' (Jeremiah 33:3)

➤ Pentecost Reveals The Multilingual and Multicultural Nature and Mission of the Church

Many people tend to think of the Church in light of what they look like, dress like or talk like. We must realize that God wants people of all colors, languages and backgrounds to love and serve Him and to work together in harmony to accomplish God's plan and will. The Church of God is open to all people who will repent, believe and surrender to God through Jesus. Outline point

Adapted from - Pentecost: The Day Everything Changed Rev. Becca Wieringa June 4, 2017.
<http://stpaulsumc.us/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/20170604-Pentecost-change.pdf>

➤ Pentecost Challenges Us to Be Active Disciples Who Share the Good News of Salvation and Lead People to a Deeper Relationship With God

The first thing the early Disciples did were to go forth in the power of God and to begin sharing the Gospel message of salvation and calling people to become disciples of Jesus. That is just what we are to do!

After Pentecost we can read in Acts how the early church grew and prospered as well as endured persecution.

Acts 2:42-47 states... ⁴² *And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.* ⁴³ *And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles.* ⁴⁴ *And all who believed were together and had all things in common.* ⁴⁵ *And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need.* ⁴⁶ *And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts,* ⁴⁷ *praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.*

The rest of the Good News Story of the early church and its growth and persecution is for another day. But let's close out our focus on the Post-Resurrection appearances of Jesus.

Final Appearance of the Post-Resurrected Christ

- **The appearances of Christ** to Saul/Paul (1 Cor. 15:8; Acts 9,22,23, 26)

After a period of years, 3-6 possibly, a man named Saul had a vision of Christ and converted and soon became known as the Apostle Paul. The last appearance of Jesus was to the Apostle Paul. It is a little uncertain as to all the details, but Paul states that he had at least three (3) encounters or visions of Jesus.

- (1) At his conversion on the Road to Damascus (Acts 9)
- (2) During a trance in the Temple area in Acts 22:17-21
- (3) Paul's vision in prison in Acts 23:11

We have covered a whole lot of historical ground in this closing out of God's Good News Story.

The main Take-Away is that Jesus Christ is the undeniable true Messiah and He came to "**seek & save the lost**". We are to join Him in this mission (The Great Commission) to reach the lost of this world and to bring them into a right relationship with God through Christ.

We are Commissioned to be His Disciples and to Make Disciples!