

**STORY**

1/8/04

The Ascension of Jesus - Matthew 28:16-20; Mark 16:19.20; Luke 24:44-53; Acts 1:1-12

TEACHER PRAYER

Dear Savior, You have called your believing children to be witnesses of the Gospel. You have assured them that as they witness Your words, the Holy Spirit will cause them to be effective and never return to You void. Lord, give us this faith that we may be faithful witnesses to the students in our Sunday School. Let us witness with boldness and joy, for You ascended into glory, and will come again to receive us unto Yourself that, where You are, we will also be eternally. Amen.

VOCABULARY

Endued - Provided with, gifted with, endowed with.

Confirming - Establish the truth of that which was doubtful or uncertain, verify, support, strengthen, prove valid.

Opened their understanding - Human understanding (reason) is corrupted by sin and does not receive the truths from God, but rejects them. For example, God creating all things in six days. The Holy Spirit, working in the Word from God, causes our ears to hear, our eyes to see, our hearts and minds to understand by faith the things of God. The Spirit "opened their understanding."

Comprehend - To grasp mentally, to understand, to catch on. When effected by the Word of God, we recognize this happens by faith, the work of the Holy Spirit.

Promise of My Father - With reference to the promise to send the Holy Spirit who will cause unbelieving hearts to believe the truth from God. Isaiah 44: "I will pour My Spirit on your descendants... one will say, 'I am the Lord's; another will write with his hand, 'The Lord's.'" Ezekiel 36: "...I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you... I will put my Spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes. . ." Acts 2: (Quoting the Prophet Joel) "I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh... I will pour out my Spirit in those days..."

Tarry - To linger, wait for, to stay longer than originally intended.

Infallible - incapable of error, never wrong, thus dependable, reliable, sure.

OUTER AIM

To record for our learning the Homecoming of Jesus in Glory after He had completed His saving work. To remind us that He commissioned all believers to be His faithful witnesses who, by the gift of the Holy Spirit, would share His saving Word with all people.

INNER AIM

That we who have been brought to Jesus may boldly and with great joy share the Good News with all people. God loved the world; Christ died and rose again for the world; by the witness of His Word, the world is to be called unto faith and be saved.

BACKGROUND

(*Rupprecht Bible History References Vol.2, pp.453-460*)

For background to the Ascension account: Matthew 28:16-20; Mark 16:15-18; I Corinthians 15:6-7. In these lessons we hear Jesus commission (call) His disciples to make disciples of all nations by baptizing them and teaching them all things that He had commanded them. Jesus said: "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned". In the letter to the Corinthians Paul reviews the number of witnesses to Jesus' resurrection: Peter, the twelve disciples, 500 Christians at one time, James, and then all the apostles.

The Ascension account: Mark 16:19,20; Luke 24:44-53; Acts 1:1-12. Jesus concluded His post-Easter work on earth (40 days) by leading His disciples to the Mount of Olives. There He underscored their call as His witnesses of the Good News to all nations. He assured them of His blessing, the gift of the Holy Spirit to make their witnessing effective, and then ascended into the glory of heaven.

Jesus continued to reinforce the faith of His disciples with many appearances and with teachings of Holy Scripture concerning His work as the Messiah, the Savior. As He prepared to return to His heavenly home, He commissions His disciples to be His witnesses to all people. Their works would be supported by the gift of the Holy Spirit. Then He ascended to His Father.

Jesus prepared His disciples to be His witnesses, pastors, teachers, and missionaries. He promised them divine help with the presence of the Holy Spirit. Since God loved the world, and Jesus died and arose for the world, the world must also have the work of the Spirit of God in order to believe such Good News. By making all believers His witnesses, His word and Spirit does go forth into all the world, to call sinners to believe and be saved.

- ▶ Jesus had completed His Savior work by His death and resurrection.
- ▶ The sins of the world had been paid for in full and the Father transferred the perfect righteousness of His Son to every cleansed sinner.
- ▶ Those who were born in sin and lived their life in sin were now declared by God to be “not guilty”.
- ▶ As righteous children adopted by the heavenly Father, we brothers and sisters of Christ, are to be His witnesses on earth until it is the time of our Homecoming.
- ▶ Mark records Jesus’ ascension and tells us that the disciples (believers) “went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word...”
- ▶ Luke records that just before the ascension of Jesus, He reminded His disciples of the things that had been written about Him in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms.
- ▶ He further instructed them, “Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations...”
- ▶ Jesus concluded with the words, “You are witnesses of these things. Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you...”
- ▶ Luke then tells how Jesus led His disciples toward Bethany.
- ▶ There He blessed them, was parted from them and carried up into heaven.
- ▶ The disciples returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God as they awaited the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.
- ▶ In the Book of Acts, Luke refers to the promise of the Holy Spirit: “You shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now... You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses of Me.”
- ▶ Luke tells us a bit more about the ascension of Jesus: “While they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, 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.’”

STUDENT PRAYER

Lower: Dear Jesus, You went back to Your home in heaven. You told Your children on earth to tell about You. Help us to be faithful in telling others that You are their Savior. Amen

Upper: Dear Jesus, You ascended to your home in glory. You called the believers on earth to be Your witnesses. You promised to bless their witness with Your Holy Spirit. Make us faithful witnesses and bless us in like manner. Amen

PRESENTATION

Tell the story with the same emotion and excitement as if you were there. Tell the story in your words, but be faithful to the account that God wrote through His evangelists Mark and Luke.

APPLICATIONS

You and I have been called to Jesus by the Holy Spirit. As believers in Jesus we are His disciples. All His disciples have been called to be His witnesses: in our family, neighborhood, school, place of work, recreation. And how about YOU becoming a pastor, teacher, or missionary witness? Why hesitate to become such a witness - He promises to bless those who are doing His work, giving them the ability, strength, guidance, and correction as needed. His Holy Spirit, abiding in the word we witness, assures success for those souls who need their share in Jesus success!

ANSWERS TO EXERCISES

Recalling Details

1. Where did Jesus meet with His disciples? Near Bethany on Mt. Olivet
2. What authority did Jesus claim to be his? All authority in heaven and on earth
3. How did the disciples understand the Scriptures about Jesus? And (Jesus) opened their understanding (of the Scriptures)
4. Why did Jesus have to suffer and die? That repentance and remission of sins should be preached
5. Where and why were the disciples supposed to wait? In Jerusalem, for the gift of the Holy Spirit
6. What instructions did Jesus have for His disciples? Be witnesses, make disciples of all nations, baptize, teach, preach the Gospel
7. How did Jesus visibly leave this earth? He rose into the clouds
8. Who appeared after Jesus' ascension? Two angels
9. What message did they have for the disciples? Jesus will return.
10. Why is this message also a comfort for us? Jesus will take us to Himself in heaven some day
11. What does Jesus want us to do while here on earth? Preach the Gospel to all creatures
12. How do we know that Jesus is still here, though we can't see Him? And lo, I (Jesus) am with you always, even to the end of the age

Review - Match the statement with the passage reference that best fits.

1. C Jesus had to suffer and die.
2. A Jesus reclaimed His rightful authority.
3. B Jesus is sitting at the right hand of God the Father.
4. E The disciples were given clear instructions by Jesus.
5. D The disciples appreciated the blessings they had received.
6. F The disciples could be comforted that Jesus had left them only visibly.

A. Matt.28:18

B. Mark 16:19

C. John 24:46

D. John 24:52-53

E. Matt. 28:19

F. Matt. 28:20

PASSAGES

These passages can be assigned as memory work or simply discussed in class as to how they fit the lesson.

Lower

Acts 2:32 - This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses.

Hymn 215, Stanza 1: Draw us to Thee, For then shall we
Walk in Thy steps forever
And hasten on Where Thou art gone
To be with Thee, dear Savior.

Middle any of the above and...

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.

Hymn 215, Stanzas 2-3: Draw us to Thee, Lord, lovingly;
Let us depart with gladness
That we may be Forever free
From sorrow, grief, and sadness.

Draw us to Thee, Oh, grant that we
May walk the road to heaven!
Direct our way Lest we should stray
And from Thy paths be driven.

Upper any of the above and...

Acts 1:11 - This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.

Hymn 215, Stanzas 4-5: Draw us to Thee That also we
Thy heavenly bliss inherit
And ever dwell Where sin and hell
No more can vex our spirit.

Draw us to Thee Unceasingly,
Into Thy kingdom take us;
Let us fore'er Thy glory share,
Thy saints and joint heirs make us.