

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION
Acts: The Continuing Earthly Ministry Of Our Lord Jesus Christ
Part II: Trusting Christ's Enthronement For Hope In His Continuing Earthly Ministry
(Acts 1:8-14 et al.)

I. Introduction

- A. When a Christian seeks to serve God in the ministry the Lord has given him, he can become discouraged and cease serving in hopelessness due to the spiritual weakness or darkness he sees in himself or in others.
- B. However, a proper understanding of the enthronement of Christ as it relates to His continuing earthly ministry through the believer is vital for the believer to remain confident in Christ's work in his behalf to make his ministry effective, and Acts 1:8-14 with other Scriptures provides that encouraging insight:

II. Trusting Christ's Enthronement For Hope In His Continuing Earthly Ministry, Acts 1:8-14 et al.

- A. Right after Jesus predicted His disciples would be effective witnesses of His truth to the ends of the earth based upon His sending them the empowering Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8 with John 14:16-18), He was taken up to heaven in His disciples' presence, and a cloud received Him out of their sight, Acts 1:9-10a.
- B. We know from other Old Testament passages that this event comprised His ascension, and it led to His enthronement in glory and power at the Father's right hand in behalf of, among other entities, the Church:
 - 1. Daniel 7:13-14 predicted the Son of Man, the Lord Jesus Christ, would come up to God the Father with the clouds of heaven. This was fulfilled at the Acts 1:9 event of Christ's post-resurrection ascension.
 - 2. Upon entering heaven's glory, Christ's voluntary limitation of the expression of His divine glory ended, and He was enthroned in divine glory to rule the universe, Daniel 7:14; Ephesians 1:20.
 - 3. We know from Hebrews 1:3 that Christ sat down at the right hand of God the Father, the hand of honor (Ephesians 1:20), and He rules there today over all other powers in heaven and on earth, Eph. 1:20-22a.
 - 4. Indeed, Christ is enthroned in complete sovereignty over all things relative to the Church, Eph. 1:22b. His enthronement fills the Church in every way with gifts and blessings for His own interest that it grow and be edified to the glory of God, Eph. 1:23 with 4:11-16; Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 621.
- C. That enthronement set the stage for the Church to have enormous divine influence in its earthly mission of being used by the Sovereign Lord to disciple the world's nations (as follows):
 - 1. Once Christ was enthroned in infinite power and authority, the Church could go into all the world and disciple the nations with the promise of making a real impact, cf. Matthew 28:19-20a, b.
 - 2. Indeed, believers would see Christ's great authority open doors of opportunity for effective ministry, and equip them to succeed in ministry as they relied on His power and leading, 2 Corinthians 2:14-17.
 - 3. We can illustrate how this ministry worked in a specific case reported in Acts 16:6-18:22 (as follows):
 - a. Although churches later existed there, the Holy Spirit under Christ's headship repeatedly kept Paul and his ministry team from going to the provinces of Asia and Bithynia, Acts 16:6-7; 1 Peter 1:1.
 - b. When the only door open to them was the seaport town of Troas, after they had gone there, the Lord gave Paul a vision encouraging him to cross the Aegean Sea to minister in Europe, Acts 16:8-11.
 - c. Heeding that lead opened up a productive ministry for Paul in Europe, cf. Acts 16:12-18:22.
- D. Consequently, after Christ had ascended, and the disciples were gazing up into heaven after His departure, two angels explained that Christ would return just as He had gone away, Acts 1:10-11. Since Jesus had ascended to heaven from the Mount of Olives (Acts 1:12), we know this refers to His Second Coming to earth to set up His messianic kingdom as predicted in Zechariah 14:3-9 when Christ returns and his feet again touch the Mount of Olives (Zechariah 14:3-4)!
- E. Realizing they were to follow Jesus' pre-ascension teaching to wait in Jerusalem for their equipping of the Holy Spirit, and then to go into all the world to disciple the nations, the disciples returned in faith in that instruction to Jerusalem to wait for that spiritual empowering and guidance, Acts 1:12-14; Mtt. 28:19-20.

Lesson: Christ's ascension to heaven and exaltation at the Father's right hand prior to His sending the Holy Spirit to equip the Church set Him in the position to make the believer's ministry very effective!

Application: May we like the apostles respond to Christ's ascension by TRUSTING His SOVEREIGN oversight of all things, that in place of faithless defeat, we might know effective service! (John 15:5-8)