

VBS 2022

**THE RETURN
OF THE
KING**



Day 1: The Promise of Return
1st-5th Grade

The Promise of Return

The Objective is the key concept for this week's lesson. It should be the main focus of the study.

These are the key verses that you will find helpful in teaching your study this week. The "Main passage" is the basis of the study, where the other verses support the objective of the lesson.

Each day, the students will learn a memory verse. Students who learn all 5 memory verses this week will receive a prize.

An introductory activity or question that will settle the class, draw their attention to the study and prepare their hearts for God's Word.

Objective This lesson will briefly review Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, and show that before Jesus ascended, He promised to return.

Key Verses

Luke 24:44-53; Acts 1:1-11—Main Teaching Passages

Mark 16:19-20 (Parallel Passage)

John 14:1-6

1 Corinthians 15:1-6

1 Thessalonians 4:15-18

Memory Verse - Matthew 24:42

"Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming."

Hook

Ask the class, "Has anyone here ever made a promise? What are some of the promises that you have made?"

Then ask, "Has anyone ever broken a promise they made to you? How did that make you feel? Did you ever make a promise that you didn't keep?"

Sometimes people don't keep their promises. This can happen on purpose or by accident. God has made many promises. He has kept and will keep every single one of them. We are going to study one of those promises today.

What does the Bible say? This is where we will read a passage or series of passages that teach on the subject of the day.

BOOK

Jesus' ascension took place 40 days after His resurrection. During that time, Jesus met with His followers and taught them many things about the kingdom of God. At the end of that time, the disciples were gathered with Jesus just outside of Jerusalem. He commanded them to remain in Jerusalem until they were baptized with the Holy Spirit. The disciples then asked Jesus if now would be the time that He would restore the kingdom of Israel, but He told them that the Father's timing for such things was not for them to know. From the time they were empowered to be witnesses by the Holy Spirit until He returned, Jesus commanded His disciples to spread the good news of His kingdom all over the world, starting in Jerusalem.

After Jesus finished giving His final instructions, He blessed His disciples and ascended into heaven. As the disciples watched this happen, two angels asked them why they were all standing there gazing up into heaven and told them that Jesus was going to return to earth the same way they saw Him leave. The disciples returned to Jerusalem with great joy and were continually in the temple worshipping and praising God.

The interpretation/exegesis of the passage. What does this passage mean? How does this passage apply to my life?

LOOK

This year for VBS, our primary focus will be on the return of Jesus and how the promise of His return should effect us today. For today's lesson, introduce Jesus' promise to return and be sure to set the context of that promise with a brief overview of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection.

For thousands of years, God had been promising His people that someone would be born from the family of Abraham who would rescue and bless the whole world. He would be from the tribe of Judah, a forever King with a forever kingdom from David's family, God's Messiah. God kept His promise (as He keeps all His promises), and that King was born in Bethlehem. He grew up. He never sinned. He taught God's Word and performed many miracles. He wasn't just the son of David. He was the Son of God. His name was Jesus.

Some people wanted to make Jesus King because of the miracles He performed, like multiplying bread and fish. Others were excited to finally be free from Roman rulers. As Jesus rode into Jerusalem, they shouted, "Hosanna! Hosanna! Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the LORD!" They didn't understand that the way this King would bring His kingdom was through His own suffering and death.

You see, not everybody liked Jesus or wanted Him as King. Some even hated Him. He was betrayed, arrested, and put to death on a cross even though He had done nothing wrong. But three days later, He rose from the dead! He had triumphed over sin and death! And not only did

LOOK (Continued)

Jesus rise from the dead, but He ascended to heaven, where He is today. But His work isn't finished. Before He went to heaven He promised that one day He would return.

But what does it mean that Jesus will come back? What is He coming back to do? In short, He is coming back to finish what He started. Jesus did conquer sin the first time He came, but the world is still broken. People are still unkind. Sickness, sorrow, and death still bring ruin and destruction. But when King Jesus comes back, He will put an end to everything evil and untrue once and for all. He is coming back to bring His people into His kingdom, the kingdom that He has long been building and preparing where we will live with Him forever. A kingdom of life and light with no sin. A kingdom of peace with no war, love with no hate, and joy with no sadness. He is coming to take us there! He is coming to bring us home!

King Jesus will return. Just as He went up to heaven He will come back down, and when He does, He will take all of His followers up to be with Him forever. Nothing and no one will stop Him. And that should be a comfort to us today (1 Thessalonians 4:15-18)! We don't know when He will come. It could be this week. Are you ready? We don't want to be caught by surprise when He comes back. We want to be ready! We will learn more about how we can be ready for the day He does return in tomorrow's lesson.

What is my response to this passage of Scripture? How should my life change according to what this passage teaches me? What are the practical things I can do throughout the week to make this true in my life?

TOOK

As a class, memorize Matthew 24:42.

Be sure to take time today to introduce yourself and get to know the kids who will be with you all week. Do your best to learn all of their names.

Pray: Praise God for sending His Son into the world to provide a way for us to become citizens of heaven. Thank Him for the promise that one day Jesus will return to take us to be with Him in His kingdom forever.

Parent Question: Why did Jesus promise to return?

FURTHER STUDY

Commentary on Acts 1:1-11 by David Guzik

JESUS ASCENDS TO HEAVEN

A. Prologue.

1. ([Act 1:1](#)) Reference to former writings.

The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach.

a. **The former account I made:** The **former account** is the Gospel of Luke. At one time the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts were joined together as one book with two volumes.

i. Imagine what it would be like if the Book of Acts wasn't in the Bible. You pick up your Bible and see the ministry of Jesus ending in the Gospel of John; next you read about a man named Paul writing to the followers of Jesus in Rome. Who was Paul? How did the gospel get from Jerusalem to Rome? The Book of Acts answers these questions. "A great New Testament scholar has said that the title of *Acts* might be, 'How they brought the Good News from Jerusalem to Rome.'" (Barclay)

ii. That expansion from Jerusalem to Rome is a remarkable story. "Humanly speaking, [Christianity] had nothing going for it. It had no money, no proven leaders, no technological tools for propagating the gospel. And it faced enormous obstacles. It was utterly new. It taught truths that were incredible to the unregenerate world. It was subject to the most intense hatreds and persecutions." (Boice)

iii. Acts is written in the literary style of the Greek translation of the Old Testament, known as the Septuagint. "Since Luke can write in a different style ([Lk. 1:1-4](#)), this is something deliberate. Probably he regarded himself as recording *sacred history*." (Marshall)

iv. We really don't know all that much about Luke from the New Testament.

- We know that he was a physician ([Colossians 4:14](#)).
- We know that he was a Gentile (from his name).
- We know that he was a devoted companion of Paul (from the text of Acts, and [Colossians 4:14](#), [Philemon 24](#), and [2 Timothy 4:11](#)).

v. There was a time when many scholars and critics thought that Acts was sort of a romance novel of the early church, written more than 100 years after the events supposedly happened. But William Ramsay, a noted archaeologist and Bible scholar, proved that the historical record of Acts is remarkably accurate regarding the specific practices, laws and customs of the period it claims to record. It is definitely the work of contemporary eyewitnesses.

vi. In the mid-1960's, A.N. Sherwin-White, an expert in Graeco-Roman history from Oxford, wrote about Acts: "The historical framework is exact. In terms of time and place the details are precise and correct... As documents these narratives belong to the same historical series as the record of provincial and imperial trials in epigraphical and literary sources of the first and early second centuries AD...For Acts the confirmation of his-

toricity is overwhelming...Any attempt to reject its basic historicity even in matters of detail must now appear absurd. Roman historians have long taken it for granted.”

vii. John Calvin wrote that the Book of Acts was “a kind of vast treasure.” D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones called Acts “that most lyrical of books...Live in that book, I exhort you: It is a tonic, the greatest tonic I know of in the realm of the Spirit.” (Cited in Stott)

b. **Theophilus**: This man might have been a Christian wanting instruction. He might have been a Roman official being briefed by Luke about the history of the Christian movement. Or, the name could be symbolic, because the name **Theophilus** means “God-lover.”

i. In the introduction to the first volume ([Luke 1:3](#)), Luke addresses Theophilus with title *most excellent*, which was a way to address people who held high office.

ii. Since Acts ends with Paul awaiting trial before Caesar, some have wondered if Luke-Acts are not “defense briefs” on Paul’s behalf to give a Roman official background on Paul’s case. Luke arrived in Jerusalem with Paul in [Acts 21:17](#); he left with him again on the journey to Rome in [Acts 27:1](#). In those two years, Luke had plenty of time to research and write his Gospel and the Book of Acts.

iii. “Ancient books were generally written on papyrus scrolls. It was practical to have a scroll about thirty-five feet in length. When it got any longer it got too bulky to carry around. This physical limitation has determined the length of many books of the Bible.” (Boice) Luke used two scrolls to tell his story, and one we call “The Gospel of Luke” and the other we call “The Book of Acts.”

iv. Luke wanted to show Theophilus and the Romans:

- That Christianity is *harmless* (some Romans officials had embraced it themselves).
- That Christianity is *innocent* (Roman judges could find no basis for prosecution).
- That Christianity is *lawful* (as the true fulfillment of Judaism, which was an approved religion in the Roman Empire).

c. **Of all that Jesus began both to do and teach**: Notice that **the former account** concerned **all that Jesus began both to do and teach**. Luke’s Gospel describes only the *beginning* of Jesus’ work; Acts describes its *continuation*; and the work of Jesus *continues* to our present day.

i. We must remember that Acts does not give us a full history of the church during this period. For example, the churches in Galilee and Samaria are barely mentioned ([Acts 9:31](#)), and the establishing of a strong church in Egypt during this time isn’t mentioned at all.

ii. Acts spans a period of about 30 years, and takes us up to about a.d. 60 or 61, with Paul in Rome waiting to appear before Caesar Nero. This same Nero began his infamous persecutions of Christians in a.d. 64.

iii. Wonderfully, what Jesus began still continues. There is a real sense in which the Book of Acts continues to be written today. Not in an authoritative Scriptural sense; but in the sense of God’s continued work in the world by His Spirit, through His church.

iv. “The Acts of the Apostles should therefore be studied mainly for this double purpose: first, to trace our Lord’s unseen but actual *continuance of his divine teaching and working*; and, secondly, to trace the *active ministry of the Holy Spirit* as the abiding presence in the church.” (Pierson)

2. ([Act 1:2-3](#)) The last work of Jesus before His ascension to heaven.

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.

a. **Until the day in which He was taken up:** Jesus, **through the Holy Spirit**, instructed the apostles regarding what to do in His absence. He **had given commandments to the apostles**.

i. Significantly, Jesus did this **through the Holy Spirit**. This was the resurrected, glorified Lord Jesus Christ, risen with all authority and sovereignty. Yet He still chose to not rely on His own resources (as it were), but relied on the power and the presence of the indwelling **Holy Spirit**.

ii. The **Holy Spirit** – the Third Member of the Holy Trinity – is the aspect of God that lives in and empowers and inspires man. The Holy Spirit has a work among those who are not yet believers, but also a great and significant work in those who believe.

iii. If the glorified, resurrected Jesus needed and relied on the Holy Spirit, so should we. This is a pattern for the rest of the Book of Acts, which shows us what the Holy Spirit does operating through the church. “The disciple is not above his Master, nor the servant above his Lord. If even he was indebted to the Holy Spirit for the power of his ministry, surely we cannot afford to attempt the work appointed us without the same anointing.” (Pierson)

b. **To whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs:** Jesus also established the fact of His resurrection with **many infallible proofs** during the **forty days** after his resurrection but before His ascension. He left *no possible doubt* that He was resurrected, exactly as He had promised.

i. In [1 Corinthians 15:6](#) Paul described one of these **many infallible proofs**: *He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present*. More than 500 people saw the resurrected Jesus, and most of them were still alive some 25 years later in the days of Paul’s ministry.

c. **Speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:** The teaching Jesus gave during that period after His resurrection and before His ascension is not recorded, but we are told that He used that time to speak **of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God**.

i. Some Gnostic and New Age teachers would like to think that Jesus used those 40 days to teach His followers strange and obscure doctrines that must be rediscovered with new revelations today. But Luke told us that Jesus simply taught them much the same things and themes that He had taught them in His earthly ministry: **The things pertaining to the kingdom of God**.

B. The ascension of Jesus.

1. ([Act 1:4-5](#)) Jesus’ final instructions to the disciples.

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.”

a. **He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem:** Jesus had nothing else for the disciples to do other than to **wait** for the coming of the Holy Spirit (**the Promise of the Father**). Jesus knew that they really could do nothing effective for the Kingdom of God until the Spirit came.

- **To wait** means that it was worth waiting for.
- **To wait** means that they had a promise it would come.
- **To wait** means they must *receive* it; they couldn’t create it themselves.

· **To wait** means that they would be tested by waiting, at least a little.

b. **He commanded... the Promise of Father... baptized with the Holy Spirit:** This is another example of how the fact of the Trinity – that there is One God in Three Persons – is woven into the fabric of the New Testament. Here we see that **He** (Jesus) told of the **Promise of the Father**, which is the coming of the **Holy Spirit**.

i. It is significant that this coming, filling, and empowering of the Holy Spirit is called “**the Promise of the Father**.”

· It shows that we should wait for it with eager anticipation; a “**Promise of the Father**” could only be good.

· It shows that it is reliable; the Father would never **Promise** something He could not fulfill.

· It shows that the **Promise** belongs to all His children, since it comes from God as our **Father**.

· It shows that it must be received by faith, as is the pattern with the promises of God throughout the Bible.

ii. “The ‘promise of the Father’ now became also the promise of the Son.” (Pierson)

c. **You shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit:** The idea of being **baptized** is to be immersed or covered over in something; even as John baptized people in water, so these disciples would be “immersed” in the Holy Spirit.

i. It may be more useful to describe the baptism of the Holy Spirit as a *condition* than as an *experience*. We should perhaps ask, “*Are you* baptized in the Holy Spirit?” instead of asking, “*Have you been* baptized in the Holy Spirit?”

d. **Not many days from now:** They knew that this **Promise of the Father** would come, but not immediately. It would be **days from now**, but not **many days**. Jesus had a purpose in not telling them exactly when it would come.

2. ([Act 1:6](#)) The disciples ask Jesus a final question before His ascension.

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

a. **Therefore, when they had come together:** This would be the last time they would see Jesus in His physical body, until they went to heaven to be with Him forever. There is nothing specific in the text to show us that they *knew* this would be their last time seeing Him on earth, other than the weight of the question they were about to ask.

b. **Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?** This was a question asked many times before, but it had a special relevance now. They knew that Jesus had instituted the New Covenant ([Luke 22:20](#)). They also knew that the restoration of **the kingdom to Israel** was part of the New Covenant (as seen in [Jeremiah 23:1-8](#), [Ezekiel 36:16-30](#), [Ezekiel 37:21-28](#)).

i. It was actually reasonable for them to wonder when the *rest* of the New Covenant would be fulfilled. The response of Jesus in the following verses also indicates that He did not rebuke them or even correct them for the question. He simply told them that the answer wasn’t for them to know.

ii. “The verb *restore* shows that they were expecting a political and territorial kingdom; the noun *Israel* that they were expecting a national kingdom; and the adverbial clause *at this time* that they were expecting its immediate establishment.” (Stott)

iii. The disciples certainly knew the many Old Testament prophecies describing the spiritual *and* national rebirth of Israel. The disciples probably thought that the spiritual rebirth seemed certain, so the national would also come.

3. ([Act 1:7-8](#)) Jesus' final teaching and final promise before His ascension.

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."

a. **It is not for you to know:** Jesus warned the disciples against inquiring into aspects of the timing of God's kingdom, because those things belong to God the Father alone (**which the Father has put in His own authority**).

i. It was wise for Jesus not to outline His plan over the next 2,000 years. It was good for the disciples to not know that the full restoration of the kingdom to Israel that they hoped would happen soon would not come for some 2,000 years. It might overly discourage them in the work they had to do right then, and might make them think less of the aspect of the kingdom of God that *was* present with them.

ii. At the same time, Jesus did not say that there was to be *no* restoration of the kingdom to Israel; He simply said that speculation into the time and date of this restoration was not proper for the disciples.

iii. **In His own authority:** The resurrected, ascended Jesus again showed His submission to the Father. His submission to the Father was not temporary, but eternal.

b. **But you shall receive power:** If the national kingdom they wanted would be delayed, the **power** they needed would not. They would soon receive power with the coming of the **Holy Spirit**.

i. With their question about the restoration of the kingdom to Israel, it is possible that the disciples still saw **power** too much in terms of Caesar's kind of power, and not enough in terms of God's kind of power.

c. **And you shall be witnesses to Me:** The natural result of receiving this promised power would be that they would become **witnesses** of Jesus, all over the earth.

i. Notice that this really wasn't a command; it was a simple statement of fact: **When the Holy Spirit has come upon you... you shall be witnesses of Me**. The words **shall be** are in the indicative, not the imperative. Jesus didn't recommend that they become **witnesses**; He said they would **be witnesses**.

ii. If we want to **be witnesses**, we need to be filled with the Holy Spirit. The best training program for evangelism is of little effectiveness without the filling of the Holy Spirit.

iii. [Isaiah 43:10](#) has the Lord proclaiming to His people *You are My witnesses*. A cultic group today claims that this is their mandate for being "Jehovah's Witnesses." Unfortunately, they fail to see [Isaiah 43:10](#) in the context of [Acts 1:8](#); we are truly *Yahweh's Witnesses* when we are *Jesus' Witnesses*.

d. **In Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth:** The progress of the spread of the gospel message from **Jerusalem**, to **Judea and Samaria**, and then **to the end of the earth** becomes the outline of Acts.

• [Acts 1-7](#) describes the gospel in **Jerusalem**.

• [Acts 8-12](#) speak of the gospel in **Judea and Samaria**.

• [Acts 13-28](#) tells of the gospel going **to the end of the earth**.

i. We may imagine the objections the disciples might think of to the places of ministry Jesus described.

- **Jerusalem** was where Jesus was executed at the word of an angry mob.
 - **Judea** rejected His ministry.
 - **Samaria** was regarded as a wasteland of impure half-breeds.
 - In the **uttermost parts of the earth**, the Gentiles were seen by some Jews of that day as nothing better than fuel for the fires of Hell.
 - ii. Yet God wanted a witness sent to all of these places, and the Holy Spirit would empower them to do this work.
4. ([Act 1:9-11](#)) Jesus ascends into heaven.

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."

- He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight:** Jesus was taken up from them as He blessed them ([Luke 24:50](#)). As He slowly disappeared into the sky, surrounded by a **cloud** they continued to gaze upward.
 - The **cloud** that **received Him** is suggestive of the cloud of glory (called the *Shekinah*) that is associated with the presence of God in the Old and New Testaments.
 - While they watched, He was taken up:** It was important for Jesus to leave His disciples in this manner. In theory, He certainly could have simply vanished to heaven and the Father's presence in a secret sort of way. But by ascending in this manner, Jesus wanted His followers to know that He was gone for good, as opposed to the way He appeared and reappeared during the 40 days after His resurrection.
 - Remember Jesus' words to His disciples in [John 16:7](#): *It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.* Now the disciples could know that that promise would be fulfilled. The Holy Spirit was coming because Jesus promised to send the Spirit when He left.
- Why do you stand gazing up into heaven?** The **two men** (apparently angels) told the disciples to put their attention in the right place (obedience to Jesus' command to return to Jerusalem), not in wondering where and how Jesus went. Jesus told them to go to the ends of the *earth*, and they stood **gazing up into heaven**.
 - Morgan speculated that the **two men** were possibly Moses and Elijah. It seems best to say they were angels.
- This same Jesus:** This is a glorious phrase. It reminds us that the Jesus ascended to heaven and seated at the right hand of God the Father is the **same Jesus** of the Gospels. He is the **same Jesus** of love, grace, goodness, wisdom, and care.
- Will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven:** Jesus will return just as He left.
 - He left *physically* and **will so come in like manner**.
 - He left *visibly* and **will so come in like manner**.
 - He left from the *Mount of Olives* and **will so come in like manner**.
 - He left in the *presence of His disciples* and **will so come in like manner**.
 - He left *blessing His church* and **will so come in like manner**.