

CHAPTER 11

DID JESUS ASCEND TO HEAVEN ON WAVE SHEAF SUNDAY, ONLY TO RETURN AGAIN... AND AGAIN?

*“Do not add to His [God’s] words, lest He rebuke you, and you be found a liar.”
~ King Solomon*

God’s Word is replete with examples of the second coming of Jesus as coming on the clouds and being seen by all mankind when He comes (Ps 97:2, Isa 19:1, Dan 7:13, Nah 1:3, Matt 24:30, Matt 26:64, Mark 13:26, Mark 14:62, Luke 21:27, Acts 1:9-11, 1 Thes 4:17, Rev 14:14-16). Did Jesus make a secret Sunday ascension? If so, it was an event which, by scriptural account, no one saw or was told about! Why have men ***assumed and imputed*** that Jesus ascended to heaven to be accepted by God (YHVH) as the “wave sheaf offering” on Sunday morning, when the Holy Scriptures say no such thing? Why not believe God’s clear Word which details Jesus’ ascension to heaven – 40 days after His resurrection – not on Easter Sunday! Are we to believe, because men tell us so, that Jesus ascended on a Sunday morning – without any witness by anyone – and so has returned already for His “second advent”? Are we then waiting for the third coming of Christ? Or are there also other “secret returns?” Perhaps we’re waiting for the fourth advent or the fifth, or ...? **We would all do well to remember God’s warnings NOT TO ADD TO HIS WORDS, nor detract from them (Deut 4:2, 13:18, Prov 30:6, Rev 22:18-19)!**

When does the Holy Bible record that Jesus was actually taken up into heaven?

- Notice I did not ask, “When do you THINK Jesus was taken up into heaven?”
- Notice I did not ask, “When were you TAUGHT Jesus was taken up into heaven?”
- But, I ask, “When does the BIBLE TEACH Jesus was taken up into heaven?”

We have believed many things – but sound doctrine is not to be based upon tradition or “beliefs,” but only solidly upon the Word of God! Clearly, what I say or believe is not any more important than your beliefs or traditions. **ONLY GOD’S WORD HAS AUTHORITY!**

When something has been ironed or burned into something, it usually leaves a permanent mark. It leaves a scar in the flesh and a nearly permanent crease in fabric. Once the Roman gentile Church assumed the position that Jesus Christ had risen on “wave sheaf Sunday” (in support of their Easter Sunday and Sunday Pentecost doctrines), it became an almost universally accepted doctrine. Nearly all churches, including many in the Church of God, were heavily influenced by this cleverly disguised and misleading *presumption*. One may ask, “How dare anyone refer to that doctrine as a *presumption*?” But in reply, one may ask, “**How dare a church or minister teach a doctrine that has no factual basis of Scriptural support at all?”** Especially since the Bible actually teaches something to the contrary! What then does God’s Word actually say about this subject? As we shall see, God’s Word is clear and unambiguous regarding Jesus’ actual ascension to heaven.

“Clearly, what I say or believe is not any more important than your beliefs or traditions.
ONLY GOD’S WORD HAS AUTHORITY!”
~Don E. Haney

TOUCH ME NOT...

Didn’t Jesus say, “Touch Me not, for I have not yet ascended to heaven?” Didn’t Christ ascend later that morning (supposedly by 9:00 am, Sunday morning), and wasn’t that proof of His being the wave offering?

In reality, *after* already having been “*touched*,” Jesus told Mary, “Stop clinging to Me,” and then the Bible records His ascension as taking place 40 days later!

Notice:

John 20:17 Jesus said to her, "Stop clinging to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.'" (NASU)

The NKJV states “Do not cling to me...,” inferring that Mary was hanging onto Jesus in a restrictive way and He wished her to let Him go.

The word translated as “touch” is “háptomai,” meaning “to connect,” to attach to or fasten to” or “to bind.” This is why many translations depict Mary as “clinging” or “holding” Jesus in a “binding” or restrictive way.

The traditional teaching was that Jesus could not be touched by sinful mankind until after He had risen and had been accepted by God the Father, since being touched would somehow “desecrate” Him or make Him somehow “unclean” to the Father. This is **pure assumption** – and a faulty assumption at that! For one thing, to ask someone to STOP CLINGING and hanging onto you indicates that they are indeed already clinging onto and “touching” you. Jesus had already been “touched” by Mary, before Jesus told her to ‘let go.’ He was telling her, He had much to do before He ascended to the Father, and she needed to let Him go, so He could do it! Jesus was also letting Mary know that her relationship with Him was now going to need to be less physical, and more spiritual. It’s as simple as that!

When, then, does the *Bible teach* that Jesus ascended to the Father in heaven? Let’s get the answers directly from Scripture: The key, once again, is found by the “careful,” “consecutive” writings of Saint Luke (Luke 1:3). Remember, Luke also wrote the book of Acts, where this issue is very plainly clarified. Let’s see...

*Acts 1:1 The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach,
2 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.*

Notice here that Luke claims to have covered in his “former account” (the “consecutive, orderly account” [Luke 1:3]) “of all that Jesus began both to do and teach UNTIL THE DAY in which He was taken up...” So we will find everything laid out in an orderly fashion in Luke – “UNTIL” Jesus’ ascension. That, then, would be the end of his “former account.” What else can we first learn from Acts before going to that “former account?”

*Acts 1:3 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.*

Let's remember that Jesus "presented Himself alive" for 40 days, before continuing in Acts 1:9-11, where Luke's orderly, consecutive day-by-day account records Jesus' ascension to heaven.

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.

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

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."

The KEY is in Acts 1, verses 1-2: "Of ALL that Jesus both began to do and teach UNTIL he was taken up"!

So let's take God's Holy Scriptures at their word and go back to the book of Luke. We'll be examining, exegetically, Luke 24:1-53. We'll begin with the first 6 verses. Then we will find out if the Holy Scriptures support our beliefs – OR – if we support our beliefs solely by our traditions?

Luke 24:1-6

24:1 Now on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they, and certain other women with them, came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared.

2 But they found the stone rolled away from the tomb.

3 Then they went in and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.

4 And it happened, as they were greatly perplexed about this, that behold, two men stood by them in shining garments.

5 Then, as they were afraid and bowed their faces to the earth, they said to them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead?"

6 He is not here, but is risen!"

Luke records that Jesus had already "risen" BEFORE anyone's Sunday morning arrival, even though Luke says they arrived "very early." They were amazed and returned to tell the others. Peter, wanting to see firsthand, "ran to the tomb" and "marveled to himself at what had happened" (verse 12). Let's continue Luke's consecutive account from here:

13 Now behold, two of them were traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles from Jerusalem.

14 And they talked together of all these things which had happened.

15 So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them.

16 But their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him.

[Verse 13] – These two were traveling to Emmaus, 7 miles from Jerusalem. That’s about a 2-3 hour walk.

[Verse 16] – God supernaturally “restrained” their eyes so they did not recognize Jesus as He walked with them to Emmaus.

After some conversation with Jesus (whom they did not yet recognize) concerning the events of the crucifixion and burial that had happened 3 days before (verse 21) and of the reports of His empty tomb from earlier that same morning (verses 1-6, 22-24), Jesus began to explain to them the prophecies pertaining to Himself, beginning with Moses and the Prophets (verse 27). Finally, they arrived at the village Emmaus. Let’s continue Luke’s careful consecutive account there:

Luke 24:28 Then they drew near to the village where they were going, and He indicated that He would have gone farther.

29 But they constrained Him, saying, "Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent." And He went in to stay with them.

Here Luke’s consecutive “step-by-step” record has Jesus still with them, and they ask Him, “*Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent.*” Sunday is now nearing its end. It is “*far spent*” and “*toward evening.*” It is now a spring evening in Jerusalem, during the Feast Days of Unleavened Bread.

After He opened their eyes, they marveled and said, “Did not our heart burn within us...” (as they walked).

Luke 24:33 So they rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together.

They returned to Jerusalem from Emmaus, arriving at around 10:00 or 11:00 p.m. on Sunday evening. Since the Hebrews always reckoned days as beginning and ending at dusk or sunset, this would now be the beginning of the second day of the week, corresponding to within an hour or so of the day we call Monday. Upon rejoining the others back in Jerusalem, they began to discuss the incredible events of the day. They spoke of how the Lord had appeared to Simon earlier, and the returning travelers told of how

Christ had walked with them and even had eaten dinner with them in Emmaus. Then, as the night drew late and past the Roman midnight into early Monday morning, suddenly the Lord appeared and began to calm them with words of peace (verse 36). Let's continue the account here, for it is now that the TRUTH IS MADE PLAIN, for those with eyes to see, whose minds are not "ironed" shut with tradition.

Luke 24:36 Now as they said these things, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, "Peace to you."

37 But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit.

38 And He said to them, "Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts?"

39 Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have."

40 When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet.

41 But while they still did not believe for joy, and marveled, He said to them, "Have you any food here?"

42 So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb.

43 And He took it and ate in their presence.

The disciples "supposed they had seen a spirit" (verse 37). Many people and churches continue to this day to make the same faulty assumption – they assume that Jesus had, by that time, become a spirit being! This **supposition** remains the foundation of the doctrine that says Jesus had ascended to heaven on "wave sheaf Sunday!" Many claim that Jesus had ascended Sunday morning and was now a spirit! If Jesus had risen into heaven to see the Father, He indeed would have had to be a spirit, as Jesus Himself taught that unless one is born again of spirit, "*he cannot enter the Kingdom of God*" (John 3:5), nor can he "*see the Kingdom of God*" (John 3:3). So if Jesus had indeed "seen" the Father or "entered" the very presence of the Father in His Heavenly Kingdom, then according to Christ – He would have had to be a spirit! But **Jesus said He WAS NOT, at that time, a spirit (Luke 24:39)!**

Notice what Jesus Himself said to calm their fears of His being a "spirit," "**...A SPIRIT DOES NOT HAVE FLESH AND BONES AS YOU SEE I HAVE**" (verse 39). To further calm their fears of Jesus being a spirit, He showed them His hands and feet. They must have yet had the wound marks made from the stakes being driven into them. Then He ate food "in their presence."

Obviously, Luke mentioned that Jesus ate in their presence, as this was also done to calm their fears of Christ now being a “spirit.”

Here we have BIBLICAL EVIDENCE from the Gospel of Luke – from **JESUS’ OWN MOUTH** – that **He was STILL IN THE FLESH, TWO DAYS AFTER HIS RESURRECTION!**

Can you, my friends, accept the words of your own Bibles? Of course you can! As more of God’s people accept them, they can also have a convincing part of sharing them with others, for the words of the wise are like goads stirring up others to enlightenment (Eccl 12:11).

After re-reading Jesus’ words from Luke 24:39, “**...A SPIRIT DOES NOT HAVE FLESH AND BONES AS YOU SEE I HAVE,**” many have mentioned how Jesus walked through walls, suddenly appearing and disappearing, and then asked me, “Could not Jesus had been a Spirit being manifesting Himself in the flesh?” After all, they remind me, God appeared to Abraham as a man (Gen 18). Friends, Jesus did many miracles before the crucifixion which were also beyond human power. The point is NOT which miracles WE JUDGE to be too spiritual to be done while Jesus was in the flesh. The point is Yeshua’s own words. He is the one who gave testimony to His disciples that He was not at that time a spirit – for as He explained – a spirit would not have flesh and bones as they saw He had!

Luke said in Acts that his former, consecutive and orderly account recorded all things “UNTIL” Christ was “taken up.” Do you believe the Gospel of Luke and Luke’s account in the book of Acts and Jesus’ own words over that of misguided “interpreters” with a preconceived belief?

Let’s continue the story flow. If Acts is true, then the book of Luke should conclude with Jesus’ actual ascension, which took place about 39 days after many misguided teachers falsely assume and teach that Jesus ascended (Acts 1:3-9):

*Luke 24:48 And you are witnesses of these things.
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."
50 And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them.*

51 Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven.

52 And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy,

53 and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God. Amen.

Does the Bible fit our beliefs? Has our knowledge and growth been concluded? Thankfully not.

WASN'T JESUS CALLED THE "FIRSTFRUITS" OF THEM WHO SLEEP?

The name "Christ" is singular. His sacrifice was singular. He was the firstborn (singular) from the dead (Rev 1:5). The firstfruits wave omer was of **many** fruits (plural), and it was **from the people!** Christ was first of many fruits yet to come.

1 Cor 15:20 But the fact is that Christ did actually rise from the dead and has become the first of millions who will come back to life again someday (TLB).

To say that Jesus had to first be "waved up" and then accepted by the Father ***before*** His great sacrifice could be accepted as the atoning sacrifice, is ***a fabrication!*** Jesus' awesome sacrifice was accepted by the Father THE MOMENT of His death – not four days later on the presumed "wave sheaf Sunday."

Matt 27:50 And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit.

51 Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split,

52 and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised;

53 and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many.

[Note: Many other Bible translations, including the NIV and Today's English Version, have more concise and simplistic translations into English of Matt 27:52-53, as they better capture the correct consecutive order of events. This especially helps in understanding the timing of the resurrection

of many of the dead saints in Judea at the moment of Christ's death, (symbolizing Yeshua's victory over death through the Cross), and their subsequent journey to Jerusalem (3 or more days later) after Christ's resurrection to be witnesses of His victory over death by showing themselves to many. This further confirmed Jesus as the Messiah and as the Savior who had power over death! Notice:

Matt 27:51 Then the curtain hanging in the Temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks split apart,

52 the graves broke open, and many of God's people who had died were raised to life.

53 They left the graves, and after Jesus rose from death, they went into the Holy City, where many people saw them (TEV).

Matt 27:51 At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks split.

52 The tombs broke open and the bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life.

53 They came out of the tombs, and after Jesus' resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many people (NIV).]

Immediately upon the death of the Messiah, the veil that separated the Most Holy Place from the rest of the Temple was rent open. Access to the Father was AT THAT MOMENT made available! Immediately upon Jesus/Yeshua the Messiah's death, the graves of many were opened. Christ's sacrifice was indeed ACCEPTED the very moment He died and yielded *up* His Spirit to the Father (Mt 27:50)! There was no waiting for some four more days for that sacrifice to be accepted as a "wave sheaf" offering by the merciful Father YHVH.

PROOF MESSIAH WAS NOT THE WAVE SHEAF, FROM GOD'S STATUTES

Do you remember from whom the firstfruits wave offerings came?

*Lev 23:10 "Speak to the **children of Israel**, and say to them: 'When you come into the land which I give to you, and reap its harvest, then you shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest.*

The firstfruits wave offerings came **FROM the PEOPLE – TO THE PRIESTS**. They were NOT from the priest. Jesus was and is our High Priest (Heb 6:20). One could correctly argue that Christ submitted to the Father's will when He gave Himself as ransom for our sins (Matt 26:42). Christ was our atoning gift from the Father (John 16:28, James 1:17). One could correctly argue that the "children of Israel," or their clergy, DID NOT, at that time recognize or appreciate Christ's sacrifice. One could correctly argue that Christ came from the Father – not from the people. **So the question begs to be asked: Was Christ or His atoning sacrifice from the PEOPLE, or FROM THE FATHER?** Obviously, and Scripturally, Christ and His sacrifice was FROM the Father – not the people! Christ was God's redeeming gift **to us**, **NOT from us!** But the wave offering was to be **from** "the children of Israel!" This important distinction between Christ – the great offering from the Father and His Son – and the wave sheaf offering "from the children of Israel" – is critically vital to understand, if TRUTH and clarity of God's plan is the goal.

Simple logic confirms that, Scripturally, the Messiah was not the firstfruits wave offering. He was the Lamb of God, as God told Abraham: "The LORD will provide for Himself a Lamb" (Gen 22:8). He was the first born (singular) from the dead.

How many have considered that it is BECAUSE of the atoning sacrifice of Jesus the Messiah, that all who are converted by God's Spirit - the Israel of God (Gal 6:16) – are able to be presented as the "firstfruits" offering up to God? THE CHURCH IS THE FIRSTFRUITS. We are "offered up" to the Father as a result of the atoning sacrifice of the Lamb of God! Thank God for His abundant mercy!

James 1:18 Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.

Rev 14:4 These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, being firstfruits to God and to the Lamb.

According to PHILO, the wave sheaf offering was understood by Israel as representing an offering for all peoples and races from all over the world up to God – eventually including Gentiles.

There is also a festival on the day of the paschal feast, which succeeds the first day, and this is named the sheaf, from what takes place on it; for the sheaf is brought to the altar as a first fruit both of the country which the nation has received for its own, and also of the whole land; so as to be an offering both for the nation separately, **and also a common one for the whole race of mankind**: and so that the people by it worship the living God, **both for themselves and for all the rest of mankind**,... (PHILO, *The Special Laws*, chap. xxix, section 162).

Could it be that since God's Word says "to the Jew first," and then to the Gentile (Rom 2:10), that the first wave sheaf offering was without leavening (representing only the called of Israel), and the second wave offering was offered with leavening on Pentecost, representing the whole of mankind (including the Gentiles) being converted by God's Spirit?

More study is always helpful, but four things are Scripturally clear here:

- 1 Messiah and His sacrifice were NOT from the people, as God's Statutes commanded that the firstfruits wave sheaf offering should be.
- 2 Jesus Christ had NOT yet ascended to heaven, AFTER the supposed "wave sheaf Sunday," since He was still "flesh and bones" late on that Sunday evening. Remember, Jesus said flesh and bones cannot enter heaven (John 3:3-5).
- 3 Jesus WAS TOUCHED, and indeed "clung to," PRIOR TO His ascension.
- 4 The ONLY biblical account of Jesus ascending to the Father in Heaven was 40 days after His resurrection! To teach anything else is to take the liberty to impute and add to God's Words based upon mere presumptions, and goes contrary to the clear Scriptures of God's Word. Let's learn to base all doctrine on things we can *prove* – not on assumptions and/or poor scholarship!

This may be difficult for some, as they discover if they truly fear God more than man! Some will likely turn a blind eye to this truth, thereby dismissing it out of hand as it will exceed the limits of their comfort zone. But others will grow and be blessed thereby. Many have had their minds seared shut.

But God is our Healer. For some people, their church has become their idol because of the way they have been taught to focus upon the “authority” of the church instead of the authority of God and His Words to us all! Jesus said the purpose of the church and clergy was to serve and build an atmosphere of joy (2 Cor 1:24), not to have dominion, control or to be like a master of our beliefs (Matt 20:25-28). Nonetheless, a cleverly disguised and misplaced loyalty to church and peers over loyalty to Christ and His Truth has temporarily misled many. But God’s Truth and freedom to fully study God’s Word will always provide the strongest ties of fellowship and unity, and is always a church’s greatest asset.

As we learn, let’s learn to study without attacking or condemning one another and avoid making and any doctrinal differences with our brothers a point of personal attack learning instead to be patient with those who do not understand as we do. And let’s always ***thank God for the freedom to study His Word!***

The topic of this book is tremendously important, as it relates to the day God poured out His Spirit on His Church. Could the amount of and/or power of God’s Spirit in us be at stake?

To summarize:

- Those who believe and teach that God gave His law on Pentecost and that Pentecost is on a Sunday or Monday have not likely realized that such a belief includes the impossibility of God having Israel work and clean on the Sabbath, before His presence appeared to them upon the mountain.
- Those who believe and/or teach a Sunday Pentecost usually base their conclusions upon the belief that Jesus rose up to heaven on Sunday, but the Bible says He remained in the flesh until He ascended to heaven 40 days later.
- Many of those who believe and teach a Sunday Pentecost would have you believe that they know more today than the MANY contemporary historians who recorded, as a matter of history, that Pentecost was counted from the morrow after the 1st Holy Day of Unleavened Bread, which lead directly to a Pentecost on Sivan 5, 6 or occasionally Sivan 7!
- Many teachers have taught us to believe in a Sunday Pentecost, **because they were falsely led to believe that the Pharisaic teaching of a Sivan 6 Pentecost DID NOT REQUIRE A**

COUNT, when indeed Pharisaic *TEACHING for a Sivan Pentecost* **DID** require a count. Indeed, the true Sivan 6 Pentecost **STILL DOES** need to be “numbered” today!

- Many of those who believe in and teach a Sunday Pentecost have mistakenly been led to believe that the Sadducees (who desired a Sunday Pentecost) were in control of the Temple in the time of Jesus and the apostles, when in fact there is ample archaeological and historical **evidence** (both old and new) which proves that *the Pharisees controlled the Temple services* and that the Sadducees submitted to them in these matters.
- Some of those who believe in a Sunday Pentecost are so bold as to have you believe they know more than the Jewish scholars who translated the scriptures in 250 B.C. (known as the Septuagint Bible [Old Testament]), which clears up any question about the count actually being from the 1st Day of Unleavened Bread – **NOT THE WEEKLY SABBATH**.
- Those who have been misled to believe in a Sunday Pentecost have simply **MISSED** and/or **GLOSSED OVER** many Scriptural proofs to the contrary. They have been led to avoid or **IGNORE** the abundant Scriptural proofs and evidences preserved by the Jews in the Mishna and Talmud, and by Jewish historians such as Philo and Josephus, and even the late Professor Edershiem. Most have been led to read primarily from commentaries authored mostly by Gentile authors who **DO NOT** keep God’s Sabbath or Holy Days!
- Those who keep a Sunday Pentecost are usually well meaning misled people who love God but are deceived. But given the Truth by the guidance and strength of God, **MANY WILL HAVE THEIR EYES OPENED, AND BE ABLE TO GROW** spiritually and overcome (Rev 3:12). God’s enlightening Truth does make us free! Praised be the **LORD!**