

Here, in Acts 1, we are about to see the Disciples having strong and courageous hearts; Jesus has been with them for 40 days, proving, beyond any doubt that He is, in fact, the Son of God, the Creator and Sovereign Ruler of all things, the One Who would strengthen and encourage them for the rest of their Earthly lives and ministry... but not too long ago, they were fearful and without any courage or strength...

Jesus had spent 33.5 years down here, on the Earth, being born of a virgin, living a perfect and sinless life and then, preaching and teaching while accompanied by His chosen Disciples. Finally, He was rejected by those who should have loved and received Him; they hated Him and crucified Him like a common criminal. When He died, His Soul and Spirit went down to Paradise where every other believer, since the time of Adam and Eve, had also gone, upon physical death. He spent 3 days in Paradise and when God raised Him back to life, He took all those in Paradise back up to Heaven with Him. After His crucifixion and resurrection, His 11 Disciples, His family and friends began to believe that He was, in Truth, the Son of God, their long-awaited Messiah. Now, they would willingly die rather than disavow that sure and certain knowledge which filled them with joy, with courage and with strong and mighty faith in the Promises of God, and the many Prophecies in His Word but remember, when He was first resurrected, the Disciples were still frightened; they had locked themselves away for fear of the Jews who had already killed *their Messiah; but, then, the thought... maybe He wasn't their Messiah; He had died; maybe they'd been wrong, all along.*

Let's read about that day:

*'The first day of the week, cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre. ² Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the LORD out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him. ³ Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre. ⁴ So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre. ⁵ And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in. ⁶ Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie, ⁷ And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. ⁸ Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed. ⁹ For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead. ¹⁰ Then the disciples went away again unto their own home. ¹¹ But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre, ¹² And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. ¹³ And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my LORD, and I know not where they have laid him. ¹⁴ And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. ¹⁵ Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. ¹⁶ Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master. ¹⁷ Jesus saith unto her, **Touch me not;** for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God. ¹⁸ Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the LORD, and that he had spoken these things unto her. ¹⁹ Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. ²⁰ And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the LORD. ²¹ Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. ²² And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: ' John 20:1*

Notice that God allowed only Mary to see the two angels and to see Jesus, also, when He first rose from the dead.

Why did He tell her, '**Touch Me not?**' Some commentaries say, because He wanted her to hurry to tell the disciples, as if there were some great time constraint; some say that it was a cultural thing, a woman touching a man but when we look more closely, those explanations soon fall apart.

She had already told Peter and John that the stone was rolled away; they had already come and gone.

Modern translations change His words, 'touch Me not,' to 'don't cling to Me' and, 'stop clinging to Me:' a completely different meaning altogether; in other words, 'you can touch Me, but don't cling to Me because that would take too much time, as I have an important mission for you... hurry go tell the Disciples! But then, I will hide from them when they quickly run, from there to here, and I will just wait around here and let them stay in their unbelief for another 10 to 12 hours.'

The Greek word John used is 'aptomai/hap'tomahee; its used 36 times in the N.T. and every time it is translated as: 'touch.' It is always translated as touch; except in this one instance, modern translations change the clear and obvious meaning so that it can be made to say what it does not say, and to not say what it really does say. John uses 3 simple Greek words: **aptomai-mou-me**. The exact meaning is: Touch Me not! That's it! There is nothing whatsoever in it which means 'clinging,' as if Jesus would think that Mary, a woman, must not cling to Him or that she should not waste precious time in clinging to Him!

His meaning is, rather, '*you must not touch Me in My present state.*'

The Lord Jesus Christ is assuring the Disciples... our ancestors in the Faith, that God the Father is just as much their Father as He is Jesus Christ's Father, that He is just as much their God as He is, His God so that they are His actual adopted brothers; later, they will learn that they're not only His brothers, but, also, His fellow-heirs of all that is, that they will rule and reign with Him forever just as we, their spiritual descendants will, as well.

This is another instance where the Bible gives us far more information than we've might have preciously noticed: If He were intimating that He was in a rush to speak with the disciples, He would not have waited until evening to come to them; He would have come right away. Remember, it says that this was early in the morning while it was still dark... about 5 AM in Jerusalem, in April. Mary runs to tell Peter and John; they hurry back to the tomb to see that, yes, it is empty; since it was barely light out, they both went inside. It says: '*Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed.*'

Believed what? ... that Jesus had been resurrected? No... he merely believed Mary's report that the tomb was empty... verse 9 reads: 'For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead. ¹⁰ Then the disciples went away again unto their own home.'... still unaware that He had been resurrected from the dead.

They all still thought His Body had been stolen so they went back behind their locked doors but Mary stayed at the tomb; then, Jesus revealed Himself to Mary but told her, still early in the Morning, **Touch Me not!** Then, instead of going right away to where the Disciples were, afraid and behind closed and locked doors, He waits all day until evening: maybe 5 or 6 PM! 12 hours later. Why!? Why didn't He come to them 12 hours earlier, instead of much later, in the evening, when He did miraculously go right through the wall to appear suddenly in the room where the Disciples were holed up and locked in?

For 12 hours, they had been fretting and brooding over their belief that His Body had been stolen away. Why all that time? Yes, Mary had seen Him and told them, but naturally, they would have been reluctant to believe her; she'd been weeping and emotional, maybe she'd imagined it...

Let's finish that verse: '*Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but (you) go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.*'

This is not a meaningless rabbit trail. As we study The Acts of the Apostles, just as we do in studying every other Book of the Bible, our goal is to discover how each Book meshes with, compliments, and reveals overlooked Truth within passages of other Books. Some seemingly opaque passage in one Book may suddenly shed light on a seemingly obscure or insignificant passage of Truth in another Book. As we study The Acts of the Apostles, we want to discover how it sheds light on the Gospels and on the Old Testament and upon the still to be written Epistles: Paul's Letters, Hebrews, James, Peter, Jude and Revelation! All Scripture is given by

Inspiration of God to enlighten us, to inspire us and to strengthen and encourage us in accomplishing The Great Commission in our own lives and ministry.

All of Scripture is given by inspiration of God and meant to point toward 3 main Events: the Comings of the Lord Jesus Christ: His First Coming to be born of a virgin, to live a perfect and sinless life, only to be cruelly crucified for the sin of others and to bring Salvation; then, especially to Old Testament believers, since they were the only believers who were already dead; finally, the N.T. points to His Second Coming which He revealed would be in 2 separate but related Events: first, He will come only as far as into the clouds, to finally bring all of His True Church/Body/Bride/us away from the Earth: first, in the air, giving us glorified, eternal bodies like His Own and then taking us back to the place He has prepared for each one of us; then, 7 years later, the completion of His Second Coming, at Armageddon, in His Powerful, Majestic and Glorious Return when He will establish His 1000 year Millennial Kingdom, on Earth, which will, finally, feature Israel in all her bestowed glory from God, as she becomes the Head of the Nations and never again, the tail.

All Scripture is geared toward giving every believer from all time, our Blessed Hope in the Lord Jesus Christ's return for each of us, to take us home with Him.

So... why the 12 hour gap in time until He does transport Himself through a locked door or a solid wall to suddenly, shockingly appear among the Disciples?

I think it's pretty simple and makes perfect sense when we put it all together.

David tells us that, at his death, he would go to a good place, where his dead child had already gone. We learn that Lazarus went later to that same good place called Paradise. Jesus, on the cross, told one of the thieves that they would, soon, also go to Paradise. Paul tells us that Jesus did take all those, in Paradise, up to Heaven, now that His Blood had finally paid the full penalty for all their sin.

When first resurrected, in the early morning of the third day, He told Mary ***'Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but (you) go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.'*** John 20:17 Why did He say all of that?

Many Bible '*scholars*' seem to fall back into catholic-like thinking which decides that '*unusual*' Scriptures should be thought, and taught, as *allegorical*... they don't really mean what they most clearly say because what they most clearly say is too outlandish to believe, too alien from our human experience... but the Lord Jesus Christ proved over and over again that the miraculous, outlandish and absolutely impossible is but child's-play for God: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit; He created and He controls everything!

When will '*modern Christians*' begin to believe Him capable of all that is beyond their imaginations!?

During that 12 hour gap, the Lord Jesus Christ went back up to Heaven: He said, '*I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.'*

When Jesus first appeared unto Mary Magdalene, He was not yet in fully corporeal form; He wasn't yet fully physical; He had not yet gone back to the Father, so He had not yet received His Eternal Form.

I also think that He had not yet taken the believers from Paradise with Him, up to Heaven.

The Old Testament believers did not rise with Him because He had to be resurrected first, and alone, so that He would be the First Fruits of Resurrection: Paul wrote, many years later, '*But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.*' 1Cor 15 He was first of those who slept... not of those that sleep... once He took them to Heaven they then became those who *had* slept, past tense; they did no longer sleep, a synonym for physical death. Of True Church believers, Paul refers to those who have died as '*those who sleep in Jesus.*' Our physical bodies still sleep until the Rapture.

*'Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them: 'Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.'*²² *And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost'* John 20:19

That morning, the Father had not yet '*sent Him.*' Now, in the evening, He had ascended up to Heaven, to His Father and now, *the Father had sent Him, back down to the Apostles*, in the power of the Holy Spirit, down to the, *soon to be born, True Church.* And the Lord Jesus Christ was now sending **the disciples** the same way: '*And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.*'

Don't forget the ones still in Paradise; Here's what I think happened, according to all the many clues: When He went down to Paradise, taking the thief on the Cross with Him, He preached all the Truth of Himself to all the Old Testament believers and then gave them His Promise: '*I am leaving for a short time, to go up to My Father, in Heaven, but I will return for you, one day very soon to receive you unto Myself that where I Am, there you may be also.*' **John 14:3**

He was resurrected up to the Earth, He appeared to Mary and then rose up to Heaven to receive the very special Body which His Father had prepared for Him: '*Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me...*' Heb 10:5 This verse, first, refers to His Sacrificial Body, for the Cross, but I think it has meaning beyond that - here in John, and also in His later, Glorified Eternal Form we see in The Revelation.

He was resurrected to meet with Mary, He ascended up to Heaven, and He descended back down to the Disciples for another 40 days. Then, very soon in our study, He will ascend again to stay in Heaven for 2000 years. As He was making this final ascent, as He was taken up into a cloud, I think He then called, up to Himself, all those He had left in Paradise, calling them up in their own primary Rapture. The only thing I'm a little unsure of is: whether or not they did, at that time, receive eternal bodies. Remember, when Paul speaks of the Rapture, He writes: '*The **dead in Christ** will rise first, clearly confining our Rapture to those 'in Christ,' the True Church. Old Testament believers were never 'in Christ;' only believers, among the True Church, are 'in Christ.'*

Maybe they received eternal bodies at that time or, maybe they'll receive them when we do in our Rapture. I believe our understanding of this, the 20th Chapter of John, is important to our fuller understanding of The Acts of the Apostles and all of the New Testament from Romans through Revelation as well as the Gospels.

Acts 1:4: '*And, 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. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?'*

Acts 1:7: '*And 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: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.'*

His Great Commission is to every believer: we are all commanded to be His witnesses to all the World. His promise of Salvation and the Holy Spirit is to everyone whom the Lord our God shall call to Himself.

'Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. ³⁹ For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the LORD our God shall call.' Acts 2:38

We have His promise that He will come for us one day soon: '*In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.'* John 14:2

The episodes in John and here, in The Acts of The Apostles, are intended to be understood so as to encourage and strengthen our Blessed Hope in His soon coming for **us!** to Rapture **us!** up and away!

All the Old Testament was meant to produce faith in God's promises of the coming Savior and that He would eventually pay for their sin and take them up to Heaven. All the New Testament is meant to produce faith unto Salvation along with our assurance and Blessed Hope in His soon coming for **us, in the Rapture,** to also take **us** up to Heaven with Him.