

# **The Ascension Was From Bethany**

**On**

**Friday Zif 28**

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# The Ascension was from Bethany on Friday Zif 28

## 1.0 Introduction

Luke ended his gospel with an account of the Ascension of our Lord Jesus from Bethany (Luke 24:50-52) and opens his Acts of the Apostles with an account of the same Ascension but apparently from the Mt of Olives (Acts 1:9-12). The Bible may not be read as contradicting itself and so we need to determine whether the Ascension was from Bethany or from the Mt of Olives. This article essays that the Ascension was from Bethany and not from the Mt of Olives.

This is complicated through the angelic comment of Act 1:11 that Jesus will return to Earth in like manner to his ascension into Heaven. It is customarily claimed that Zechariah 14:3-4 depicts the Second Coming of Jesus as the OT's LORD God descending onto the Mt of Olives. This monograph appeals through a number of articles and papers available at my Internet homepage that not Jesus but God the Father was the OT Creator and LORD God who spoke to Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and Moses and that therefore Zechariah 14:3-4 does not depict the Second Coming of Jesus.

That Zechariah 14:3-4 does not depict Jesus' Second Coming is strengthened through the angels telling the apostles in Acts 1:11 that Jesus' return (Second Coming) will be in "like manner" to his Ascension. However, the peaceful Ascension is in no way in like manner to the prophesied descent onto the Mt of Olives by the OT LORD God which will split the Mt of Olives in two and will open a wide valley between the two halves (Zech 14:4).

This article also shows that the Ascension was during the afternoon of Friday the 28<sup>th</sup> day of Zif, which is the second month of the Hebrew calendar (1 Kings 6:1).

Mainstream Christendom commonly refers to Jesus return to Heaven as the Ascension and with this suggests that Jesus ascended into Heaven. It should be noted that Luke 24:51 states that He was "carried up" into Heaven rather than that He ascended into Heaven. The KJV translators correctly rendered the Greek verb "anapherō" (Strong G399) "to carry up". That raises a question over the appropriateness of the widely used term "Ascension" but this is not considered further in this paper.

All quoted or referenced scriptures are from the King James Version Bible.

## 2.0 The Lord's Commanding His Apostles to Wait in Jerusalem for the Holy Spirit

Before we examine the actual Ascension accounts by Luke in his Gospel and in Acts it needs to be stressed that Jesus had commanded his apostles to stay in Jerusalem till they received power from on high in the form of the holy spirit (Luke 24:49, Acts 1:4).

Luke 24.49 And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

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.

It is therefore no surprise that we find the apostles anxious to obey their master and return to Jerusalem after they got over the shock of seeing him carried up into Heaven. We will return to this later because it has an important bearing on the actual location from where Jesus was carried up into Heaven.

## 3.0 Luke's Gospel Account of the Ascension

Luke ends his Gospel with the following account of the Ascension.

Luke 24.50 And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them.

.51 And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.

.52 And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy:

This passage plainly states that Jesus led his disciples to Bethany, where He blessed them and then was carried up into Heaven. There is no mention of the Mt of Olives and so we must conclude from this passage that the Ascension was from Bethany.

#### 4.0 Luke's Acts 1:9-12 Account of the Ascension

Luke begins his Acts of the Apostles with the following account of the Ascension.

- Acts 1.9 And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.
- .10 And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;
- .11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.
- .12 Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey.

There is no mention in the actual description of the Ascension in verses 9 and 10 or even verse 11 from where this took place. So we have no reason to depart from Luke's Gospel account stating it was from Bethany.

The question concerning the Mt of Olives arises from verse 12 which indicates they faced a Sabbath day's journey (walk) from the Mt of Olives to Jerusalem, the city they had been instructed to return to. Why are we given the information it was a Sabbath-day walk from the Mt of Olives to Jerusalem? It is plain that it must have been Friday after sunset when the apostles reached the Mt of Olives on their way back to Jerusalem from Bethany but that this need not stop them completing their return to Jerusalem because the city was a lawful Sabbath-day walk away. It will be shown in Section 6.0 that the Ascension was indeed on a Friday.

We saw from Luke 24:50-52 that the Ascension took place from Bethany. Let us also assume that when Jesus had been carried up into Heaven that this was before sunset because Acts 1:9 states they observed a cloud obscuring Jesus from their view. They must have remained standing there staring in disbelief skywards until the two angels brought them back to reality by asking why they were staring into the sky.

It seems the apostles had tarried rather long at Bethany before beginning their walk back to Jerusalem via the Mt of Olives and as a result they found themselves after sunset on that mountain, which lies between Bethany and Jerusalem. Luke's mention of the Sabbath-day walk indicates it was after Friday sunset and therefore already the Sabbath when they found themselves on the mountain. This would not have stopped them continuing onto Jerusalem because it was only a Sabbath-day walk away.

There is no reason for assuming the Ascension took place from the Mt of Olives and so Luke's account of Luke 24:50-52 that the Ascension took place from Bethany does not contradict his parallel account of Acts 1:9-12.

#### 5.0 Zechariah's Account of the OT LORD God's Descent onto the Mt of Olives

The all-capitals form "LORD" occurs some 6,500 times throughout the OT, has the Strong number H3068 and is always the translation of the Hebrew Tetragrammaton JHVH. However the Hebrew JHVH translated "LORD" does not mean "Lord" but rather means "*The Self-existent One*" or "*The Eternal*" or "*I AM*". I have shown in the short article A13, *How the OT Lord, LORD, God and GOD relate to God's name and His NT Identity* and in the study paper P2, *God the Father is the Creator and Husband of Israel*, that throughout the OT the all-capitals form LORD always denotes God the Father and never Jesus. Other articles at my Internet homepage that show that God the Father and not his Son Jesus was the OT Creator and LORD God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob and of Exodus and who married the nation of Israel at Mt Sinai, are A2 & A3, A13, Q6, Q7 – see Section 9.0, *References* for details.

In Zechariah 14:3 this all-capitals form LORD therefore depicts God the Father descending onto the Mt of Olives and not, as is often mistakenly claimed, his Son Jesus.

- Zech 14.3 Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle.
- .4 And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.

The former WCG taught that Jesus was the LORD God of the OT and therefore linked the Second Coming of Jesus as alluded by the two angels in Acts 1:11 with the descent of the OT LORD onto the Mt of Olives as depicted by Zechariah 14:3-4. That interpretation is also not uncommon in mainstream Christendom. The point being that the angels said that Jesus would come in like manner to the Ascension witnessed by his apostles.

There are a few things wrong with that assumed link between Acts 1:11 and Zechariah 14:3-4.

- (1) According to my claim that God the Father always depicts OT LORD then not Jesus but God the Father will descend onto the Mt of Olives in Zecharia 14:3-4 and therefore that passage can not depict Jesus' Second Coming.
- (2) In Acts 1:1 the angels said that Jesus' return would be in like manner to his Ascension. Acts 1:9-12 describes a peaceful ascension as the disciples watched but Zechariah 14:3-4 describes a violent descent by the OT LORD onto

the Mt of Olives that splits the mountain in two and creates a large valley between the halves. Clearly no human would want to stand there and watch that descent. It is plain that Zechariah does not resemble a Second Coming of Jesus that will be as peaceful as his Ascension.

- (3) Luke's account in Luke 24:50-52 declares that the Ascension was from Bethany rather than from the Mt of Olives and so again precludes a Second Coming that is both in like manner and to the Mt of Olives.

Since Zechariah 14:3-4 depicts God the Father's yet future descent onto the Mt of Olives that will split that mountain into two to form a large valley and since Jesus' Ascension from Bethany was peaceful without any upheaval of Bethany, there is no justification for linking Jesus' Second Coming to Zechariah 14:3-4.

## 6.0 The Ascension Was Friday Afternoon

It still needs to be shown that the Ascension was on Friday. When this is done the reference in Acts 1:12 to the Mt of Olives being a Sabbath-day journey from Jerusalem will make sense. For this the reader needs to refer to the calendar given in the Appendix and consider the following facts and consequences.

- (1) As is well known by the Churches of God, the Resurrection was just before the end of the weekly Sabbath, that is just before Saturday sunset. This is the time a new biblical week is about to "dawn" or begin – Matthew 28:1, "*In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, ...*". This is not an Easter Sunday morning dawning but a Saturday sunset one! See Section 8.0 of paper P8, *The Seventh Day Remains the Christian Sabbath*.
- (2) Acts 1:2-3 reveals the Ascension was on the 40<sup>th</sup> day since Jesus first appeared to the Apostles after his Resurrection – note not first appeared to his disciples but to his apostles.
- (3) Luke 24:13-32 relates how Jesus joined two disciples, who were no apostles and therefore did not stay in Jerusalem but were on their way to Emmaus. After they recognized Jesus, they returned to Jerusalem to tell the news to the 11 apostles. Then Jesus suddenly entered the room and this was the first time his apostles saw Him after his Resurrection (Luke 24:33-36).
- (4) Being Sunday evening that first meeting with the apostles was already on the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of the biblical week which had begun at Saturday sunset – see point (1) above.
- (5) The 2<sup>nd</sup> day was therefore Day-1 of those 40 days and Day-40 was the day of the Ascension. The reader should check this and the remaining points with the help of the calendar of Appendix.
- (6) Since Day-1 of those 40 days was on the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of the biblical week, then were Day-8, Day-15, Day-22, Day-29 and Day-36 also on the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of their respective weeks. Counting further, Day-37, Day-38, Day-39 and Day-40 were respectively on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> day in their week. Therefore Day-40 was on the 6<sup>th</sup> day of the week which corresponds to the secular Friday. This proves that the Ascension was on Friday.
- (7) Since Jesus met the 11 soon after the start of Day-1 of those 40 days and since He was carried up into Heaven towards the end of Day-40, the period over which the apostles saw Him was 40 days.
- (8) When Jesus was carried up into Heaven towards the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> day of the week, He entered His Father's Rest on the 7<sup>th</sup>-day Sabbath. The reader may like to read Section 4.0 of my paper P6, *Noah's 365 Days in the Ark*, to see that when God calls one into his Rest it is always on the 7<sup>th</sup>-day. For example, Noah entered the Ark on the Sabbath and left it 365 days later to re-enter Satan's world on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the week.
- (9) Since the Crucifixion was on Wednesday Abib 14, Day-1 of the 40-day count of Acts 1:2-3 was Abib 19. From this it may be determined that the Ascension day (Day-40) was 28<sup>th</sup> day of the month Zif of the Crucifixion year on the Hebrew calendar. Readers unfamiliar with the fact that the Crucifixion was on Wednesday Abib 14, may like to read Section 9.0, of the aforementioned paper P8.

Note that the two disciples who met Jesus on their way to Emmaus, were not part of the 11 apostles, who had stayed in Jerusalem as Jesus had instructed them. Therefore the 40-day count of Acts 1:2-3 does not begin on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of that week. The point is that Luke specifically mentions in Acts 1:2-3 that the 40 days applied to the apostles and therefore not to disciples in general. Although the eleven were originally known as disciples, the total number of Jesus' disciples numbered as many as seventy (Luke 10:1, 17). Only the 11 that remained after Judas' betrayal of Jesus, of the twelve that followed Jesus closely were appointed Apostles. Therefore the 40-day count of Acts 1:2-3 does not begin on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the week, when those two disciples met Jesus on way to Emmaus but began at the start of the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of the biblical week, which is Sunday evening, when Jesus suddenly entered the room where had assembled his apostles as well as others (Luke 24:33-36).

## 7.0 Summary

It is now clear that the Ascension was from Bethany on the afternoon of Friday Zif 28 and that Acts 1:12 refers to the Mt of Olives to stress that this was where the apostles found themselves after seeing Jesus ascend into heaven and delaying their departure from Bethany. It was then past Friday sunset and so already the Sabbath but the Mt of Olives being only a Sabbath-day walk from Jerusalem, they were able to continue their journey to the city. The reference to the Mt of Olives in Acts 1:12 does not imply the Ascension was from there but that the apostles found themselves there on way back from Bethany to Jerusalem. The Ascension took place at Bethany as Luke explains in Luke 24:50-52.

## 8.0 An Absurd Consequence of Misinterpreting Zechariah Chapter 14:3-4

As explained in Section 5.0 Zechariah 14:3-4 can not be an account of the prophesied “Second Coming” of Jesus but rather describes the descent from Heaven of God the Father unto the Mt of Olives. It will surprise many who were in the former WCG to learn that God the Father was the LORD God of the OT. The former WCG taught – as does much of Christendom – that Jesus had been the Creator LORD God of Eden and of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob, who spoke to Moses from the Burning Bush and who married the nation of Israel at Mt Sinai. I have shown many times from the Bible that God the Father was indeed the most high LORD God who Created all things in Heaven and Earth (Acts 4:24<sup>b</sup>-27<sup>a</sup>) and who spoke to Abraham and to Isaac and to Jacob and to Moses and who married Israel at Mt Sinai and who remains to this day the Husband of his still estranged Wife Israel.

Had Jesus been the OT LORD God who had married Israel, then God the Father would have remained a single or unmarried Father who begot his Son Jesus through His Son’s Wife Israel by Mary, which would mean both adultery and incest within God’s Family. That plainly would be an absurd consequence of the mistaken idea that Zechariah 14:3-4 depicts the Second Coming of Jesus as the LORD God of the OT.

## 9.0 References

The articles and papers referred to are the following and are available at my Internet Home page or by written request – for details see at the end of this paper.

- P2 *God the Father is the Creator and Husband of Israel!*
- P6 *Noah's 365 Days In The Ark*
- P8 *The Seventh Day Remains the Christian Sabbath*
- Q6 *Quick Guide To God the Father Being The God of Exodus*
- Q7 *Quick Guide To God the Father's OT Identity*
- A2 *How can God be unmarried and yet be a Father with a Family? – Part 1*
- A3 *How can God be unmarried and yet be a Father with a Family? - Part 2*
- A4 *Jesus' Divinity and Human Birth Explained and Unitarianism Rejected*
- A13 *How the OT Lord, LORD, God and GOD relate to God's name and His NT Identity*

## 10.0 Conclusion

It has been demonstrated that the Lord Jesus’ Ascension was from Bethany and not from the Mt of Olives. It has also been shown that Zechariah 14:3-4 does not describe the Second Coming but rather the descent of God the Father who was the OT Creator LORD God of Eden who spoke to Abraham and to Isaac and to Jacob and to Moses and who married His Wife Israel at Mt Sinai. It should be noted that despite my stating that God the Father was the Creator and LORD God of the OT, that I am not a Unitarian and for that reason I included under Section 9.0 References, paper A4, *Jesus' Divinity and Human Birth Explained and Unitarianism Rejected*

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# Appendix

## Crucifixion-Year Calendar for Abib and Zif

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wed'day	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Month	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Sabbath
	(Last month of previous year)				1 New Year	2	3
Abib (1st month)	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	11	12	13	14 PO, C, B	15 FUB-1	16	17 R
	18 E	19 1 <sup>st</sup> Mtg (1)	20 (2)	21 FUB-7 (3)	22 (4)	23 (5)	24 (6)
	25 (7)	26 (8)	27 (9)	28 (10)	29 (11)	30 (12)	1 (13)
Zif (2nd month)	2 (14)	3 (15)	4 (16)	5 (17)	6 (18)	7 (19)	8 (20)
	9 (21)	10 (22)	11 (23)	12 (24)	13 (25)	14 (26)	15 (27)
	16 (28)	17 (29)	18 (30)	19 (31)	20 (32)	21 (33)	22 (34)
	23 (35)	24 (36)	25 (37)	26 (38)	27 (39)	28 A (40)	29

### LEGEND

- PO = Passover on Abib 14 with "Last Supper" taken after Tuesday sunset,
- C = Crucifixion on Wednesday Abib 14 (PO day),
- B = Burial just before Wednesday sunset – still on Abib 14,
- FUB-1 = Feast of Unleavened Bread Day 1 (Abib-15 holy day),
- R = Resurrection on Abib 17; just before Saturday sunset,
- E = On way to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-31) two disciples meet Jesus near end of Abib-18 day (verse 29),
- 1<sup>st</sup> Mtg = Jesus' 1<sup>st</sup> meeting with his 11 Apostles after Sunday sunset which is already Abib 19 (Luke 24:33-36),  
Therefore Abib 19 is Day-1 of 40-day count to Ascension when apostles see Jesus (Acts 1:2-3),
- FUB-7 = Feast of Unleavened Bread Day 7 (Abib-21 holy day),
- A = Ascension on late afternoon of Friday Zif 28 (Day-40 of 40-day inclusive count to Ascension).

