

SERIES: Transition Time  
SUBJECT: From Jesus' presence to Jesus' power  
READING: Acts 1:9-25

Introduction:

**Last week I took the opportunity to tell you about the importance of the local church as it is presented in the New Testament and its historic influence on the individuals who love and are a part of the Local church which Paul called a mystery!**

*Eph 3:3-10 How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, (4) Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) (5) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; (6) That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: (7) Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. (8) Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; (9) And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: (10) **To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,***

**I also pointed out that many of our contemporary churches have abandoned the New Testament pattern of church government with its pastors, deacons, and involved and committed congregations all under the headship of Christ. Their alternative is the Old Testament God used in the Wilderness under Moses a powerful leader and a prescribed**

**number of helpers to minister and administrate. In Moses case seventy; Num 11:16-17** And the LORD said unto Moses, Gather unto me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom thou knowest to be the elders of the people, and officers over them; and bring them unto the tabernacle of the congregation, that they may stand there with thee. (17) And I will come down and talk with thee there: and I will take of the spirit which *is* upon thee, and will put *it* upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou bear *it* not thyself alone.

**Although this pattern was effective in the Old Testament God ordained the New Testament pattern and expounded it in particular here in the book of Acts. The old testament had a pattern of a chosen number to be minister to the nation. The New Testament Pattern is that every member is to be a minister.**

**It is the work of the church to make it so; Eph 4:7-12** But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. (8) Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (9) (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? (10) He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) (11) And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; (12) For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

**Sense this is God's plan for the church age it should be no surprise that Satan would attack it!**

- 1. In the Old Testament a finite number were called required to make a commitment;**

2. **In the new testament pattern every minister is called to be a minister and those who obey are committed to their calling in a particular locality!**

**As evidence of Satan's attack on the Local Church I ask;**

1. **When was the last time you read a tract or heard a gospel presentation that ends with a discussion of the believer's relationship to the church?**
2. **At best there is a very low emphasis on church involvement, church membership, and being a part of the family of God in the visible, gathered household of saints.**
3. **And in the massive effort to make salvation personal which it is the part of that personal relationship with Christ the saved are called to be a part of a local Church.**
  - a. **Where they are saved, taught, trained, and sent forth in the harvest field, called to the process the fruit, and send it out to bear more fruit;**

**Joh 15:7-16** If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. (8) Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. (9) As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. (10) If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. (11) These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and *that* your joy might be full. (12) This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. (13) Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. (14) Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. (15) Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth:

but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you. (16) Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

- b. Unfortunately the church has been left behind and overlooked to the detriment of many souls.**
  - 1. Too many people today tend to be ecclesiastical consumers.**
  - 2. They're only interested in what they can get out of their church, and they bounce from congregation to congregation as their whims and interests change.**
  - 3. The shop for the best value in the product they consume, rather than producing a product the lost world needs!**
  - 4. They don't have any particular commitment or loyalty to a specific assembly of saints.**
  - 5. In fact, they have little to no attachment to the church at all, and are under no obligation for regular attendance—if they make it, they make it; if not, it's no big deal.**
  - 6. For people like that, their faith is completely anchored in their personal relationships with Christ; there is no corporate commitment or responsibility to the people of God.**
  - 7. Their Christianity exists completely outside and apart from the church.**

- c. But the idea of believers living independently of the church is totally foreign to the New Testament.**
- i. The Holy Spirit addressed almost every epistle to a local church, and other books like 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, and Philemon were addressed to key leaders in the church.**
  - ii. Even the book of James—which was written to believers scattered by persecution—assumes the recipients are still meeting together and deals heavily with life in the context of the church.**
  - iii. Throughout the New Testament the assumption is always the same: that the people of God are faithfully gathering together in a local assembly where the Word of God is being disseminated.**
  - iv. That unified gathering—not just the invisible worldwide church in prospect, but is the local, visible congregation manifesting all that the entire body of believers represents!**
  - v. The Local Church is at the heart of Christianity.**
  - vi. The church is the only institution the Lord established and promised to bless.**
  - vii. Why would anyone who claims to love the Lord want to keep His people at arm's length?**

- d. The widespread lack of commitment to the local church shows up in many other ways as well—**
  - i. The rampant neglect of baptism and communion,**
  - ii. The explosion of parachurch ministries, and**
  - iii. The forsaking of the biblical qualifications for church leadership are just a few examples.**
  
- e. May our church, Calvary Baptist Church of Sebastian be an example of Christ’s church and may we challenge believers to become a part of the commitment but A PART OF THE COMMUNITY OF BELIEVERS!**

AND NOW BACK TO ACTS;

As we studied Acts A COUPLE OF WEEKS AGO we saw Jesus appear in the upper room settling all doubts concerning His resurrection; we heard His instructions concerning the need for them to go to Jerusalem and wait for the coming of the Holy spirit to empowered by the indwelling presence of God’s presence and His power through the Holy Spirit.

As the title of this lesson implies, they were experiencing a transition from Jesus’ personal presence to power’s presence in every believer.

Immediately Jesus steps on a cloud and ascends into Glory where He is seated at God’s right hand! He has been recently joined there in glory by three of our beloved brothers!

## **The assurance of His coming again is the subject of (vv. 9-11).**

**Act 1:9-11** *And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. (10) And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; (11) Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.*

Christ's ascension into heaven was an important part of His ministry, for if He had not returned to the Father,

- He could not have sent the promised gift of the Holy Spirit which He promised and which Acts chronicles!
- Also, in heaven today, the Saviour is our interceding High Priest, giving us the grace that we need for life and service

**Heb 4:14-16** *Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* profession. (15) For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are*, yet without sin. (16) Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*

- He is also our Advocate before the Father, forgiving us when we confess our sins ().

**1Jn 1:9-10** *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all*

unrighteousness. (10) If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

1Jn 2:1-2 My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: (2) And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for *the sins of the whole world*.

- The exalted and glorified Head of the church is now working with His people on earth and helping them accomplish His purposes (Mark 16:19-20).

Mar 16:19-20 So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. (20) And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with *them*, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.

**As the believers watched Jesus being taken up to glory, two angels appeared and gently rebuked them.**

- Angels play an important role in the ministry described in Acts, just as they do today, even though we cannot see them. (see Act 5:19-20 *But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said, (20) Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life.*

Act 8:26 And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert.

; Act 10:3-7 He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying

unto him, Cornelius. (4) And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God. (5) And now send men to Joppa, and call for *one* Simon, whose surname is Peter: (6) He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do. (7) And when the angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually;

; **Act 12:7-10** And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon *him*, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from *his* hands. (8) And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me. (9) And he went out, and followed him; and wist not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision. (10) When they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city; which opened to them of his own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street; and forthwith the angel departed from him.

Paul was on a sailing ship on his way to Rome; the ship was about to sink when I believe Jesus appeared to him with instructions and assurance **Act 27:23-24** **For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve,**

It is also true that the angels minister to us as the servants of the saints (Heb. 1:14). ***Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?***

**The two messengers on that day gave the believers assurance as they do to us today that Jesus Christ**

**would come again, just as He had been taken from them.**

- This seems to refer to His public "coming in clouds" (Matt. 24:30; 26:64; Rev. 1:7) rather than to His coming for His church "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye" (1 Cor. 15:51-52; 1 Thes. 4:13-18).
- Regardless of what views different people may take of God's prophetic program, *Christians agree that Jesus is coming again and that He can come at any time.*
  - This in itself is a great motivation for faithful Christian service.
  - Those who have this hope serve Christ daily looking for that glorious return!

**What an unforgettable moment!** His resurrection was a monumental moment, but whereas **He arose in secret**, He ascended openly, visibly, before the astonished eyes of a host of His disciples.

- His resurrection was a triumph of the highest order, signaling the conquest of the grave forever and for all His own.
- Resurrection, rare as it was, remarkable as it was, was a known phenomenon.
- But that a man in a human body should defy the law of gravity and slowly but surely ascend upwards to the sky, that was a crowning wonder of a life full of wonders.
- In fact, the Holy Spirit considers the ascension of Christ so important that He mentions it in Acts and the gospels no less than twenty times and uses thirteen different words and

expressions to describe it, each one reflecting a different shade of meaning.

- So it was that Jesus went home, angel escort and all, up through the clouds, up beyond the stars, back to the glory land whence He came.
- But now He was different; now He had a human body, a **battle-scarred by a sinful world for sin** but still a resurrected, glorified human body.
- In that body He arrived at the gates of glory, watched by the adoring angel throng, up to the throne of the Father, there to sit down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.
- A Man in a human body is now seated on God's throne, because, as God the Son, second Person of the Trinity, as coequal and coeternal with the Father, He has every right to be there.

### **The spiritual significance of that ascension must not be overlooked.**

- It means we now have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.
- We have a Mediator in heaven, a great High Priest, touched with the feelings of our infirmities, able to minister on our behalf.

### **As the old hymn puts it:**

Lifted up was He to die,  
"It is finished," was His cry,  
Now in heaven exalted high;  
Hallelujah! what a Saviour!  
(*Philip P. Bliss, "Hallelujah, What a Saviour"*)

## G. The Prospect of His eminent return is revealed (1:10-11)

Act 1:10-11 And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; (11) Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

1. The attention of the disciples was riveted on the sky.  
Unable to look away!
2. They did not miss a move or a motion of that astonishing ascent so long as their beloved Lord remained visible.
3. **It was the end of an era.**
  - a. That which had begun in a cradle now ended in a cloud. God in Christ had come down to earth; now He had gone back to heaven.
  - b. For thirty-three and one half years this planet had been visited from outer space.
  - c. The Son of the living God had been born, had grown up, had ministered, traveled, and taught, had been killed and buried, had conquered death, and now He had gone home.
  - d. Never before and never again, in all the history of the universe, would its like be seen.