

## Research: Acts 1:1-3-4, 7-8, 9

### ASCENSION

#### 1 The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach,

The name *Theophilus* is from two Greek words: *theos* and *philos* – which translated is “friend of God” (*Strong* #2321). We might think of the name to mean “God-loving.” There is no reason to think he was not a real person, possibly Luke’s patron, who helped finance publication of the gospel.

The first account or “former treatise” that Luke wrote was his gospel, which was a record of Jesus’ healings and teachings. Both works – Acts and Luke – are to be read as a whole unit.

#### 2 Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen:

The first phrase is a description of Jesus’ ascension which actually inaugurates the apostles’ mission. “Luke stresses the Spirit-guided apostolic character of the Christian gospel. This is the first of 57 occurrences of ‘the Spirit’ [or Holy Ghost] in the book of Acts” (*AB Acts* 196).

The word “ghost” in Greek is *pneuma*. It is “breath, Spirit, wind, air” (*Strong* #4151) and is associated with the concept of movement. The Scriptures open with: “The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters” (Gen. 1:2).

SH 588:7-8

**HOLY GHOST.** Divine Science; the development of eternal Life, Truth, and Love.

“whom he had chosen” alludes to Luke 6:13: “he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles.”

“**Apostle**” in Greek is *apostolos*, which means, “a messenger, one sent on a mission” (*Strong* #652).

#### 3whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:

**Infallible** is *tekmeron* in Greek which means “that from which something is surely and plainly known; indubitable evidence; proof; certainty.”

“The proofs here meant are Christ’s speaking, walking and eating with His disciples on several occasions after His resurrection, and giving to Thomas and the rest the clearest demonstration that He was with them in the same real body as before His death, and not in appearance only ([Luke 24:39](#); [Luke 24:43](#); [John 20:27](#); [John 21:13](#)). As the verity of the Resurrection would be the basis of all the Apostolic preaching, it was necessary that such clear proofs as these should be given by Christ to the twelve who were to be His witnesses

“*being seen of them forty days*] Better, **appearing unto them by the space of forty days**. Christ was not continuously with the disciples, but shewed Himself to them frequently at intervals during the forty days between the Resurrection and the Ascension.” (Cambridge Bible).

“**To whom**, i.e. the apostles, **he showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs**; eating, drinking, speaking, walking with them; nay, showing them his very wounds, and permitting them to be touched; God suffering Thomas’s infidelity to contribute to the strengthening of our faith.

**Being seen of them forty days**; not continually, but upon occasion as he pleased; it was so long from his resurrection to his ascension; and the same space in which God showed himself unto Moses in Mount Sinai. So long also he was pleased to stay with them, that he might more abundantly testify the truth of his humanity, and of his resurrection” (Matthew Poole’s Commentary).

4And, being assembled together with *them*, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, *saith he*, ye have heard of me.

“Our Lord told the disciples the work they were to do. The apostles met together at Jerusalem; Christ having ordered them not to depart thence, but to wait for the pouring out of the Holy Spirit. This would be a baptism by the Holy Ghost, giving them power to work miracles, and enlightening and sanctifying their souls” (Matthew Henry’s Commentary).

7And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.

8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you:

“Power” is *dynamis* in Greek – “which denotes a robust force at work in demonstrative ways for all to see and feel. Such a ‘power’ comes with the Spirit of prophecy” (*NIB Acts* 42).

“This is the ‘power (*dynamis* in Greek) from on high,’ of which Jesus spoke in Luke 24:49. The witnesses to the risen Christ will not receive a kingship for Israel but rather the power of God’s Spirit, the effect of the outpouring of which will enable those who receive it to give testimony and speak with boldness (Acts 4:29, 31)” (*AB Acts* 205).

“God’s reign will be reestablished among God’s people not by some apocalypse from heaven but by a mission on earth” (*NIB Acts* 42).

9 And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.

“The two accounts of Jesus’ ascension here and in Luke 24:51 are unique in the New Testament. Jesus’ ascension further validates his resurrection and vindicates the claim that he is God’s Messiah. The ascension also provides the implied religious motive for the apostles’ testimony to Jesus (1:8). While they are not eyewitnesses to his resurrection, the apostles are eyewitnesses to his ascension, lending credibility to their proclamation that he is alive. Significantly, the ‘cloud’ that carries Jesus heavenward recalls the use of a ‘cloud’ to symbolize God’s faithful presence among the liberated people in the Old Testament story of Israel’s exodus” (*NIB Acts* 43).