

Ephesians Series

Lesson #126

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Dean Bible Ministries

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Why the Ascension of Christ is Important in our Spiritual Lives

Ephesians 4:7–16



EPHESIANS

THE WEALTH, WALK
& WARFARE
OF THE BELIEVER

Eph. 4:7, “But to each one of us grace **was given** according to the measure of **Christ’s gift**.

Eph. 4:8, “Therefore He says: ‘When **He ascended** on high, He led captivity captive, and **gave gifts** to men.’

Eph. 4:9, “(Now this, ‘**He ascended**’—what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth?

Eph. 4:10, “He who descended is also the One **who ascended** far above all the heavens, that He might **fill** all things.)

Eph. 4:11, “And **He Himself gave** some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers,

Eph. 4:12, “for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,

Eph. 4:13, “till we all come **to the unity of the faith** and of the knowledge of the Son of God, **to a mature man**, to the measure of the stature of the **fullness** of Christ;”

Eph. 4:7, “But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ’s gift.

Eph. 4:8, “Therefore He says: ‘*When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men.*’ ” [Psa. 68:18]

What The Bible Teaches About

The Ascension: Basic Verses



Mark 16:19, “So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God.”

ἀναλαμβάνω *analambanō*

3 sing aor pass indic

to take up, raise, take to oneself

Jesus receives the action of being taken up to heaven

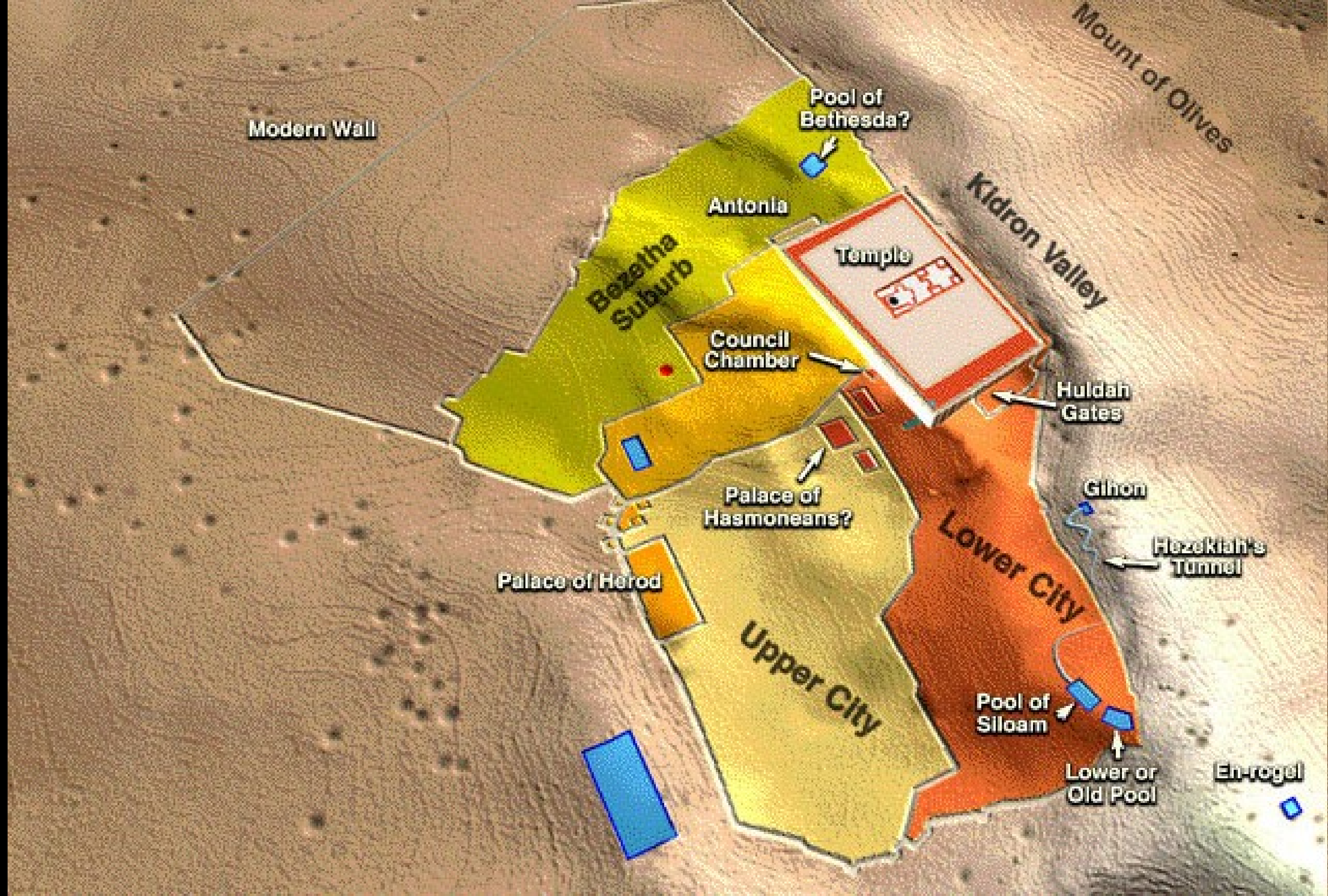
Luke 24:49, “ ‘Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.’

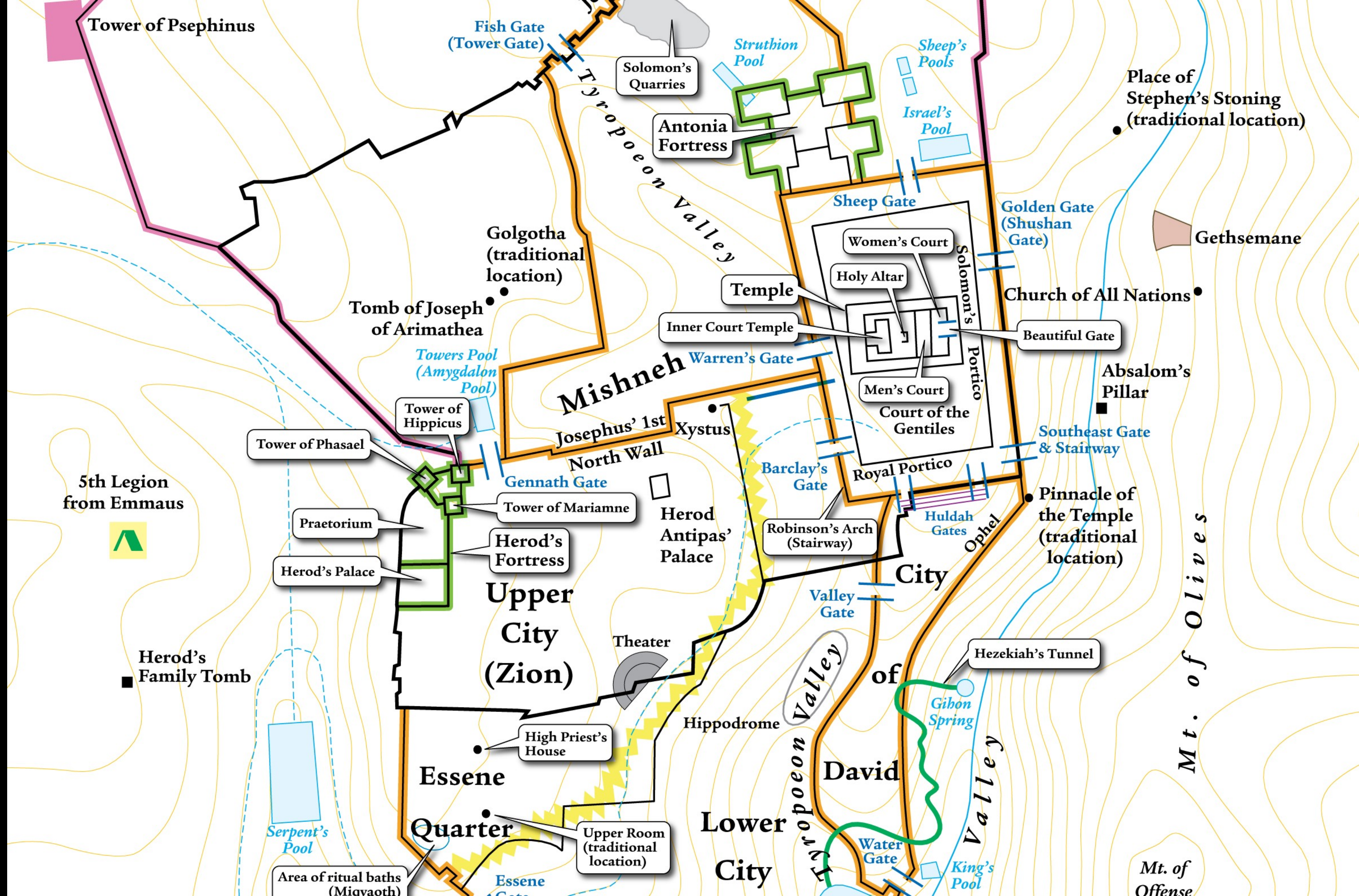
Luke 24:50, “And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them.

Luke 24:51, “Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted [separated] from them and [was] carried up into heaven.”

**διίστημι *diistēmi* 3
sing aor act indic
to set apart,
separate; stand
apart; “He separated
from them”**

**ἀναφέρω *anapherō*
3 sing imperf pass indic
to bring up, carried up to, taken up**







Acts 1:4, “And when he 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’; ...”

Acts 1:6, “Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, ‘Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?’”

Acts 1:7, “And He said to them, ‘It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority.’”

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.’ ”

Acts 1:9, “Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.”

ἐπαίρω *epairō*

3 sing aor pass

indic to lift up

ὑπολαμβάνω *hupolambanō*

3 sing aor act indic to

suppose; to lift up; to reply



Acts 1:10, “And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel,

Acts 1:11, “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.’ ”

Zech. 14:4, “And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, from east to west, making a very large valley; Half of the mountain shall move toward the north and half of it toward the south.”

Questions that ought to come to our minds:

- **Why did Christ have to ascend at all, why not just begin the Kingdom? Acts 1:6**
- **Why did Christ have to ascend *before* sending the Holy Spirit? (John 16:7)**
- **Why did Christ have to ascend *before* giving spiritual gifts?**
- **What is the connection between the ascension of Christ and the giving of gifts?**
- **What is the connection between Christ's session in Heaven and our spiritual life?**

What The Bible Teaches About

The Ascension: Background



What happened to God's plan when the Lord Jesus Christ was rejected and crucified?

1. The Jews expected a “one coming” Messiah.

When Jesus came at the First Advent it was not clear from Old Testament prophecy that there would be two advents. The Jews expected only one coming of the Messiah.

Our Viewpoint
 We see the "Mountain Peaks" and the "Valleys" from the side, and we can separate the first and second coming prophecies.

Priest
 Heb. 4:14

The Three Appearings

"Now to Appear"



Glory
 Heb. 9:24

"Hath Appeared"

"Shall Appear"

Birth of Jesus (Bethlehem)
 Num. 24:17;
 Isa. 7:14; Mic. 5:2



What the Prophets Saw



Calvary
 Isa. 53:1-12



Antichrist
 Dan. 7:19-27



The Sun of Righteousness
 Mal. 4:1-6



The Kingdom
 Dan. 7:13-14;
 Isa. 2:1-3;
 Mic. 4:1-2;
 Hag. 2:5-9



Destruction of the Earth by Fire
 2 Pet. 3:7-13



The Holy City
 Rev. 21:2



The New Heavens and New Earth
 Isa. 65:17; 66:22;
 Rev. 21:1

The Old Testament "Valley"
 The viewpoint of the prophets



The Valley of the "Church"
 The prophets did not see this.

The Valley of the "Perfect Age"

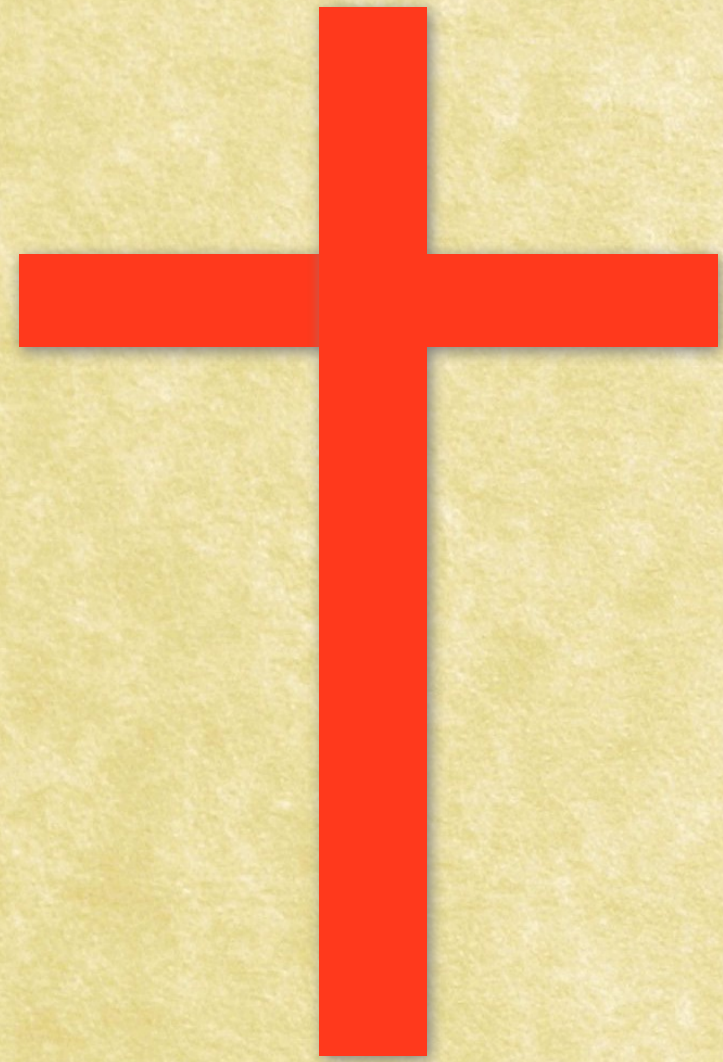
Acts 1:6, “Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, ‘Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?’ ”

The Kingdom was Postponed:

- 1. It did not come *at all*.**
- 2. It did not partially come, or begin to gradually come in; “already-not yet” isn’t what happened.**
- 3. It was not cancelled.**

2. Jews expected the crown before the Cross.

Cross With/After/Before the Crown?



The Cross

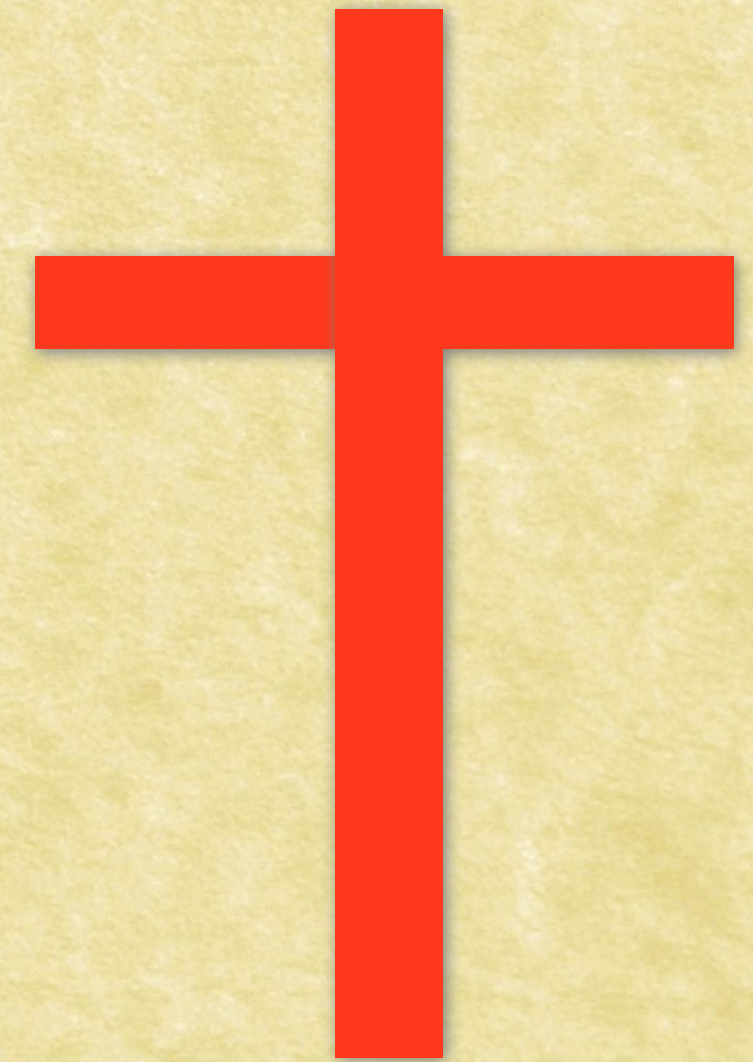


The Crown

Cross With/After/Before the Crown?



The Crown



The Cross

1 Pet. 1:10, “As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful search and inquiry,

1 Pet. 1:11, “seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted 1) the sufferings of Christ and 2) the glories to follow.”

Isa. 50:6–7; Isa. 53:3–11

The Suffering Messiah

Isa. 53:3, “He was despised and forsaken of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; And like one from whom men hide their face, He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.

Isa. 53:4, “Surely our griefs He Himself bore, and our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

Isa. 53:5, “But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.”

The Suffering Messiah

Isa. 53:6, “All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him.

Isa. 53:7, “He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth; Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, and like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, so He did not open His mouth.”

The Glorious Messiah

Isa. 40:3, “A voice is calling, ‘Clear the way for the LORD in the wilderness; Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God.

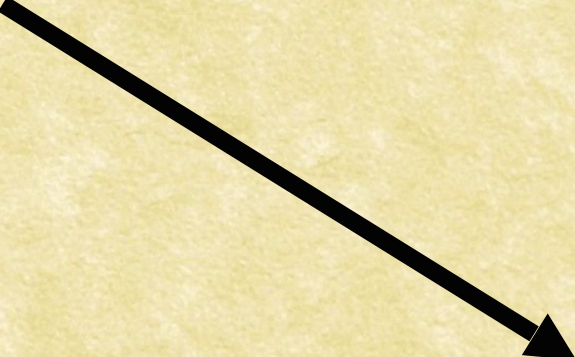
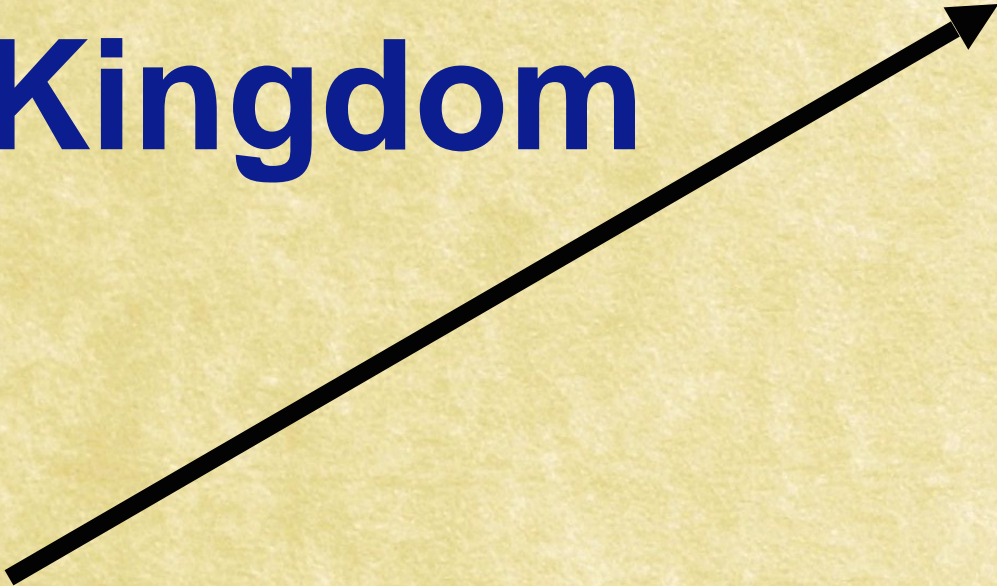
Isa. 40:4, “ ‘Let every valley be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; And let the rough ground become a plain, and the rugged terrain a broad valley;

Isa. 40:5, “ ‘Then the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all flesh will see it together; For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.’ ”

The Presentation of the Kingdom and the Response

The *REJECTION*
of the King

The *OFFER*
of the Kingdom



The *CRUCIFIXION*
of the King



Matt. 12:31, “Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy *against* the Spirit will not be forgiven men.”

Matt. 12:34, “Offspring of serpents! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.”

The Differences Between Christ's Ministry Before Matthew 12 and After Matthew 12

Before

**Signs were for Israel so
they would believe in Him**

**He taught the masses
without faith**

He told them to tell all

**He announced "Repent for
the kingdom is at hand"**

He spoke openly

After

**Signs were for the disciples
to train them**

**He taught the disciples
who had faith**

He told them to tell no one

**He no longer
announced this**

He spoke in parables

*****This introduces the major issue that serves as a backdrop to understanding the Ascension and Session: The Kingdom. How you understand the Kingdom, of course, is affected by whether you are a Dispensationalist or Covenantal theologian. *****

Reformed theology cannot conceive of real contingency in this plan, their theology tells them everything is about salvation. They limit the purpose of the First Advent to the Cross.

Dispensational theology, understanding the distinction between Israel and the Church, recognizes real contingency, and that God had more in mind for the First Advent than simply the Cross. It entailed a genuine offer of the Kingdom.

“Again the attentive student of the Sacred Text is confronted with major doctrines and age-characterizing ministries of Christ which by theologians generally are neglected to the point of dishonor to Christ; especially is this true of those of a Covenant school who in defense of a man-made theory must avoid all that is distinctive in this age of God’s supreme achievements, lest the dead level of a supposed immutable covenant should be brought to disorder and confusion. Why, indeed, should any emphasis be placed on the limitless achievements of Christ’s present ministry when, according to this theory, saints of former ages were equally blessed with saints of this age? . . . It is no small issue that the present ministries of Christ which are of the greatest consequence should be disregarded by theological writers.”

~Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, IV, 261.

3. John the Baptist, Jesus, and the disciples all proclaimed a message of repentance, directed to Israel not Gentiles, “Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand,” the issue was thought change for the Jews, in order to bring in the kingdom.

Matt. 3:2, “and saying, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!’ ”

Matt. 3:2, “and saying, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!’

Matt. 3:3, “For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying:

‘The voice of one crying in the wilderness:

“Prepare the way of the LORD;

Make His paths straight.” ’ ” [Isa. 4:3]

The Glorious Messiah

Isa. 40:3, “A voice is calling, ‘Clear the way for the LORD in the wilderness; Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God.

Isa. 40:4, “ ‘Let every valley be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; And let the rough ground become a plain, and the rugged terrain a broad valley;

Isa. 40:5, “ ‘Then the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all flesh will see it together; For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.’ ”

Matt. 3:7, “But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, ‘Offspring of serpents! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?’ ”

Matt. 3:10, “And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”

Matt. 4:17, “From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ ”

Matt. 10:5, “These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them, saying: ‘Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans.

Matt. 10:6, “But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

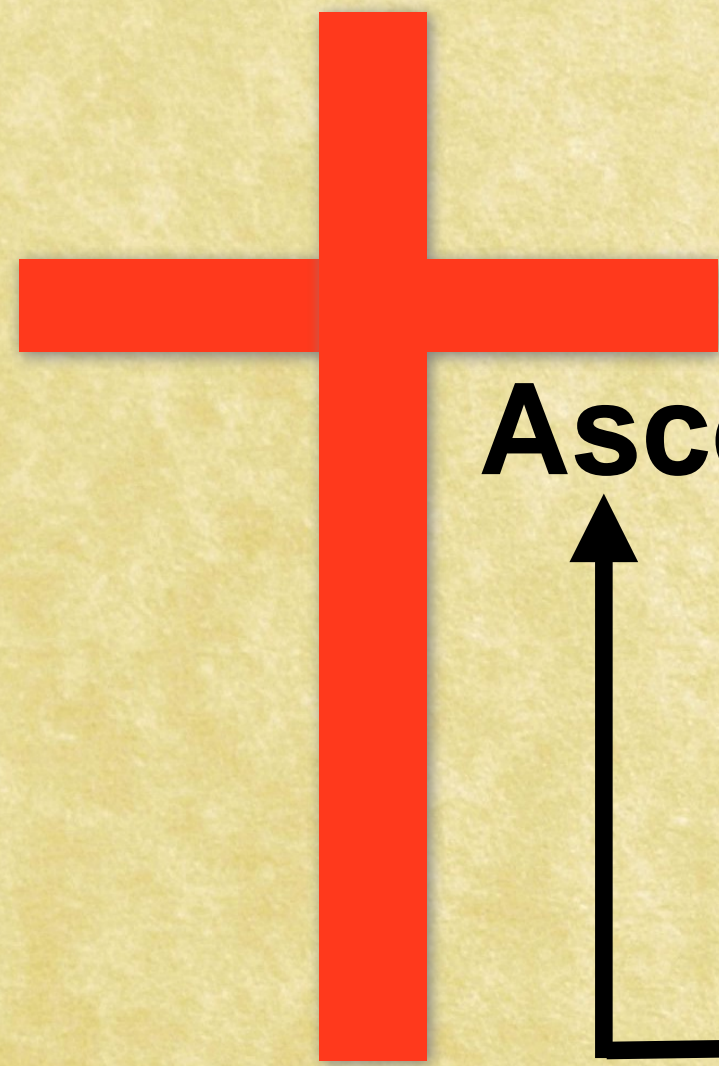
Matt. 10:7, “And as you go, preach, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ ”

4. Near the midpoint of His public ministry the Jewish religious leaders accused Jesus of being empowered by Satan. This official rejection of Jesus led to the postponement of the Kingdom.

Three Points of Summary

- 1. The postponement of the Kingdom called for a postponement of Glory.**
- 2. Postponement means the issue of the Kingdom relates to the distinct plans of God for Israel and the Church.**
- 3. Postponement means there will be an unforeseen departure and a Second Coming.**

What Then is the Purpose of This Interadvent Age?



Ascension



Church Age

2nd Coming

Rapture



The Cross

The Crown