

“In Like Manner” – Acts 1:11

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Acts 1:9-11 – *And when he had spoken these words, while they looked he was exalted [or lifted up]; indeed the glory cloud took him to be raised on high away from their sight. And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, and said, Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken away from you into heaven, will come in like manner as you saw him go away into heaven.* (Literal Translation)

In Like Manner

Many Christians proclaim that the return of Christ will be as visible and bodily as His departure. This text [Acts 1:9-11] seems at the outset to preclude any possibility of a non-visible or non-bodily return of Christ. Or does it? The operative phrase here is “in the same way” or “in like manner.” I have heard so many Christians proclaim with this passage alone that, “since we have obviously never seen, nor has anyone in Church history ever seen, any physical or bodily return of our Lord, we must therefore conclude that this passage has indeed not been fulfilled as of yet, and so we eagerly await for Jesus to return standing on a cloud at His second coming.” Of course, this overly literal, and unfortunately too often used, shallow argument has derailed so many Christians from seeing the true nature and meaning of this text, and from enjoying the fact that indeed, it’s fulfillment has in fact taken place.

Assuming that this passage does refer to Christ’s parousia (which most scholars do admit), it must be pointed out that Christ’s disciples *did not* see Him ascend into heaven because *“a cloud hid Him from their sight”* (Acts 1:9). While some readers of the text miss this point entirely, it is important to note that they were *“looking onward”* and He was *“lifted up”* [actual meaning in the Greek, [apairo](#), here is to be lifted up in a figurative sense, e.g. to be glorified], and that He was *“taken out of their sight in a cloud.”* The reason this is so important is because the Disciples never actually saw Jesus ascend into the physical heaven, or anywhere else once the glory cloud exalted him! He was glorified and instantly vanished before their eyes into the cloud. The writer of Mark and Luke’s Gospel, in addition to Paul’s letters to Timothy and the Ephesians also describe the event this way:

Mark 16:19 – *“¹⁹So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God.”*

Luke 24:50-51 – *“⁵⁰Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them. ⁵¹While he blessed them, he parted from them and was exalted into heaven.”*

1 Timothy 3:16 – *“¹⁶Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness: He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.”*

Ephesians 4:8-10 – *“⁸Therefore it says, ‘When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men.’ ⁹(In saying, ‘He ascended,’ what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth? ¹⁰He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.)”*

What we see clearly in each of these accounts is that the primary focus of each writer is not to focus on the direction or physical nature of Christ’s ascension as the primary “manner” of things, but that the “manner” in which Jesus went into heaven was to *“sit at*

the right hand of the Father," and to be *"taken up in glory,"* and that He ascended far above all the heavens to *"fulfill all things."* As we discussed earlier, His return *"in the same way"* or *"in like manner"* would also be hidden from sight, since they gazed upon Him and He was hidden from them in a cloud when He ascended. In stark contrast, how "like mannered" does his return to earth need to be given a "physical" and "bodily" interpretation? Many have been taught that this phrase means in an identical manner i.e., identical in every detail, except in the reverse order. So, since He ascended in a visible, resurrected, glorified body into a cloud, He must come back in that same form, physically and visibly glorified on a cloud; right?

He also therefore must come back to that exact location on the Mount of Olives, right? How far do we press this method of interpretation? In those days only a small group saw Him ascend. Does this mean that only a small group or only those same people will see Him return versus every person on earth at that time? Traditional explanations contain numerous problems, and various differences. Additionally, consider this. If *"in like manner"* means "in exactly the same physical way and in every literal detail as He left," then:

- How does Jesus come from heaven riding on a white horse (Rev. 19:11) if He didn't leave that way?
- How does He come *"with ten thousand of His saints"* (Jude 14) if He didn't leave that way?
- How does He come *"as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west"* (Matt. 24:27) if He didn't leave that way?
- How does He come *"with a loud command [shout]...and with the trumpet call of God"* (1 Thess. 4:16) if He didn't leave that way?
- How does He come *"in blazing fire with his powerful angels"* (2 Thess. 1:7) if He didn't leave that way?
- How does He come *"with his angels in the glory of his Father...to repay each person according to what he has done"* (Matt. 16:27) if He didn't leave that way?

If Jesus is to return in the exact same "manner" in which He left, and if we are to interpret the "manner" here as a physical, literal interpretation of His bodily ascension, then we fail to recognize that the angel who spoke to the Disciples was wrong in the description of just exactly "how" or "in what manner" our Lord was in fact going to come again. His coming would not be private; it would not be without judgment; it would not be without blazing fire and His angels; it would not be without ten thousand of His saints; and it would not be without Him riding on a white horse!

I mean, if we are to be clear here, when did we see Jesus riding a white horse with ten thousand saints as lightning flashes and with a loud shout and the trumpet call of God in blazing fire with his powerful angels in the glory of his father to repay each person according to what he had done when He ascended into heaven? He is supposed to return in the same manner that He left, right? This method of interpretation lends itself to this exact dilemma, among many others, and is a very problematic interpretation.

William H. Bell makes the following observations concerning the issue of 'in like manner': *"Fourth, 'in like manner' is an adverbial phrase which does not modify or describe the noun 'Jesus' as in [physical] appearance. 'In like manner' modifies the verb phrase 'shall so come.' Therefore, it is an abuse of the laws of grammar [in Greek] to use 'in like manner' to refer to the [physical] appearance of Christ. Grammatically and contextually speaking, it only refers to [the manner of] his ascending in a cloud. Hence, a return in like manner means that he would return in a cloud. And, to repeat, there is no mandate for a physical cloud at the return of Christ. Fifth, in further support of the above, to make the phrase 'in like manner' refer to the bodily appearance of Christ would make the Bible contradict, and the inspired writers liars. John was present when Jesus ascended. He along with the other apostles saw the bodily appearance of Christ when he ascended back to heaven. However, some thirty plus years later he writes, 'Beloved, now we are the children of God; and it has*

not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is, (1 John 3:2).’ Since John was present at the ascension and had both saw [seen] and handled Jesus in bodily form (1:1-2), how could he a few verses later say that it had not yet been revealed? Further, if Jesus’ bodily form at the ascension was physically visible were not John and all the apostles already like him? Sixth, if one tries to skirt around this issue by saying, ‘Yes but we are speaking of a glorified, immortal spiritual body,’ then does it not follow that for ‘in like manner’ to refer to the appearance, Jesus would already have to be in that glorified, immortal spiritual body at the ascension [and before he left]? [E]ither way one slices the cake, the apostles would already have seen it, and Jesus would have to return in the same body [that he left]. That, my friends, is a dilemma which forces John into inspired falsehood! Such cannot be.”

Coming and Going

Thankfully, there are other explanations and applications for this verse which does not suffer from the above problems or dilemmas. One of them revolves around the meaning of the Greek word *erchomai*, that is translated *“will come back.”* This word actually means *“comes or goes.”* In the Acts 1:11 account, we see Jesus “going” into a cloud. Moreover, the two angels (*“two men dressed in white”* [vs. 10]) did not say Jesus would come in like “body,” or in the same “body,” or to the same “place,” or to only those who witnessed his ascension. The emphasis of “coming” in like manner is not on his physical nature; rather, it is on the *manner* of his future coming for them. This phrase does not limit Jesus to coming back in only a physical/visible mode. It refers to *what manner of coming* He comes.

That is, in many, if not most of His Old and New Testament appearances Jesus came out of the invisible spirit realm (or an epiphany), and manifested Himself in the visible physical realm, and then went back into the invisible spirit realm. That has been the means and manner of many of his comings and goings. He moves out of one dimension, into another, and back again. In other places angels have that same capability (2 Kings 6:17). His form, the place, and the recipients have varied in “physical manner,” or appearance, however, this is not the primary emphasis of importance intended here. *Erchomai*—comes and goes—is the general, overall manner in which all of his many visible comings have occurred, whether they were as an epiphany, or as the general “coming” of the invisible YHWH in the invisible or visible “cloud” of judgment, or protection, and this does not change. The comings of God were and are not always visible, or bodily, yet, they always occur in the glory cloud of God. This is the intended focus in every occurrence of cloud coming; that God is performing the act and that He is the one who is above all things.

In any case, just as the transfiguration instilled great fear in Peter, prompting him to suggest building the three tents to shield him, James, and John from the splendor they could not bear, so the splendor of the risen Christ at his ascension would have required the veil of the cloud to shield the disciples from the glory they could not bear. Thus, He was hidden in the cloud while He was exalted in glory. *“In like manner”* He would come again (Acts 1:11) in glory, just as He left in glory (e.g. in a cloud). Luke here recounts Jesus completing his statement of commission (cf. Luke 24:48–49), and “while they were looking on” or *“before their eyes”* He departed from them and was *“lifted up.”*

Lifted Up

The word translated *“lifted up”* is *epenthe* (aorist passive form of *epairo*); while in its active form this word does describe the physical action of lifting up an object, such as one’s hands in prayer, (1 Tim 2:8) or a staff (Exod 10:13), in its passive form its “literal” meaning is figurative, since it does not have to do with an active *physical* lifting up of an object, but with a lifting up of someone in stature, dignity or exaltation (or in the case of Jesus, “in Glory”). This fits perfectly with every other usage of Jesus being lifted up in glory, such as

in Acts 1:11. Again, it is not the “physical” lifting up that is important here, but the literal glorification that is taking place. In like manner he would come again in his glory.

As we can plainly see, every other use of this word does *not primarily* denote a literal and physical elevation of the person, (although Jesus may have indeed been going into the air or in an upward direction) but rather, it describes in figurative terms the elevation of the person in honor and dignity, i.e., exaltation. In either case, at some point in this passage, whether it was in the air or on the ground, Jesus disappeared into the glory cloud and into the glory of the Father where He experienced His exhalation to the Throne of David, and the disciples then looked upward and onward toward heaven amazement.

Even more important to understand here is the phrase itself, *“in like manner.”* Let us examine the Greek term, [hon tropon](#), rendered “like manner” in Acts 1:11; giving all the passages where it occurs in the Bible, and then let those who are so adamant about the exact manner be just as adamant in all the passages where it occurs elsewhere.

1. Now *“in the same way”* (hon tropon) James and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these resist the truth. (2 Timothy 3:8)
2. Exodus 7th & 8th chapters in regard to those magicians—Satan’s mediums. *Will you kill me, “as”* (hon tropon) *you did the Egyptian yesterday?* (Acts 7:28)
3. *Oh, Jerusalem, Jerusalem...how often I would have gathered my children together, even “as”* (hon tropon --like manner) *a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, and you would not.* (Matt. 23:37 and Luke 13:34)

Jesus the Chicken

Will anyone claim that in any of the above passages that *“in the same manner”* means in the exact physical manner in every way for each comparison, especially for the last example? Is not the true idea that just as certainly as one thing has been done, another will be done just the same? It could also be said another way: As certainly as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, so Jesus would have gathered Jerusalem’s children as well; but we think no one would insist upon the exact physical way in which a chicken performs this act, and then say that it would be the same physical manner that Jesus gather’s His people, would we? Does Jesus have wings? Does he make chicken noises when he does the gathering? The only reasonable and possible interpretation of what the Angels could have meant in Acts 1:11 (the only remaining passage where hon tropon occurs), is (my own emphasis underlined): “ye men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up into heaven? This same Jesus has gone away in glory as he said he would, and he will surely come again in glory, just as he said he would.”

To be quite honest, there is really nothing in the passage as to the manner of coming in any physical sense (not at all a reference to the physical bodily nature of how Jesus left, and how He would again return), rather, the passage is a positive declaration that he would come in glory as He promised, just as He left. Remember, Jesus formerly promised them that when he would return, it would be with the glory of his angels. He never said anything regarding the physical manner of his coming. While it would certainly be a physically discernable event, it certainly would not be a physical body that every eye would see.

While this verse [Acts 1:11] is generally cited to prove that the glorified Jesus will himself be *personally and bodily* visible at his second coming, it is in fact the case that the glorified Jesus cannot be seen by any man because His glorified person is veiled, hidden, and enveloped within the cloud of God’s presence. Just as the disciples had not seen Christ going up to heaven, rather, they saw Him disappear into the cloud which veiled him and his Divine Glory, so *in the same manner*, e.g., hidden within the cloud, He would also return. Remember, if we are going to suggest that *“in the same manner”* must means exact physical manner, then we must argue that his coming would be invisible, not physical. It cannot be stated too strongly that the glorified Jesus Himself would *not* be visible in His

second coming because He was not visible in His ascension, but rather hidden. This is not to say that His second coming would not be a visible event with a visible judgment, or visible action, or even with a visible cloud, rather, the "manner" in which Jesus was to return would be in the same Glory in which He ascended, e.g. IN A CLOUD OF GLORY!

The cloud, of course, symbolizes the Divine Glory of God, which, as always, must be hidden from men (even of faith), due to their incapacity to see it in its unveiled splendor. The cloud has always represented the following in the bible:

- (a) a symbolic and representational means to show the presence of the Divine Glory of God
- (b) it provides a veil for men who cannot behold God's glory in the flesh
- (c) it exalts the one enveloped by the cloud to experience the intimacy of the association with the Divine Glory of God
- (d) it signals by its physical and visible rise into the heavens the spiritual and invisible nature of the exaltation of the one hidden by and enveloped within the cloud

We must emphasize that the Lord himself is invisible and is only made visible by the symbolic and representational cloud which reveals the presence of His Divine Glory. This was the case all throughout the Old Testament, and it was the prediction of Jesus Himself when He stated that He would come again *"on clouds of glory"* (cf. Matt. 24:30; 26:64; Revelation 1:7). Below is a list of many of the "cloud comings" in the Bible, given as an insight into just how important the idea of "clouds" are in understanding the purpose of Jesus stating that he would come on clouds, and in associating his second coming on clouds with his ascending *"into a cloud."* When Luke recorded this event, he did not specifically include it just so that people today could know that Jesus would come again in a physical cloud and with his physical body. What the disciples saw, and what Luke recorded in Acts 1:11 was an event that gave us the exact manner in which our Lord took His throne...that is, in Glory! This was to directly fulfill what had been written in Daniel 7 and elsewhere. It would also be in this exact same manner that Jesus Christ would return again; that is, in Glory!

Cloud Coming in the Bible

Exodus 16:10 *"And it came to pass, as Aaron spake unto the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and, behold, the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud."*

Exodus 19:9 *"And the LORD said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee forever. And Moses told the words of the people unto the LORD."*

Exodus 34:5 *"And the LORD descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD."*

Leviticus 16:2 *"And the LORD said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the holy place within the veil before the mercy seat, which is upon the ark; that he die not: for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat."*

Numbers 11:25 *"And the LORD came down in a cloud, and spake unto him, and took of the spirit that was upon him, and gave it unto the seventy elders: and it came to pass, that, when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied, and did not cease."*

Psalm 18:9-12 *"He bowed the heavens also, and came down: and darkness was under his feet. 10 And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly: yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind. 11 He made darkness his secret place; his pavilion round about him were dark waters and thick clouds of the skies. 12 At the brightness that was before him his thick clouds passed, hail stones and coals of fire."*

Psalm 97:2-5 *"Clouds and darkness are round about him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne. 3 A fire goeth before him, and burneth up his enemies round about. 4 His lightnings enlightened the world: the earth saw, and trembled. 5 The hills melted like wax at the presence of the LORD, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth. "*

Psalm 104:3 *"Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters: who maketh the clouds his chariot: who walketh upon the wings of the wind."*

Isaiah 19:1 *"The burden of Egypt. Behold, the LORD rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt: and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence, and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it."*

Daniel 7:13 *"I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him."*

Nahum 1:3 *"The LORD is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked: the LORD hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet."*

Zephaniah 1:14-15 *"The great day of the LORD is near—near and coming quickly. Listen! The cry on the day of the LORD will be bitter, the shouting of the warrior there. That day will be a day of wrath, a day of distress and anguish, a day of trouble and ruin, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness..."*

Coming Down

Genesis 18:20 *"And the LORD said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous; 21 I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know."*

Exodus 3:8 *"And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians..."*

Deuteronomy 33:2 *"And he said, The LORD came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them."*

Psalm 18:7 *"Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken, because he was wroth. 8 There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it. 9 He bowed the heavens also, and came down: and darkness was under his feet. 10 And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly: yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind. 11 He made darkness his secret place; his pavilion round about him were dark waters and thick clouds of the skies. 12 At the brightness that was before him his thick clouds passed, hail stones and coals of fire. 13 The LORD also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave his voice; hail stones and coals of fire."*

Psalm 97:5 *"The hills melted like wax at the presence of the LORD, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth."*

Psalm 50:3 *"Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him."*

Psalm 144:5 *"Bow thy heavens, O LORD, and come down: touch the mountains, and they shall smoke."*

II Samuel 22:7 *"In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried to my God: and he did hear my voice out of his temple, and my cry did enter into his ears. 8 Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations of heaven moved and shook, because he was wroth. 9 There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it. 10 He bowed the heavens also, and came down; and darkness was under his feet. 11 And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly: and he was seen upon the wings of the wind."*

Isaiah 31:4 *"For thus hath the LORD spoken unto me, Like as the lion and the young lion roaring on his prey, when a multitude of shepherds is called forth against him, he will not be afraid of their voice, nor abase himself for the noise of them: so shall the LORD of hosts come down to fight for mount Zion, and for the hill thereof."*

Isaiah 64:3 *"When thou didst terrible things which we looked not for, thou camest down, the mountains flowed down at thy presence."*

Isaiah 66:15 *"For, behold, the LORD will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire."*

Cloud Coming Language

In each of the above passages, few if any commentators would make the argument that the physical, literal body of God came down and actually judged any of the nations, or stood side by side with Moses as an actual person, or partook in any physical bodily appearance to perform any of his comings. This does not mean that God never made Himself known by any physical event (there were numerous epiphanies and judgments mentioned), but that in each of the above passages where "cloud language" was used, God never appeared in bodily form at any time that we know of, even though the texts each state that He "came down." Surely Luke, knowing of the Old Testament language and Scriptures, would have been hinting at these passages when He referred to our Lord as being surrounded by "a cloud" in Acts 1:11.

Indeed, Luke was simply giving an account of what had been seen, but why was it so important for the Father to cause His son to be enveloped by a cloud when He disappeared, which Luke would record and say that in the same "manner" Jesus would return again? The answer is quite obvious to me that the importance of the cloud going event in Acts 1:11 was a statement to those who saw it that Jesus was being glorified as God Himself, taking His place on the throne with the Father. In exactly the same "manner" Jesus would return in judgment and in glory and for the full salvation of the saints, and that return was in a literal event and on clouds of glory; not in a bodily, physical return, but in a real, physical judgment which would be recognized by all as the glory of God coming down on the nation of Israel and Judah.

In the same way, when Jesus mentioned to Caiaphas that he would be seen coming on clouds of heaven, the response was for Caiaphas to declare blasphemy. Why the response? Because Caiaphas understood that only God had the power and position to judge a nation, and Jesus' statement was a declaration of equality with God as a judge and with authority. By stating that Jesus would "come on clouds" Jesus was not simply making a physical declaration of "how" he would physically return, his statement was one of judgment to Caiaphas and the Jews, and one of equating himself with God. Jesus did not tell Caiaphas this information so that he would know where and how he would come to judge the Jews; Jesus used language and information already quite familiar to the Jews to relay

that he was equal with God himself, and that he would judge as God had judged nations so many times before in the Old Testament.

Matthew 26:63-65 – *And the high priest said to him, "I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God." ⁶⁴Jesus said to him, "You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven." ⁶⁵Then the high priest tore his robes and said, "He has uttered blasphemy. What further witnesses do we need? You have now heard his blasphemy."*

This Same Jesus

There is also another interesting point to make concerning this passage which is often overlooked, and rarely pointed out by popular commentaries. In Acts 1:11, the two men standing in white said, *"This same Jesus who was taken up..."* Does anyone ever question why the men specifically referred to Jesus as *"this same Jesus"*? You might not think that this is important, but think about this for a minute. Why would the disciples think that the Jesus who had just left them, was going to be any other Jesus to come again than the one they saw disappear into the cloud? Why the need for the two men to specify *"this Jesus"* from any other one?

I think the reason is quite simple. The two men dressed in white are identifying the content of Christ's return: the final event culminating in the coming of the Kingdom of God. A few verses earlier the disciples asked, "...is now the time for Jesus to restore the kingdom?" Jesus goes on to say that it is not for them to know, and he tells them that his spirit will come to empower them to bear witness of Him throughout the world until the end (remember that in the Gospel accounts Jesus told them that some of them would not even finish going through the cities of Israel before He came again – Matt. 10:23). Now, it is very important to keep this in mind, because the whole issue here is the "arrival of the kingdom when the end would come."

This is what they were taught all the time that they were with Jesus, and the disciples understood very well that Jesus was going to establish His kingdom within that generation, and during the time when the Spirit was poured out to all nations (cf. Joel 2; Acts 2). With the question of the kingdom still lingering, the two men in white make it clear that when Jesus comes back He will come back by the clouds opening up, which is the apocalyptic code for "the arrival of God and His kingdom." What the two men were answering was the disciples question concerning the Kingdom.

You see, Jesus had just been raised from the dead, and according to Luke 24 Jesus had just spent over a month (40 days) opening their eyes and explaining the Kingdom to them so that they would know it's true nature and timing. The disciples wanted to know if it was now time for the Kingdom to be established, and Jesus told them that while it wasn't to be known the exact time of its arrival, they would receive the power from on high very soon, and the two men gave them the information they needed to know; that in the same way that He left, so too would He return-**IN HIS KINGDOM**, or, *"in like manner."* He left to prepare the Kingdom, and He would return to consummate it! Remember, Daniel 7 explains that when the *"one like the son of man"* came to the Ancient of Days, he would be given a Kingdom at that time, never to be overcome. This means that Jesus went to the throne and was given his Kingdom at that time. It would be during this time that Jesus would give the Disciples the power of the Holy Spirit to rule and reign with him until all of his enemies were made his footstool, and the Kingdom would be fully established.

Returning in like manner tells us that although the kingdom had not yet fully come for the disciples when the power from on high was received (e.g. Pentecost), it certainly would come in its fullness and it would be *"this same Jesus"* who brings it, that is, the same Jesus that just disappeared before their very eyes. In addition, if Jesus was in fact going to

return in the same "body" and in the same exact physical way that He disappeared, wouldn't the disciples have recognized Him as the same man they just saw leave? Why the need to say "*this same Jesus?*" The answer is very simple. Jesus left them to receive his glory on his throne and to prepare the heavenly Jerusalem; the church; the Kingdom; and to bring witness against Israel and Judah and all people during the great commission which would consummate in judgment for those who rejected Christ and salvation for those who accepted Christ. This period of time was the time when the power of the Holy Spirit was given to spread the Gospel and to establish the Church once and for all, never to be destroyed. This was the establishment of God's Kingdom through his people. Whatever the disciples loosed or shut up during this time would never be overcome from that point on and forevermore (cf. Matthew 16:19; 18:18).

Again, the man who ascended into glory and in a cloud would come again, in glory and in the clouds. For this reason the two men identified who it would be, and what it was that was going to be taking place when this event happened. Since Jesus would not return in a physical body as he had appeared during the 40 days after his resurrection, it was quite necessary for the two men dressed in white to identify that "*this same Jesus*" would in fact be the same Jesus that would come again in glory as he left. Any future event that included a "cloud coming" judgment would have been recognized by all people as YHWH, the Ancient of Days, and the Eternal God performing the work.

Here, the two men in white are specifically identifying "this man" Jesus as the Eternal God, the Ancient of Days, one who has power to come, and to judge, and to bring salvation to all men. When the Jews and all other people saw this judgment event happen in AD70 they would understand and know that it was Jesus who performed this act because they had been told by the two men in white that it would be THIS SAME JESUS who would come again in glory. Jesus himself predicted that he would come again on the clouds of glory and that he would bring his reward. When the temple and all of Jerusalem and the Jewish nations were judged in AD70, the reward was given and Jesus was then declared victorious and King of Kings.

Every Eye Would See Him

Another objection to the argument being made here is that every eye did not physically see Jesus come on clouds in AD70. Is this true, and is this a legitimate argument? Was the non-physical coming seen by all the tribes of the land of Israel? It is time that we open the "eyes of our understanding," (Ephesians 1:18) to the fact that indeed, yes, they did. In fact, Paul exhorted the Ephesians to use their eyes of understanding in order to know what it was they were in fact hoping for. "*I pray also that the eyes of your hearts understanding be enlightened; that you may know the hope of His calling, which are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.*" (Ephesians 1:18) Notice also what the historian Josephus had to say concerning this:

*"..The whole population poured forth and each of the fugitives was surrounded by a vast crowd, eagerly asking what had befallen outside.. They casually mentioned the fall of Gischala.. When, however, the story of the prisoners came out, profound consternation took possession of the people, who drew thereupon plain indications of their own impending capture. But John.. went round the several groups, instigating them to war by the hopes he raised, making out the Romans to be weak, extolling their own power, and ridiculing the ignorance of the inexperienced; even had they wings, he remarked, the Romans would never surmount the walls of Jerusalem.. By these harangues most of the youth were seduced into his service and incited to war; but of the sober and elder men **there was not one who did not foresee the future and mourn for the city as if it had already met its doom.**" (Josephus Wars 4.121-128; ed. Thackeray, vol. 3., pp. 36-39)*

Gary Demar also adds validity that the "seeing" which was to take place was not necessarily to be a visible seeing in which every physical eye had to literally see the body of Jesus doing these things. He says, *"Equating 'seeing' with 'understanding' is a common biblical metaphor... Notice how 'seeing' is equivalent to 'understanding.'" (Last Days Madness; Atlanta, GA: American Vision, 1999; p. 168).* Kenneth Gentry also has much to say concerning this, *"The cloud-coming of Christ in judgment is reminiscent of Old Testament cloud-comings of God in judgment upon ancient historical people and nations." [He Shall Have Dominion (Tyler, TX: ICE, 1992) 388-389] "The final collapse of Jerusalem and the Temple... Through these events the Jews were to 'see' the Son of Man in His judgment-coming in terrifying cloud-glory: clouds are symbols of divine majesty often entailing stormy destruction. The members of the Sanhedrin and others would experience such in their life times (Matt. 26:64; Mark 9:1; cf. Rev 1:7 with Rev 1:1,3)" (ibid. 348). "It is obvious that this coming is a judgment coming focusing upon first century Israel...In regard to the Jews (those who 'pierced Christ,' Rev. 1:7), the Jewish War with Rome from AD67 to 70 brought about the deaths of tens of thousands of the Jews in Judea, and the enslavement of thousands upon thousands more." (p. 27)*

John Lightfoot also says, *"The destruction of Jerusalem is phrased in Scripture as the destruction of the whole world; and Christ's coming to her in judgment, as his coming to the last judgment. Therefore, those dreadful things, spoken of in Matt. 24:29,30 and 31, are but borrowed expressions, to set forth the terms of that judgment the more.. v.30 - 'then shall they see' - not any visible appearance of Christ, or of the cross, in the clouds (as some have imagined); but, whereas Jews would not own Christ before for the Son of Man, or for the Messiahs, then by the vengeance that he should execute upon them, they and all the world should see an evident sign, and it was so. This, therefore, is called 'his coming,' and his coming in his kingdom." [A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles, ed. Rev. John Rogers Pitman (London: J.F. Dove, 1825), p.141]*

In speaking of this "sign," what was it that they would see? Jesus said that *"then would appear in heaven the sign of the son of man, and then all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory"* (cf. Matthew 24:30). In book 6, chapter 5 of Josephus' War of the Jews, we are told of exactly those signs which appeared and which foreshadowed God's judgment on all the nations of the tribes of Israel. Josephus declared that every eye either recognized this event as God's judgment, or that they were slaughtered or taken into captivity.

Final Notes

On a final note, many Christians today fail to recognize the importance of the direct fulfillment of Daniel 7 in Acts 1:11 and in the other accounts of the ascension. Daniel 7:13-14 specifically describes the events of Jesus ascending to the Ancient of Days to take His place in Glory. It never describes Jesus leaving His throne of Glory in heaven after having received it, only to have to reacquire his throne once again, or to re-establish his throne on the earth, or in a physical kingdom. Why this doctrine was believed by the Pharisees and by many in the early church (and still today by many Christians) is quite perplexing, yet it exists nonetheless. For Jesus to retake the form of a human, even in a semi-glorified bodily state per se would be to leave His throne in heaven and His glory which cannot be seen by the naked eye of any human being (this is why His glory had to be veiled by a cloud at His departure and again by His return). Even Daniel 7:22 speaks of the *"Ancient of Days"* who would "come" in judgment, but it does not say that Jesus would leave His throne in heaven or unveil His glory and become a man again in some fleshly semi-glorified state to perform this coming. The *"Ancient of Days"* would come as He always came before, in a cloud, in judgment, in a visible act of punishment, salvation, destruction, protection, and just as Jesus predicted; ON CLOUDS, IN GLORY! And this was exactly the "manner" in which the angel told the disciples Jesus would come again; in the same manner that He left on clouds of Glory.

Acts 1:9-11 provides a critical background for Matthew 24:30 and also Revelation 1:7, both of which speak of the return of Christ on and with the clouds. Since this is the case we know then that Daniel's ten horned beast of Daniel 7:22-24 refers to the same one mentioned in Revelation 13:1-2, which precedes Revelation 14:14 describing the same *"one like the Son of Man."* Therefore, the coming of the Son of Man on clouds in Acts 1:11 is exactly the same coming of the Son of Man described in Daniel 7, which is also the same event and description as Revelation 13-14. Additionally, the ten horned beast of Revelation and Daniel was being ridden by the harlot, Mystery Babylon, who was Jerusalem (Revelation 17:6, 18:20, 24). She was drunk with the blood of the saints and the martyrs of Jesus, and Jesus specifically brings the charge against the Jews for these crimes (cf. Matthew 23).

Given all of the above information, is not undeniable then as to the "manner" of Jesus' coming, and also the time frame in which this event would happen? Jesus said that these things would happen to "this generation" speaking of the one to whom he spoke to. Doesn't that generation of Matthew 23:36 then speak of the same one in Matthew 24:34? Jerusalem, the temple, and the entire ethnic Jewish nation was destroyed or taken captive by Rome in the first century during "that generation" when Jesus came to them in judgment (cf. Luke 21:20-22; Matthew 24:30; Daniel 7:13). All of these events and predictions meet every demand of Jesus coming on clouds in Acts 1:11.

Finally, the time statements of Acts 1:11 must be applied correctly to every "coming" passage of Jesus and the Apostles. Jesus promised that it would happen in that generation; Paul, Peter and John declared that Jesus' coming was near or at hand and in their own lifetimes (cf. Romans 13:11-12; Philippians 4:5; James 5:8; 1 Peter 4:7; Revelation 1:3; 22:6, 10, 12; etc.). Therefore, the argument has been made that the *"coming in like manner"* of Acts 1:9-11 was completely fulfilled in the lifetime of the Apostles who were told that they would see it, and that this event does not require that it is accompanied by the physical body of Jesus which existed prior to his ascension. Remember, the angels told those who were standing there that in just the same way that he disappeared and went away in glory, he would also come back to them in glory, both for judgment and for salvation (cf. Hebrews 9:28).