

# THE NEXT 40 DAYS

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## SCRIPTURE

Acts 1:3, “After his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God” (NIV).

## INTRODUCTION

Can we safely assume that Easter is complete because we have moved through Jesus’ Passion story, specifically the crucifixion and resurrection?

Well, it will be 40 more days before Jesus left earth, and in this time, Jesus authenticates His resurrection and prepares His people for the next period of history; the period until He returns once again—the Second Coming. By the way, did you know that the phrase “forty days” occurs 22 times in 22 verses in the Bible? What’s up with the emphasis on the number 40?

“Forty days” designates important time periods, for example, before His temptation, Jesus fasted “forty days and forty nights” in the Judean desert (Matthew 4:2, Mark 1:13, Luke 4:2). Forty days was the period from the resurrection of Jesus to the ascension of Jesus (Acts 1:3). God had instructed Moses for 40 days on Mt. Sinai in preparation for Israel’s mission in the world. Jesus instructed the apostles for 40 days in preparation for the church’s mission in the world.

## BODY

In the 40 days between Jesus’ resurrection and ascension, He:

1. Appeared several times to His disciples and others.
2. He spoke to them further about the kingdom of God.
3. He spoke to them about the coming of the Holy Spirit, for whom they were to wait.

As we know, dead man cannot appear and speak to several people. But Jesus did appear to many, spoke to them and instructed them.

**He presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive**

Getting back to our Scripture Acts 1:3(a), the Bible is very clear that Jesus rose from the grave and gave “many convincing proofs” that He is alive; you can read Acts 13:31; Matt. 28:9,16; Mark 16:10-14; Luke 24:1-53; John 20:1-21; 1 Cor. 15:5-7 and 1 John 1:1. The testimonies of the multitude that saw Jesus is alive, is the clear reason we can keep going in the face of fear. The lyrics by Dave Branon come to mind, “Because Jesus lives, we can face tomorrow.”

Luke, in Acts, even made more than just a historic statement. It is a challenge to all critics who deny the bodily resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Luke made this amazing and startling statement that Jesus was alive, He was seen by a great multitude of people, and His resurrection was confirmed by a great number of convincing proofs.

Today, 2,000 odd years later, no other doctrine of the Scriptures has been more persistently attacked than the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ. And no wonder, for it is a key in of all Christian doctrine.

In the resurrection of Jesus, the whole structure of Christian doctrine stands or falls. If the resurrection could be disproved, Christianity would crumble in the dust and have less credibility than the wildest myths of ancient Greece and Rome. But the fact of the resurrections still stands solid.

There can be no more doubt when you consider the facts of Christ’s life, death, and resurrection. His integrity is well-founded. Prophets foretold His coming. Miracles supported His deity. Eyewitnesses verified His resurrection. And today, the Holy Spirit confirms to anyone who is seeking to know the truth, that Jesus is alive.

“Because Jesus lives, we can face tomorrow,” and anything else for that matter!

## **Over a period of forty days**

Think about this story. A man by the name of Jesus Christ walked out of the Judean wilderness making claims a lot of people found difficult to believe. He was later executed and pronounced dead. But 3 days later He showed up alive. And there have been sceptics ever since.

God wants to bring you to the place where you learn what you do not know. He arranges your life so that you can understand what you do not understand. He wants to bring you to the end of your cleverness so that all of your trust will be in Him—alone. Waiting purifies our motives because in the long hours while we wait, our pride crumbles and we eventually realize that everything depends on God.

For forty days, Jesus showed the world that He lives again. The Sanhedrin had called Jesus a blasphemer, and others claimed His miracles were of the devil, but His 40 days in Jerusalem and surrounding areas, being seen by multitudes, was hardly disputed. The contemporary Jewish historian Josephus referred to it, as did other writers. Two generations later, the writer Eusebius interviewed many people who had known people who saw Jesus during these days and they told of miracles, even cited sermons and letters of the risen Jesus.

In other words, some people might not have joined the Christ-followers, and although believers multiplied rapidly, even in the face of persecution soon thereafter, very few people disputed that He rose from the dead.

## **About the kingdom of God**

“...and spoke about the kingdom of God.” The Kingdom of God is the place where God reigns as King.

Let’s read Luke 17:20-21, “Now having been questioned by the Pharisees as to when the kingdom of God was coming, He answered them and said, ‘The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed; nor will they say, ‘Look, here it is!’ or, ‘There it is!’ For behold, the kingdom of God is in your midst.’”

Is it possible that all these discussions can cloud the most important question, “Are you in the Kingdom of God?”

Jesus explained to the Jewish leader Nicodemus, how one (Jew or Gentile) can gain entrance into the Kingdom of God. Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God." Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he?" Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:3-5).

### **A challenging question**

We know the significance of 40 days and we know what Jesus did during His last 40 days on earth. So, for the 40 days ended with the remembrance of His ascension...

- What are you committing to doing? What are you going to do next? What more can you do?
- What is your plan of action; when, why, how etc.?
- What are you going to do with the results? Acts 1:8, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

I would like to remind you that you have already received the Holy Spirit when you became born again.

### **CONCLUSION**

To summarize, during the 40 days following Jesus' resurrection:

- Jesus convinced His disciples that He was alive.
- Jesus comforted his disciples about His resurrection. He comforted them, that they had a future in the Kingdom of God.
- Jesus commissioned His disciples to go out and preach the gospel to the entire world.

Both the disciples and us today do not preach the Good News in our own power. This is important to grasp. Indeed, Jesus explained that the Holy Spirit would come upon them and give them His power to be His witnesses throughout the world (Acts 1:8).

Jesus called the apostles, as well as you and me, to go into a world where people do not know about Him and to give a truthful account of what they had seen, heard, and experienced.

In taking the gospel to the ends of the world, we are called to testify to the truth about Jesus and how He has changed our lives. “What are you doing to tell others? Is your faith in the risen Christ, and are you seeking to share His message of salvation with others? Are you living the Good News?”

A lot of folks believe the finest day for mankind was when a man set foot on the moon, but my friend the real finest day for mankind was when Jesus stepped out of the tomb!!

Amen.