

# ASCENSION:

## THE “FORGOTTEN” CHRISTIAN FESTIVAL

### A. The Big “7” of the Christian Church Year”

Christmas, Epiphany, Palm Sunday, { Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, } Easter, Ascension, Pentecost  
 (Zechariah 3:9d)

### B. “Why Did Jesus Have to Stay on Earth for “40” Days after His Resurrection?”

**Acts 1:3:** After His suffering Jesus also showed the apostles through many convincing proofs that He was alive; He was seen by them for 40 days and spoke with them about the Kingdom of God.

#### 1. The Major “40s” of the Bible:

Genesis 7:4 (Noah’s Flood); Exodus 16:35 (40-year journey with manna); **Exodus 24:18 & 34:28** (Moses’s glory-revelation after 40 days on his second 40-day trip up Mt. Sinai); 1 Kings 2:11 (David’s reign) & 1 Kings 11:42 (Solomon’s reign), both of 40 years; **1 Kings 19:8-15** (Elijah’s glory-revelation after 40 days); Matthew 4:2; Mark 1:13; Luke 4:2 (Jesus in the wilderness); **Acts 1:3** (Jesus’s Ascension [the ULTIMATE glory-revelation] 40 days after His resurrection.

**2. KEY:** Recall that it was Moses and Elijah who appeared to Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration! All three men had significant 40s!

**3.** For the moment, let’s view and compare Jesus’s Ascension as He entered into that very special glorified PRESENCE of GOD. What can we say?

Moses had the greatest OT \_\_\_\_\_ of GOD, while

Elijah had the greatest OT \_\_\_\_\_ of GOD, while

Jesus had the greatest NT \_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_ of GOD EVER!!!

As to Moses, compare Exodus 33:18-23 with 34:5-7, 29 (“face shined,” a VISUAL revelation from GOD)!

As to Elijah, see 1 Kings 19:8-13

(God was not in the “wind, earthquake, fire” but came with His “still, small Voice,” an AUDIO revelation from GOD).

As to the human, exalted Jesus, His entrance into the very PRESENCE of GOD became the ULTIMATE VISUAL & AUDIO revelation of the LORD GOD.

(This will be elaborated upon in our study of Daniel 7 below!)

4. What did the resurrected **Jesus** do on earth for **40 days** before He **ascended** into heaven? What does **John 20:17** imply?

“**Jesus** said to her [Mary Magdala]: “Do not touch Me/Stop holding onto Me, for **I** have not yet **ascended** to My **Father**,....”

- a. Peter Toon’s & F. F. Bruce’s “time” conclusion: **Jesus** **ascended** back to heaven on Easter Sunday right after He appeared to Mary—and then made *repeated* trips back and forth from heaven to earth over the next days until His final **Ascension** **40 days** after His resurrection.
- b. The Giessler “time” conclusion: **Jesus** was compelled to stay on earth for **40 days** after His resurrection in order to “parallel” & “better” **Moses & Elijah** since they were a prophetic TYPE & FORESHADOWING, while **Jesus** was the ANTITYPE or PROMISED FULFILLMENT & REALITY of that former FORESHADOWING. (In an extended way, consider **John 1:17**: “For by **Moses** came the Law, but grace and truth came through **Christ Jesus**.”)

Our **Savior** would have had plenty of things to do on earth during His final **40 days**. Numerous people—those who had had contact with Him before His death, and even others who had watched Him die at Calvary—would need to know that He had risen from the dead. **Jesus** now needed to do vital evangelism! He needed to show those He had healed, comforted, raised from the dead, etc., that He was their **Living Savior**.

**Christ** may have visited that Gentile centurion who had the greatest faith that **Jesus** had witnessed during His *earthly* ministry. Also, our **Risen Redeemer** may have appeared to that Canaanite woman whose faith proved very strong when He had challenged her faith by referring to her as a “dog.” (**Christ’s** *post-death* resurrection may have needed to *cement both* of their faiths once again in a time when their faiths were possibly faltering, each having heard that **Jesus** was dead, but, like doubting Thomas, they may *both* have been questioning whether the **Healing One** had *truly* risen.)

And what about Jairus, Zacchaeus, Bartimaeus and his now-seeing buddy? And what about the formerly demon-possessed man in Gentile territory who had had 6,000 evil spirits driven out of him, or the Centurion who had guarded the cross, and maybe even the “rich” man who loved his riches more than his invitation to become a disciple of the **Savior**?

Need I cite more examples? Certainly **Jesus** had more than enough work to do on earth during the **40 days** between His resurrection and His **Ascension**.

---



---

### C. On This Side of the “**Cloud**”

**Acts 1:3-12** states: “After His suffering **Jesus** also showed the apostles through many convincing proofs that He was alive; He was seen by them for **40 days** and spoke with them about the Kingdom of God. When He met with them, He ordered them not to leave Jerusalem but to wait for what the **Father** had promised, ‘which,’ He said, ‘you have heard from Me; for John baptized with water, but in a few days, you will be baptized with the **Holy Spirit**.’ “When they came together, they asked Him, ‘**Lord**, are You now going to reestablish the kingdom of Israel?’ “He told them, ‘It is not for you to know what times or periods the **Father** has set by His own authority. But when the **Holy Spirit** comes upon you, you will receive power and will testify of **Me** in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the farthest parts of the world.”

“When He had said this and while they were watching Him, He was lifted up, and a **cloud** took Him away so they could no longer see Him.

“As He was going up and they were gazing into the sky, two men in white clothes were standing right beside them. They asked, ‘Men of Galilee, why are you standing here looking up into the sky? This **Jesus**, who was taken away from you to heaven, will come back in the same way that you saw Him go to heaven.”

#### **BRIEF COMMENTS ON THE MOST IMPORTANT PARTS OF THE FOREGOING TEXT!**

1. The disciples were to wait in Jerusalem for **PENTECOST**!
2. Do not be “Last Times” daters! And do not make **GOD**’s *spiritual* Kingdom into a *physical* one! (Think about the recent so-called “Nineveh” eclipse!)
3. Be filled with the **Holy Spirit** and get moving (into four *geographical* areas).
4. **Jesus** **ascended** up out of the sight of the disciples.
5. Two angels appeared with a *question* that strongly implied that the disciples needed to march out with their *evangelism* sandals on and their mouths speaking.
6. The angel messengers also said that **Jesus** would one day descend just as He had **ascended**—and that He would return on **clouds**. See **Mark 14:62**.

## D. The Other Side of the “**Cloud**”

**Daniel 7:9-10b,13, 14:** I [Daniel] was watching until thrones were placed and **Ancient of Days** sat down. His clothes were as white as snow and the hair on His head like pure wool. His throne was fiery flames and its wheels a blazing fire. A stream of fire flowed, coming from Him. Thousands upon thousands served Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him.

In the visions during the night, I [Daniel] saw **One** coming with the **clouds** of the heavens like **the Son of Man**, and He came to **Ancient of Days** and was presented before Him. And He was given **glory, power to rule, and a Kingdom**, so that all peoples, nations, and those of every language should serve Him. His authority is everlasting and will not pass away, and His Kingdom one that will *not* be destroyed.

## E. Thoughts on the Selected Verses of Daniel 7:

1. A Judgment Scene with the **Ancient of Days** presiding, noting *some* of His attributes!
2. The angels around Him equaled **100,000,000**.
3. The **Son of Man** is to return on the **clouds** of the heavens. What are they? See **Psalm 104:3**: “You make Your angels winds and Your servants flames of fire.” (Also, interpret by thinking of **Elijah’s chariot & horses** as he ascended to heaven.)
4. What was given to the **Son of Man** according to His Human Nature? **Reverse the words!!!**
5. How long will **Christ’s Kingdom** last? **Compare Revelation 11:15 with Daniel 2:44!** Also, think of Handel’s “**Messiah**”—“**forever and ever and ever!**”

## F. The Athanasian Creed:

“who although He is **God** and **Man**; yet He is not **two**, but **one Christ: one, not** by conversion of the **Godhead** into flesh; but by the assumption of His manhood into **GOD**” [at the time of the **Ascension** of **Christ** in His State of Exaltation according to His Human Nature]. (**Council of Chalcedon—AD 451**: “*union without fusion; separation without distinction*”!)

---



---



---



---



**H.** Some Other Passages *Pertinent* to Christ's **Ascension**; Thus, Ascension Sermon Texts:

**Psalm 68:18a, b**;

Psalm 110:1, 6;

**Zechariah 14:3-5** (See Laetsch, *The Minor Prophets* (CPH) for interpretation.

The "mountain" (Mt. Olivet, the mountain from which **Christ ascended**) *symbolically* splits "east and west," so that *symbolically* a "valley" of protection for **Christians** is formed to *protect* them while *evangelizing*. Therefore, they would be able to carry the Gospel to the four-corners of the earth—in every direction, *successfully*!

A biblical interpreter must realize that the **Holy Spirit** does not bind Himself to human time-parameters when inspiring Scripture. **He is timeless.**

In **Daniel 7** things are not chronological. They go from a history scene to a judgment scene that covers various periods of historical time—and then *seemingly* carries it on to the Final Judgment. The Daniel 7 text then backtracks to the **Ascension** of **Christ**. Finally, it dances back and *seemingly* covers the whole New Testament period.

**Zechariah 14** also presents a *complex* time-pattern, but a different one to be sure! It *seems* to be more *chronological* but adds an even more difficult *symbolism*. The first two verses *tend* to speak about the days of the Early Church, while verses 3-5 speak *symbolically* of **Christ's Ascension** from Mt. Olivet.

The next verses speak of the Reformation Era (thus, Laetsch) and *seemingly* travels on down through the history of the whole New Testament to Judgment Day.

The ball is now in your court as the interpreter. May the **Holy Spirit** enlighten you!!!)

Matthew 28:18;

John 14:1-3;

**Ephesians 1:20-23**;

Colossians 2:9, 10;

Hebrews 2:7, 8;

**1 Peter 3:21c, 22**;

Revelation 1:4-5d.