BIBLE STUDY
May 6 and 9, 2024

<u>THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD</u>
Acts 1: 1-11
Mark 16: 15-20
Ephesians 1: 17-23

1. **Acts 1: 1-11**
   - Our reading is the introduction to the book of the Acts of the Apostles, which connects it to the Gospel of Luke. Acts is volume 2 of Luke's Gospel.
   - V. 1: the first book=the Gospel of Luke. Acts is also written to Theophilus, meaning lover of God. This name is a literary device and not the name of an actual person. We are all Theophilus since we are all lovers of God.
   - V. 2: The Gospel dealt with all the events and words of Jesus during his ministry and through his Passion, Death, and Resurrection up to his Ascension. The Ascension in the Gospel of Luke tales place on Easter evening just as in John's Gospel.
   - V. 3: In Acts, Luke extends the appearances of the Risen Lord to forty days. Firty days is a symbolic number of a special time of God's revelation like the 40 days of the flood, the 40 years of wandering in the desert, the 40 days of Moses on Mt. Sinai, the 40 days of Elijah walk to Sinai, and the 40 days of Jesus' fasting in the desert.
   - V. 4: They are to stay in Jerusalem and await "the promise of the Father," another name for the Holy Spirit.
   - V. 5: The words of John the baptized are to be fulfilled. They will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.
   - V. 6: The disciples are still looking for a restoration of the Kingship of David. They still have a lot to learn. That knowledge will come with the descent of the Holy Spirit.
   - V. 7: Only the Father knows the exact time. The disciples are not to worry about times and places, but to be witnesses to Jesus and his Resurrection to all the world.
   - V. 8: They will witness first in Jerusalem and Judea. After the death of Stephen and the resulting persecution, they will spread out to Samaria, and then Philip will witness to the Ethiopian eunuch who will bring the word to Africa, the ends of the earth. This is a summary of Acts chapters 1-8.
   - V. 9: Jesus is lifted to heaven and taken from their sight.
   - V. 10: His ascension is accompanied by the appearance of two angels.
   - V. 11: They chide the disciples for standing and looking up to heaven. They admonish them to be busy about their mission for the Lord will return one day and seek an accounting.
2. **Mark 16: 15-20**
   - It is accepted that Mark 16: 9-20 is a later addition to the Gospel. Ancient, reliable manuscripts end the Gospel at 16: 8 with the fear and confusion of the women. Later members of Mark's community probably thought this ending

to abrupt and inconclusive, and added an ending combining information from other sources. The added ending is considered canonical and an authentic part of the Gospel.

- V. 15: Jesus commissions the disciples in words similar to Mathew's. Go into the entire world ad proclaim the Gospel to every creature.
- V. 16: When people hear the proclamation of the Gospel, they will have to decide to believe or not believe. This is an eschatological choice, which will affect their salvation.
- Vv., 17-18: Mark represents an early church that is still very charismatic. The disciples will give credence to their preaching with signs such as driving out demons, speaking new languages, immunity from poisonous snakes, protection from poisons, and healing the sick.
- V. 19: Jesus ascends into heaven and takes his seat at the right hand of God, meaning he is glorified by the Father.
- V. 20: The disciples preach everywhere, and the Lord is with them and confirms their word by signs.

3. **Ephesians 1: 17-23**
    - These verses are part of Paul's prayer of thanksgiving for the faith of the Ephesians and a prayer for their strengthening through the Gospel.
    - V. 17: Paul prays that the Ephesians will receive from God wisdom and revelation to know him more profoundly.
    - V. 18: He prays that the eyes of their heart—an affective understanding—will understand the hope that God's call engenders and the riches that believers will inherit.
    - V. 19: That they may know the great power of God to accomplish what he promises.
    - V. 20: This power God showed when he raised Jesus from the dead and seating him at his right hand in heaven. The Ascension is Jesus taking his seat at God's right hand.
    - V. 21: Jesus is above any other power existing now or in the future.
    - V. 22: Jesus is the head of the church which is his body here on earth and contains the fullness of God.