

## **Infallible proofs, Misplaced expectations and Jesus' priorities**

The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," He said, "you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven." (Acts 1:1-11 NKJV).

### **Introduction**

On Thursday Christians, across the world, celebrated the ascension of Jesus Christ into heaven. We are going to look today at Jesus' last words just before He went back to heaven and sat at the right hand of the Father in power. Jesus has now the most powerful position in the Universe. As it is written in Philippians 2:9-11: "...Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:9-11 NKJV).

In the context of who Jesus is, let's look at our passage:

### **1. Infallible proofs and Jesus' promise**

-- Jesus is risen indeed! Our text says "that Jesus presented Himself alive after His death with "many infallible proofs" -- We who believe in Christ have a living hope-- We are not like the world who wonder what will happen when we die. We don't have to 'umm' and 'ahh' when people ask us what happens after death. 1 Peter 1:3 says: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (I Peter 1:3 NKJV).

-- Our text says that Jesus presented Himself over 40 days to His disciples with "many infallible proofs." Question: What are these infallible proofs? We know many people in today's world do not believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, nor in the resurrection of the dead! Why do the Scriptures say: "infallible proofs?" Infallible according to the Oxford dictionary means "proof that cannot be wrong."

--Firstly Jesus appeared to many after His resurrection. Thomas, the Emmaus-travelers, His eleven disciples and more than 500 people SAW Him after His death. In other words, there were eye-witnesses of His resurrection. 1 Corinthians 15:3-7 reads: "For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. After that, He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time" (I Corinthians 15:3-6, 8 NKJV). In other words, when Paul wrote this letter there were many eyewitnesses who could testify to the fact that they saw Jesus after He was resurrected. If the law of God said everything will be established by two or three witnesses, and we have more than 500 witnesses of Jesus' resurrection, then we have hundreds of infallible proofs!

--Secondly many touched Jesus' resurrected body (John 20:11-29). He was not a ghost.

--Thirdly He even ate fish in front of His disciples (Luke 24:37-45; John 21:12-15 ). This verifies the fact that He was not a spirit. The scriptures make it clear that these things prove that Jesus really was resurrected from the dead! Along with 2000 years of church-history and millions of believers and what you get is a world-wide movement of people who claim that Jesus rose from the dead based on what the Scriptures teach! These facts are astonishing!

-- **The promise**--Jesus promised that He would baptize His disciples with the Holy Spirit. Even John the Baptist witnessed the following about Jesus three years before, at the onset of Jesus' ministry: "And John bore witness, saying, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him. I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God" (John 1:32-34 NKJV). Now here in verse 4 Jesus reiterates what John prophesied about Himself: "He said, 'you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.'" The baptism which we as believers in Christ and Reformed believers should fight over is not infant or believers baptism, but the baptism with the Holy Spirit. Although I believe that believers baptism is more scriptural, there are many believers of God who will be in heaven, e.g. Martin Luther, Jonathan Edwards, Martin Lloyd Jones, Andrew Murray, etc. who believed in infant baptism. In fact, millions of believers in Christ will be in heaven who have not undergone water baptism as adults after they believed. But no one will see heaven without the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is not a second blessing as some people believe. There is much confusion about this even of people in Reformed circles. I was for years confused about this. I have been part of Pentecostal churches, Holiness movements and off course in Dutch Reformed churches before. Many in Pentecostal churches would say that if you don't speak in tongues, you do not have the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Many in the Pentecostal church distinguish between

having the Holy Spirit and being baptized with the Holy Spirit, which they call the second blessing! And when they speak about being baptized in the Holy Spirit they refer to having the ability to speak in tongues. Speaking in other languages heavenly or earthly is not the definitive sign of being born of the Holy Spirit and being baptized with the Holy Spirit. It is debatable if speaking in tongues is still operative in our day, now that we have the Scriptures! But if it is possible, it is not the definitive sign of being baptized in the Holy Spirit! 1 Corinthians 12:11,27-31 says: "But one and the same Spirit works all these things (speaking of the gifts) distributing to each one individually as He wills." "Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually. And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? But earnestly desire the best gifts. And yet I show you a more excellent way" (1 Corinthians 12:11, 27-31 NKJV). Although not all those things mentioned in this text are still for us (e.g., apostles), it is clear that the Holy Spirit says not all have the same gifts and that the Holy Spirit gives as HE wills! Much of what is going around in Pentecostal and Charismatic churches under the guise of "speaking in tongues" is just, baby talk, wishful thinking, and gibberish. I can share this with you because I have been around in Pentecostal churches and so have many of you who are listening to me. You know what I am talking about. I have been commanded to speak in tongues by pastors, although nothing that came out of my mouth was of the Holy Spirit. As I understand Scripture, there is not really a difference between being born of the Spirit and being baptized with the Holy Spirit! It all refers to being owned by the Holy Spirit, to become God's possession, to be His property!

-- God baptizes ALL His children. 1 Corinthians 12:13 declares: "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body— whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit." And in 1 Corinthians 12:3 it is stated: "Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed, and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy

Spirit" (I Corinthians 12:3 NKJV). And how do we become part of the body of Christ? By being born again!! And faith in Christ and repentance towards God is the evidence of that event! As one preacher said: "It's like when you light a match. Which comes first, the light or the heat of the flame? The light of course. But when there is light, there is heat as well. So it works with being born again. Being born of the Holy Spirit is the light. It comes first. But where there is light there is heat as well! The heat is saving faith! If you are born again, you will have saving faith!

-- Being born of the Holy Spirit and being baptized in the Holy Spirit is used interchangeably in the New Testament. Some commentators would say that being filled with the Spirit and being baptized with the Holy Spirit are used interchangeably especially in the book of Acts. But are we baptized with the Spirit continually? No, we should be filled with the Spirit continuously and regularly, because we as believers grieve and quench the Spirit often by disobedience and sin (Ephesians 5:18). So, believer in Christ, if you are born again you have been baptized by the Holy Spirit! And you who know about Jesus and are convinced that you do not have the Spirit of God, look to Jesus! Repent of your sins, and believe in Jesus Christ as your only Lord and Savior and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit! As Peter said to the people at Pentecost 2000 years ago: "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call" (Acts 2:38-39 NKJV).

### **1. The disciples' misplaced expectations**

-- Back to our text: The disciples thought they were going to reign with Jesus over the tribes of Judah. In fact, Jesus promised the disciples this before His crucifixion. In Luke 22 we read Jesus saying: "But you are those who have continued with Me in My trials. And I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed one upon Me, that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." (Luke 22:28-30 NKJV). This was Judas Iscariot's expectation as well. But when He realized Jesus was not the political Messiah He hoped for; He betrayed Jesus. The disciples had



this expectation, to rule over Israel probably immediately after the resurrection. We can understand therefore why the disciples had the following question: Verse 6,7 "Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at THIS time restore the kingdom to Israel?". The disciples thought now is the time to rule with Jesus over the tribes of Israel. They had a certain expectation, but it was not the right time! Jesus had other plans: we read of that in Romans 11. Paul reveals a mystery to us: "For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved (Romans 11:25-26 NKJV). It was not the time of Israel, and it still isn't. It is the time that the Gentiles hear the gospel and that many be saved!

-- We as disciples of Jesus also have expectations about Jesus. Many of them are misplaced and unrealistic as well. Especially when we come to faith in Jesus. Some of us were taught God is going to heal us of all our diseases, or that Jesus is a means to make us rich, or that Jesus is a means to make us successful. Or that Jesus is a means to have a spectacular ministry. We think Jesus is primarily there to do stuff for us. Good stuff. We were promised that Jesus will heal our marriage, give us good jobs, make all our problems go away! Increase our bank balance! We were told that Jesus will sort out all our problems, all our family problems. As the Bumper sticker says: "Jesus is the answer!"

-- But along the way, believers in Christ hit reality. False believers hit reality as well. We are confronted with UNAVOIDABLE disappointment. People cheat you, steal from you, insult you, and ridicule you because you follow Jesus. Your family problems don't go away. Your family problems get worse! You don't get rich as you thought you would! Your bank balance doesn't increase as expected, because of Jesus! At times, you don't have enough money. God doesn't heal ALL your diseases! In fact, the older you get your body starts decaying and giving you more problems! People persecute you. You struggle. You suffer. Family members die before they reach old age. Divorce takes place. Friends of yours get raped. Molestation in the family occur. Family members get addicted to drugs etc. Things don't go as you planned or as you have expected. You realize Jesus is not like a magic genie, which you can rub and after asking and pleading real

hard, all your wishes come true!! And many a believer's reaction: "Why didn't anyone tell me Christianity is so hard?" And what happens to many a believer and false believer? They blame God! They point the finger at God! They get furious with God! Many turn their backs on God and say: Christianity is not for me! They say: "Why does God allow all the suffering, heartache, Aids, earthquakes, human trafficking, abortion, incurable diseases, etc. People have misplaced, wrong and unrealistic expectations about Jesus, life, and Christianity!

-- But whose fault is it that the world is as it is? Is God the author of sin? Is God to blame for your sin? Certainly not! Would there be suffering and sickness and sin if it was not for the fall of man? Yes, God allowed it to take place, and now God is in control of all these things and uses it for the believers' good. But sin and the devastation it brings, cannot be attributed to God! We are the ones who are at fault. We are hell-bent sinners in need of grace and mercy!

-- In the turmoil of life God tests us. Our faith gets refined. God puts us through the crucible. We get put through the fire of affliction and suffering to see if our faith is genuine (1 Peter 1:3-11).

We read in 1 Peter 1:6-7 "In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:6-7 NKJV).

--And those false believers who came to Christ for wealth, health, and prosperity, those who came for the gifts of God and not for God Himself, fall away. We see this truth in the parable of the Sower. The temptations and tribulations make the seed of the word of no effect. And the riches and cares and the pleasures of life choke the seed of the word, and it becomes unfruitful! And what is worse is that the false expectations and promises that false teachers gave them make them inoculated against Christ, Christians, and His kingdom.

-- Friend, do you have realistic expectations about Jesus Christ? Have you counted the cost of being a disciple of Jesus Christ? Jesus said we must count the cost! As one preacher said: "Salvation is a gift, but His glory will cost you everything!"

RC Sproul said: "Salvation is free, but is not cheap!"

Salvation cost Jesus Everything! Yes believers are kings with Jesus Christ, and yes, believers will reign with Him on the new heavens and earth, and yes, believers are seated in heavenly places right now, (Ephesians 2:6) and yes, believers are joint-heirs with Christ, but believers are not in paradise yet.

The disciples didn't go to glory just after Jesus went to heaven, they still had to carry their crosses daily, and they still had to suffer for His Name sake. All the apostles, except John, died as martyrs. And so it will be for us. We will not all die as martyrs, but we will all suffer for the Name of Christ. "If we suffer with Him, we will reign with Him" 2 Timothy 2:12. It is unavoidable! "All who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution! (2 Timothy 3:12). Jesus said: "A servant is not greater than his Master. If they persecuted Me, they will persecute you" (John 15:20).

## **2. Jesus' exhortation, priorities and assurance**

-- Jesus' priorities look different from ours. He looks at the global picture. Our eyes are fixed on our position in His kingdom. We want to make a name for ourselves. We want to be known. It is today the same. Many people also still look at Israel and is concerned about the end times. In a sense, they also ask: "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel." "Look at ISIS, radical Islam, secular humanism, the degeneracy in Western society, etc. People, God's people, many of them are preoccupied with end time's theology (eschatology). When you meet them, it is all they can talk about. I have met many Christians who are obsessed with "end times" theology. Not that end time's theology is unimportant. The truth is important. But they are obsessed with the question: "When will the end come?" One Christian I knew had a monthly newsletter called: "The End Bulletin." He gave it out way back in 1999. He was convinced of the fact that the end will come in 1999. He convinced me! I wanted to flee into the hills. I was waiting for the anti- Christ to be revealed at any time! Thank God I got out of the grip of end-times madness! I am not sure where he is now. I seem to bump into these kinds of people all the time. We Christians look locally. Many times we are narrow-minded. We are obsessed with Israel and when the end will come. Also, we Christians are many times



obsessed with our own people, our own-own country. We should off-course not ignore our familial and local responsibilities!

-- But Listen to Jesus' exhortation to His disciples: verse 7 "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority." Jesus is concerned with more than Israel! He is concerned with the Gentiles, the unbelieving nations, with the elect that has to come in from the corners of the earth! He wants the gospel to go out! Listen to Acts 1:8 again: "BUT you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." Not or, or, but and, and. Yes, we should start at Jerusalem. Our Jerusalem is Kempton Park; Our Judea is the cities in Gauteng. Our Samaria is South Africa, and our ends of the earth are: "the ends of the earth", Africa, Asia, etc. Jesus directed the disciples' attention to the task at hand, to the unbelieving nations around Israel and the ends of the earth! Jesus' priorities look different from ours!

-- Jesus gave the disciples assurance. Jesus said His disciples will receive power "Greek: dumanis" to complete His task. They would receive dynamite! Jesus promised the abiding Holy Spirit. And they received Him didn't they! God has given His church in every generation the power and joy of the Holy Spirit to complete His mission. Without His power, His continual filling, His joy within believers, they will not be able to finish His task.

-- Jesus said to His disciples: "you shall be My witnesses" And Jesus says this to all his disciples: You shall be MY witnesses. Not witnesses of how much material blessings you received, or how big a church building God gave you. Jesus said you will be witnesses of Jesus Christ!!! Witnesses!! Talking is going to take place! Are you a witness for Christ? Jesus said in Mark 8:38 "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him, the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels"(Mark 8:36, 38 NKJV).

-- Witnessing is not an option for a believer! You are either for or against Jesus. There is no middle ground with Jesus! "Marturia" is the Greek word for witnessing. Martyrdom is what the early church faced

by witnessing! Martyrdom is what thousands of Christians are facing every year in the Middle East, North Africa and across the world. Are we willing to be martyrs for Christ? In the high school, in your neighborhood, in your family? What does your testimony for Jesus cost you? What have you suffered for the name of Christ? We have no real comprehension what our brothers in Syria, Iraq, North Korea are suffering for the Name of Christ!

I came across this parable in one of Ray Comfort's books: It is a rebuke to the lukewarm church in every generation and lukewarm members in the church of Christ!

### **The Parable of the Fishless Fishermen Fellowship:**

The fishermen were surrounded by streams and lakes full of hungry fish. They met regularly to discuss their call to fish, the abundance of fish, and the thrill of catching fish. They got excited about fishing!

Someone suggested that they needed a philosophy of fishing, so they carefully defined and redefined fishing and the purpose of fishing. They developed fishing strategies and tactics. Then they realized that they had been going at it backward. They had approached fishing from the point of view of the fisherman, and not from the point of view of the fish. How do fish view the world? How does the fisherman appear to the fish? What do fish eat, and when? These are all good things to know. So they began research studies and attended conferences on fishing. Some traveled to faraway places to study different kinds of fish with different habits. Some got doctorates in fishology. But no one had yet gone fishing. So a committee was formed to send out fishermen. As prospective fishing places outnumbered fishermen, the committee needed to determine priorities. A priority list of fishing places was posted on bulletin boards in all of the fellowship halls. But still, no one was fishing. A survey was launched to find out why. Most did not answer the survey, but from those who did, it was discovered that some felt called to study fish, a few to furnish fishing equipment, and several to go around encouraging the fishermen. What with meetings, conferences, and seminars, they just simply didn't have time to fish.

Now, Jake was a newcomer to the Fisherman's Fellowship. After one stirring meeting of the Fellowship, he went fishing and caught a large

fish. At the next meeting, he told his story and was honored for his catch. He was told that he had a special “gift of fishing.” He was then scheduled to speak at all the Fellowship chapters and tell how he did it. With all the speaking invitations and his election to the board of directors of the Fisherman’s Fellowship, Jake no longer had time to go fishing. But soon he began to feel restless and empty. He longed to feel the tug on the line once again. So he canceled the speaking, he resigned from the board, and he said to a friend, “Let’s go fishing.” They did, just the two of them, and they caught fish.

The members of the Fisherman’s Fellowship were many, the fish were plentiful, but the fishers were few! —Anonymous

### **3. How do I get my priorities in line with Jesus'?**

Here are three suggestions:

-- Give time in prayer not only for yourself and your family but for the 12000 ethnic groups in the world. Get Operation World and pray through it!

-- Give finances for the work of missions and frontier missions. For those who haven't heard the true gospel. Local... Yes... But further afield. Read gospel, Christ-centered newsletters.

-- Be a daily witness for Christ, at work, at home, and wherever you travel. Look out for opportunities to be a witness! Make disciples.

1) Have your testimony ready. How God saved you from your sins and God's wrath!

2) Testify about the inerrancy, infallibility, and sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures contained in the 66 Books of the Bible. God has spoken to us in history. He can be known!

3) Testify about Jesus' divinity, His perfect righteousness, His substitutionary death on the cross, His resurrection and His ascension into heaven!

4) Warn people about the Second Coming of Christ and the coming Judgement. Verse 9-11

How do your priorities look like in the light of eternity? Did your misplaced and unrealistic expectations about Jesus and His kingdom shift your focus from what Jesus wants to what you want? May God

help us to escape from self-centeredness to God-centeredness. May God help us to flee from self-preoccupation to God's mission-preoccupation. Jesus said: Acts 1:8 "But you **SHALL** receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." Jesus conquered the grave! Jesus ascended to heaven! Acts 1:9-11 records the following: "Now when He had spoken these things while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven." (Acts 1:9-11).

--Jesus is coming again! Just as the Angels assured the women at the empty tomb about the reality of Jesus' resurrection, so two angels assured the disciples, that just as they saw Him going with a cloud into heaven, so Jesus will come again on a cloud for judgment.

Jesus is assuredly going to judge the living and the dead as assuredly as He went to His Father in heaven and sat at His right hand. Jesus is seated at the right hand of the Father, and every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess that He is Lord! For many it will be too late.

Jesus presented Himself to His disciples in a resurrected body!

Jesus promised us the Holy Spirit!

Jesus is coming again on the clouds in judgment!

Do your priorities correspond with Jesus'?