

# What's Next?

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] I ask you to open your Bibles to Acts chapter 1. Acts chapter 1, I'm going to read the first 11 verses. In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day he was taken up to heaven after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen.

After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of 40 days and spoke about the kingdom of God.

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.

For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit. So, when they met together, they asked him, Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?

He said to them, It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority, 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.

[ 1 : 2 9 ] After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them.

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 gospel is the account of God's saving work through the Lord Jesus Christ, his eternal son.

And God has been announcing that gospel ever since Genesis chapter 3, when man fell in the Garden of Eden.

So for some 4,000 years now, or since then, God kept telling his people about this coming Redeemer. And so the message through his prophets were, He's coming.

[ 2 : 4 2 ] He's coming. And then suddenly he came, breaking into human history by his virgin birth in Bethlehem. And that was the first of a whole cluster of saving actions by Jesus Christ.

Saving acts, even as this book is called Acts. The incarnation, when the eternal son of God became man, born of a virgin, made like us in every way, sin only accepted, taking on a human nature like ours, alongside of his divine nature.

That was the first of those saving acts of our Lord Jesus. And then secondly, he lived 33 years of perfect obedience, that he might have a righteousness to give to believing sinners.

And then he became sin for his people and died under God's curse and wrath on the cross, even as we've just sung.

Bearing our punishment for sin, that we might have our sins forgiven, blotted out, remembered no more. And then three days later, after his burial, he rose again.

[ 4 : 1 0 ] The next saving act. He rose again, triumphant over sin, death, and hell for all of his trusting people. Now for the last couple weeks, we've been looking at those last two saving acts.

His death in our place and his resurrection from the dead. Now this morning, I want to ask, what happened next?

What happened after the resurrection? What great events in God's saving plan followed Jesus' resurrection from the dead?

That wasn't the end of his acts of redemption. We're going to see the next three great events for our salvation this morning. And all three of them are mentioned here in our text that I just read for you.

Acts 1, 1 to 11. Now the book of Acts was written by Luke, a doctor who traveled with the Apostle Paul on his missionary journeys.

[ 5 : 1 1 ] And Acts, this book of Acts, is a sequel to his first book, the Gospel of Luke. And both of them were written to this same man whom he earlier called Most Excellent Theophilus, evidently a man of some social standing.

So Luke's book of Acts picks up the account where his Gospel left off. You see that as he opens. In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and teach until the day he was taken up to heaven.

That's a reference to Christ's ascension into heaven. And that's number one this morning. The next great act of Jesus in the history of salvation after his resurrection is his ascension into heaven.

Luke's Gospel ended with the ascension and now Acts begins with it. Now Luke's going to tell us about it in just one verse, verse 9.

But first he wants us to know that there were 40 days between Christ's resurrection and his ascension. We wouldn't know that if it were not for these words in verse 3 that tell us that.

[ 6 : 2 8 ] So Jesus died and was buried. Three days later, he rose from the dead. And then 40 days later, he ascended into heaven.

Now, what happened during those 40 days between his resurrection and his ascension? Well, according to verse 3, there were two things that happened.

First, he was appearing to his apostles and giving them many convincing proofs that he was alive. And secondly, he was teaching them. So let's consider those two things.

He first was showing himself to the apostles and giving them many convincing proofs that he was alive. Infallible proofs.

Undeniable proofs. And last Sunday, we saw some of those appearances to his apostles and the proofs that he gave them. He let them touch the nail prints in his hands.

[ 7 : 3 1 ] He showed them the marks in his hands and his feet. He let them put their hand where the spear had wounded his side. He ate and drank with them to show them he was not a phantom, just a mere spirit, but had a real physical resurrection body.

The same body that went into the tomb came out, though gloriously transformed. And we might ask, why? Why so many convincing proofs that he was alive?

Well, it was because of the subsequent ministry of these apostles. Apostle is a sent one. And as Christ sent ones, they were to go and to preach the gospel of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection.

Christ's real resurrection from the dead is an essential part of the gospel. In order to be saved, you must believe in your heart that God has raised him from the dead.

Romans 10, verse 9. There simply is no salvation apart from a resurrected, living Christ. So that's why when they set about later in this first chapter to replace Judas, we need another apostle to replace Judas.

[ 8 : 52 ] One of the qualifications of an apostle was to have personally seen the risen Christ. You see it in verse 22. Peter says that one of these who've been with us since the beginning, one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection.

So an apostle has to be an eyewitness of the risen Christ with no doubts that he was indeed alive. And that's why Jesus is found over this period of 40 days stooping to strengthen their faith, to answer their doubts by showing them many undeniable proofs that he was alive.

They could no more, by the time he's done, they could no more deny his resurrection than they could deny their own existence. They were convinced of it. And indeed, as an apostle who's to preach the risen Christ, that was a necessity.

So this became a reality they were willing to die for and their witness to the resurrection just fills their preaching as you read on through the book of Acts. Now Luke doesn't mean when he tells us that Jesus appeared to his disciples over a period of 40 days that he was with them constantly for those 40 days.

That's not what he's telling us. And indeed, that's not what we see in the Gospels. It's rather that he would just suddenly appear to them and then standing in their midst would teach them and speak to them and spend time with them and then sometimes leave just as suddenly as he appeared.

[ 10 : 31 ] He would disappear from their presence. So over the period of 40 days, he sporadically appeared to his apostles from time to time.

The New Testament points to around 10 such appearances over the 40 days. So that was the first thing that was going on what Jesus was doing during the 40 days.

He was appearing and showing them signs that he was alive. But secondly, he was teaching them. Verse 2 says, he was taken up to heaven after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen.

So these were the chosen apostles to carry this authoritative word of Christ to the entire world. Their teaching, therefore, is the foundation of the church.

As Ephesians 2.20 says, that the apostles and prophets are the foundation of the church with Jesus Christ himself as the chief cornerstone.

[ 11 : 40 ] So Jesus has only had these men for three years to train them. and he's using these last days with them to further instruct them.

And verse 3 gives us the specific content of his teaching. Notice, it says, he appeared to them over a period of 40 days and spoke about the kingdom of God.

The kingdom of God, which we heard in the Sunday school class as adults. The kingdom of which Jesus Christ is the king with all authority in heaven and earth given to him.

The kingdom that he came to establish on earth and will continue to build from his throne in heaven through these apostles as they go everywhere preaching the gospel and making disciples of Jesus Christ.

Seeing slaves of Satan's kingdom set free and brought over into the kingdom of Jesus Christ. Transplanted out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of the son he loves.

[ 12 : 53 ] This is what Jesus had been teaching for three years. You know, the gospels are full of the parables of the kingdom. That was Jesus teaching on the kingdom.

The laws of the kingdom, the citizens of the kingdom, that great sermon on the mount, that manifesto of the kingdom. His message is summarized in Matthew 4.23 as preaching the good news of the kingdom.

That was his message for three years. Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. And during Jesus' three years of public ministry, even great sinners were doing just that.

They were repenting. They were turning from their sins and turning to Jesus Christ in saving faith and submitting to his rule over them.

We even saw one of the thieves hanging on the cross beside Jesus doing that right there in his dying moments. Jesus told the scribes and the Pharisees that the tax collectors and prostitutes were entering the kingdom before them.

[ 14 : 06 ] So even while Jesus was preaching the kingdom and inviting people to come to him and to enter the kingdom, they were entering the kingdom. So Jesus had taught for three years about the kingdom.

And now after his resurrection, Jesus has precious little time left and so he uses his last words to his apostles to prepare them for their assignment. And that is all about establishing the kingdom of Christ on earth.

It's by the preaching of the gospel and making disciples that they would advance God's kingdom, his reign, his rule in the hearts of his people.

That's his kingdom here on earth. And in this we see the overlap of the church and the kingdom of God. They're not exactly the same. The kingdom of God is advanced by building the church of God.

The church is the people where God's rule is acknowledged and Christ's kingdom is actually seen. And so the church becomes, each local church becomes little outposts of the kingdom of God.

[ 15 : 26 ] So that was his message. As he had those 40 days to instruct them about the kingdom of God. Now Luke then gives us two samples of these appearances and teaching sessions that our Lord had with his apostles during these 40 years.

He just gives us two samples. The first is found in verses 4 and 5. And he says, 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 for John baptized with water but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.

Well what is Jesus talking about here? He's talking about the next great act of redemption after his ascension. ascension. It's as unrepeatable as his life and death and resurrection and ascension.

It's the abiding gift of the Holy Spirit poured out upon the church on the day of Pentecost. And so this is the second of the three great acts of Jesus after the resurrection.

First we're going to see his ascension but immediately after that just ten days after that we're going to learn on the day of Pentecost how the Spirit was poured out upon this little church in Jerusalem with the signs of a mighty rushing wind and tongues of fire that came upon their heads and the ability then to proclaim the good works of God his saving works in the many different languages that were represented during the feast of Pentecost.

[ 17 : 14 ] So he's speaking about the pouring out of the Spirit upon the church. Notice there were three that foretold this upcoming event. This was the promise of the Father he says in verse four.

Wait for the gift my Father promised. So throughout the Old Testament the Father's prophets foretold that the age of Messiah would be marked by a great outpouring of God's Spirit upon his people.

Indeed in the next chapter when Peter preaches on the day of Pentecost and is trying to explain to them the wonder of hearing God's word in different languages.

He's going to quote from Joel chapter 2 and explain this is what the prophet had said that God would pour out his Spirit upon his people.

So the Father had promised the Spirit the gift of the Spirit to his people. And then Jesus himself also foretold this upcoming event.

[18:18] You see he said in verse 4 wait for the gift my Father promised which you have heard me speak about that night in the upper room the night of his betrayal Jesus had said to his disciples in John 14 16 I will ask the Father and he will give you another helper another paraclete to be with you forever the Spirit of truth yes the Father promised in the Old Testament I spoke to you about it in the upper room and then third John the Baptist also spoke about this the forerunner of Jesus remember he said I baptize you with water but after me will come one more powerful than I the latch of whose sandals I'm not worthy to unloose he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit Jesus Christ will baptize you with the

Holy Spirit so there it is this is what's coming and now Jesus tells his apostles that this great event is just a few days away indeed it will be on the day of Pentecost 50 days after the resurrection so 40 days after the resurrection Jesus will ascend 50 days after the resurrection the spirit will be poured out upon his church by the Lord Jesus and that's exactly what Peter says to the crowd that day in chapter 2 verse 32 and 33 that this is an act of the ascended exalted Christ Peter says God verse 32 of chapter 2 God has raised this Jesus to life and we're all witnesses of the fact exalted to the right hand of

God he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see in here it is an act of Jesus from his throne to pour out the Spirit upon his church that is the second of the great saving acts that we see in this chapter his ascension to heaven his pouring out the Spirit upon his church so that was the first sampling that that Luke gives us about these meetings of Jesus with his disciples now we come to the second sample of his meeting with his disciples to teach them and actually this was his last appearance this is what he said when he appeared to them and then ascended into heaven which we'll see in verse nine but it begins in verse six so when they met together this is the meeting from which

Jesus is going to ascend when they met together they asked him and now we have the question from these confused and curious apostles Lord are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel now their question shows that they're still mistaken about the kingdom of God both as to its timing and to its ethnic identity of its citizens first let's look at its timing are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel they're expecting a positive answer we expect now to see Israel raised to prominence instead of being the tail to be the head of the nations and to be the one who is on top and we can understand why they might expect those glory days of Messiah's kingdom to happen at once they knew that

Messiah's kingdom would be marked by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and on this earlier the earlier occasion Jesus had told them this event is just a few days away oh so their expectations then of the glory days of Messiah's kingdom are running high and and so they is this the time you're going to restore the kingdom to Israel remember they've been in captivity for some nearly 600 years is this it now we need to remember that these are the same apostles they're not different apostles from those we met in the gospels and what did we meet in the gospels in terms of these men well they had lived three years with Jesus while Jesus was teaching them about the kingdom of God and yet they had been so wrong in their ideas about Messiah's kingdom and

[ 23 : 32 ] Luke's gospel showed us their earthbound expectations for Messiah's kingdom how they expected Jesus their Messiah to free Israel from captivity to Rome to come and crush the Roman army and to set Israel free from their political enemies and then for Jesus to set up his throne in Jerusalem and to raise Israel to the highest nation in the world and reign from his throne in Jerusalem with themselves the twelve reigning as kings with him over the nations you know to the very end of those three years that they were with Jesus they were arguing with each other about who's the greatest and who's going to have the seats of preferment on the left and the right in Jesus kingdom three years with Jesus instruction had not cured them of their erroneous thoughts about the kingdom of

Christ they had thought on their last trip to Jerusalem for the Passover that this was the time that the full glory of God's kingdom was going to be shown that it would appear at once you see that in Luke 19 and verse 11 so they expected to find yes this is the time when God's glorious kingdom is going to elevate Israel to the top and the book of Acts shows us that even Jesus death did not altogether cure them of such ideas you remember right after Jesus death on the day of his resurrection two of the disciples are walking along the road to Emmaus and what they said speaks of the view of all the apostles when they said and speaking to Jesus they didn't know it was Jesus but they said we had hoped past tense that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel we had hoped that he was going to be the one to save

Israel from her bondage to the Romans and elevate Israel oh but he died he died at the hands of the Romans who crucified him and with the death of their Messiah their hopes of his glorious kingdom died as well oh but now he's risen from the dead he's dead no more their king's alive and well and with the resurrection of their king their old hopes about his kingdom were also revived so they asked the newly risen king here Lord are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel surely now Lord now that we see that death was part of your plan and death is conquered now that the gift of the Holy Spirit is just days away from being poured out is this the time for the restored glory of the kingdom of Israel well from our perspective that they were 2,000 years off at least it hasn't happened yet and it should be a caution to us about date setting about the times of fulfilled prophecies but notice they were not only mistaken about the timing of

God's kingdom they're also mistaken about the ethnic identity of its citizens Lord are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel and these men still can't see past their prejudice of Jewish nationalism they're still thinking that the kingdom of God is exclusively a Jewish thing that the citizens of the kingdom were the tribes of Israel and what you can find as you read through the book of Acts is that the whole book will reveal how deeply embedded that Jewish nationalism was the idea that the followers of Messiah will be Jews chapters 10 and 11 show that it will take a miraculous vision in the event of the Gentile Cornelius to get through to the apostle Peter that God does not show favoritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what's right remember the sheet that came down three times it will take that to take that idea of

Jewish nationalism out of Peter's mind and to see no God is now accepting men from all nations who fear him and and and and and chapter 15 of Acts shows that the whole church council had to be held because the Jerusalem church and the Antioch church were at loggerheads as to what is the role excuse me what must a Gentile do to be saved and to join Messiah's kingdom and some said well they've got to be circumcised and keep the Old Testament laws and Paul and Barnabas said no we don't put that burden on them in the gospel it's faith and repentance period and so this was an issue that will go on for years in the book of Acts many of Paul's writings to the early church addresses the very same erroneous ideas that the kingdom of God is an exclusively Jewish thing and so we see something of this wrong idea here in the question that they ask of

[ 29 : 17 ] Jesus Lord are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel now notice Jesus response corrects both of their mistaken views of the kingdom first of all as for the timing of when the kingdom of God will come in its final glory he said to them verse 7 it is not for you to know the times or dates the father has set by his own authority but you will be my witnesses in other words that's none of your business that's the father's business your business is to be my witnesses to tell others what you have seen and heard and know about me my incarnation my life my death my resurrection my ascension into heaven the gospel that's your business Calvin says he cures their morbid curiosity by recalling them to their present duty they're curious about when will

Israel be lifted up among the nations and he says your business is to be my witnesses that's not your business that's not for you to know rather this is for you to do the work of the kingdom the agenda for now is to preach the gospel let that be your focus your business and how we need to be aware of diversions and distractions and curiosities that would pull us away from the main thing this is still our business church don't swerve from it be witnesses of the gospel of Jesus Christ if you know enough to be saved you know enough to tell another how to be saved that's the way Jesus corrected their ideas about timing secondly notice how he corrects their faulty ideas about the ethnic identity of the kingdom the citizens of the kingdom when he says verse eight you'll receive power when the

Holy Spirit comes on you that's this great event of Christ pouring out his spirit on the church and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth my kingdom is not a little Jewish thing men it's a universal kingdom my father told me that it's too small a thing for me just to save a few of the remnant of Israel he said I will also make you a light for the Gentiles that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth yes you will begin in Jerusalem where I was put to shame on a cross there you will spread my honor by declaring my gospel my glorious stop at Jerusalem you will go throughout all Judea the land of the Jews with my gospel but you will not stop there you will go on out into

Samaria those despised half breed Jews who intermarried with Gentile nations and were scorned by the Jews yes you will take the gospel to them they too are to be invited to enter my kingdom on equal footing with you and you're to go to the very ends of the earth those that you consider Gentile dogs if they repent and believe on me they will share equal citizenship in my kingdom with you believing Jews what a contrast this is from Jesus first commission that he gave to his apostles in Matthew chapter 10 when he sent them out to preach here's what he told them Matthew 10 do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans go rather to the lost sheep of Israel yes it was to be to the

Jew first but now it's to go also to the Greeks to the Gentiles God so the new covenant was a new constitution for Israel and it brought a change about in its citizens who is the Israel of God well now there's been a pruning in the new covenant the unbelieving Jews are pruned out and the believing Gentiles are grafted in and so with the new covenant established in Jesus blood a new commission for the disciples of Jesus is necessary to go into all the world and to invite one and all Jew Gentile whatever they are to come by faith and repentance to Jesus Christ and enter his kingdom so don't stop bearing witness to me until the very further most places of the earth have penetrated been penetrated with my gospel all the nations of the earth must be blessed by me that's what was promised to

[ 34 : 41 ] Abraham in Genesis 12 3 I have my people there to go and claim them for your king and aren't we Gentiles here in America thankful that the gospel has come to us and that we have been welcomed into the kingdom of Jesus Christ well it's no small task these men must have been looking at each other we are going to do this and Jesus knows it and so he says in verse that you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you this is the gift of the ascended Christ clothing them with power from on high Luke 24 49 and it's this power by which this little band of disciples were to turn the world upside down with the gospel of Jesus Christ not by my not by your might but by my spirit dwelling in you enabling you to be my witnesses our work this is still the unfinished business of the church and our work of making disciples from all nations is work that we are totally unfit for in ourselves it requires a supernatural equipping it's the almighty power of

God the Holy Spirit that is needed and it's needed to overcome obstacles in us and obstacles in our hearers it's the Spirit's power is needed to overcome our fear of man and to make us bold witnesses for Jesus Christ that power is needed to overcome our prejudice against people who are so different from us and so offensive to us that power is needed to overcome their prejudice against our king and his gospel and his laws to overcome their hatred of Christ their love of sin their blindness and unbelief and their fatal deception under Satan's sway and yes their apathy they just don't care you see obstacles both in us and our hearers that nothing but the spirit of Christ in us will be able to overcome so verse nine we're finally here we come then to the first great act of

Christ after the resurrection what is it it's his ascension look what he says in verse nine after he said this he was taken up before their very eyes and a cloud hid him from their sight this is no secret disappearance of Jesus into heaven but was in full view of these disciples this is another event historical event that they are to bear witness of and it's not a sudden disappearance as at other times during the 40 days when he would appear to them and then he'd be gone this was more protracted and drawn out it was slower he just begins to rise up off of the earth and continues to rise and they gaze at him as he's leaving them until a cloud hid him from their sight there was something more permanent about this leaving than what they had experienced during these 40 days and so looking intently up into the sky as he was going they're still gazing heavenward no doubt stunned by what they have seen and suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them probably angels as the two at the tomb men of

Galilee why do you stand there looking into the sky this same Jesus who's been taken from you into heaven will come back in the same way you've seen him go into heaven seems they were somewhat shocked at his departure not only the fact of a man floating into the air but the fact that he was leaving them they're wanting to claim to him to hold on to him just like Mary Magdalene when she saw the resurrected Christ fell at his feet and clung to his feet and Jesus says don't hang on to me I've not yet returned to my father and your father I've not yet returned to my God and your God I'm not going to be here anymore I'm going to send back to the father so don't get this idea of clinging to me and holding on to me and it seems these men had the same idea yes he told them he was going to leave them and then return to them but he had done that he had left them in death and they were without him for three days and then he returned to them three days later in the resurrection and it seems they thought that they had him now back for good expecting him to be always with them establishing this worldwide kingdom with them ruling from his throne in Jerusalem had he not said to them behold



I am with you always to the end of the age but now this he's gone he's gone what now and there seems to be something of a reproof in these angels words why do you stand there gazing into the sky reminding them of what they had forgotten the Lord's promise to come back bodily visibly with every eye seeing them don't just stand there do something do what he told you to do go back into Jerusalem and wait for the coming of the spirit and then go and preach his gospel and so the apostles returned to Jerusalem with great joy as they had been told to do and there they processed all that they had just seen and heard from the Lord Jesus and these two angels to wait for the gift of the spirit to empower them as witnesses to the ends of the age so what have we seen today well we've seen three more great acts of

[ 41 : 11 ] Jesus Christ after his resurrection first his ascension into heaven and they watched and watched until a cloud hit him from view but you know he didn't stop there at the clouds he went all the way to the right hand of the father and there was a top side to the cloud and and acts one doesn't tell us the top side we have to look at the rest of the Bible to find what did he send to he ascended to his coronation day his exaltation and coronation as king upon the throne of God at his own right hand the father was so pleased that his son's humble obedience unto the death of the cross that Philippians 2 9 says therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him a name that's above every name that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow and every tongue confess that

Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the father that's what happened on the top side of the cloud the father said to his son Psalm 110 verse 1 sit here at my right hand until I make all your enemies a footstool for your feet and and he and he's there today as king of kings lord of lords ruling over the whole universe for us his church Ephesians 1 and from that throne he intercedes for us as our great high priest he ever presents before the father there on his throne that sacrifice that he made for our sins as long as he is there presenting himself as the atoning sacrifice to take away our sins our salvation is sure he has satisfied God's wrath and justice that stood against us and so his presence there says father look on me and pardon them and he's also pitying our weakness from his throne of grace and he's sending mercy and grace to help us in our time of need to keep us from falling to bring us all the way home to heaven because he is able to save completely all who come to

God through him why because he always lives to make intercession for them that's what he did after he ascended he took his seat and there he has been praying for us and assuring our arrival in heaven so that's the first thing we've seen after the resurrection came the ascension 40 days later then 50 days after the resurrection the second thing we see the great act of Jesus Christ was as the ascended Lord pouring out his spirit upon his church to empower us for this task of being his representatives and witnesses to the world about a savior who's done all the saving work you say but my sin yes he died for sin he paid the price for sin he's done it he entered into the grave and he's triumphant over death he's done all that's needed and we're empowered by the spirit to take that message into the world though how these men went boldly into the world proclaiming this gospel of

Christ knowing that their King Jesus was alive and reigning with all over heaven and earth for them and that wherever they went with the gospel he was present with them yes his words were true when he said behold I am with you always to the ends of the earth he is with them by his holy spirit for what Christ does in the earth today is done through his holy spirit they share one and the same divine nature and where the spirit of and so he went with them from his throne by his spirit he blessed their gospel witness and is building his church I will build my church he says oh but you're in heaven oh yes but I have I work through my my holy spirit I work through the church as witness and I am the one building that church that's the second great act the outpouring of the spirit upon the church for witness and that leaves one more great act of

Jesus Christ and the two angels dressed in white announced it at his ascension this same Jesus whom you have just seen taken from you into heaven will come back in the same way you've seen him go that's the last that's that's the last great act of salvation Jesus Christ physically returning to the earth that's the next thing on the salvation calendar of heaven it's not only the next thing it's the last thing all the others are over and past his incarnation his life death resurrection ascension outpouring of the spirit they all happened within around 33 years and now we've had 2,000 years and the next great act of salvation for 2,000 years it's been the next great act of salvation the last act his return from heaven bodily return not to bear sin but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him he's coming back with all of his glory to wrap up this great mission of salvation to judge all men to assign the eternal destinies of devils and angels of men and women boys and girls either heaven or hell and then to create a new heaven and a new earth the home of righteousness and peace and perfect love for his redeemed ones he's coming back to usher in the final stage of his kingdom that will have nothing of the curse left anywhere nothing nothing nothing of sin and evil nothing to destroy or no death or sorrow or pain nothing to disturb our peace and rest only the fullness of joy at

[ 47 : 46 ] Christ's presence forever with eternal pleasures at his right hand pleasures that never perish spoil or fade that's what's next on the calendar of heaven are you ready for it are you waiting for it are you longing for it our Lord's not been idle on his throne for 2000 years he's been gathering his bride he's been building his church he's been advancing his kingdom made up of believers of all nations many of you here that's who he was gathering aren't you glad Jesus didn't come back 100 years from now or before 100 years before now none of us would know these eternal pleasures they didn't come back 50 years ago 20 years ago 5 years ago some of you were not in

Christ five years ago you see he's being patient as he's gathering in his bride more and more sinners taken from the kingdom of darkness and planted into this kingdom of the Lord Jesus love and light don't miss it my friend Jesus Christ is coming back you can't count on a lot of things for sure but this one's for sure and the moment he returns the door is closed forever you've got to get into Christ now get into Christ today how will you escape if you neglect so great a salvation so great a savior as our Lord Jesus you know others are pressing into the kingdom today as the gospel is going on he's gathering more people into his kingdom why shouldn't it be you if you're outside of Christ why shouldn't you be one who is pressing into the kingdom by repentance and faith surrender in faith to this great king join the ranks of those who will see him face to face and hear from him welcome enter the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world amen let's pray father this whole plan of salvation was yours you with your son and the holy spirit and you have been executing that plan through your son the only mediator between

God and man the only way we could stand redeemed before a holy God we thank you for such a plan and thank you for including us in it there are some that are outside of Christ and we long to see them gathered in would you empower us by your spirit to lose our fear of man and to boldly proclaim this message to a world that is dying in darkness and deceit help us thank you for the gift of the holy spirit to work in us and to work in those that we bear witness to to open their hearts to receive the message as you did Lydia's heart that they might repent and believe do it do it in this place do it around the world today and we'll give all glory and praise to you in Jesus name amen let's sing one verse of closing hymn number 244 spirit strength of all the weak we've learned of that great event of the spirit being given 244 we cry to the holy spirit to strengthen us and to give us courage to present this gospel let's sing the first and last verses stand with me as we sing 244 voice and beer for you