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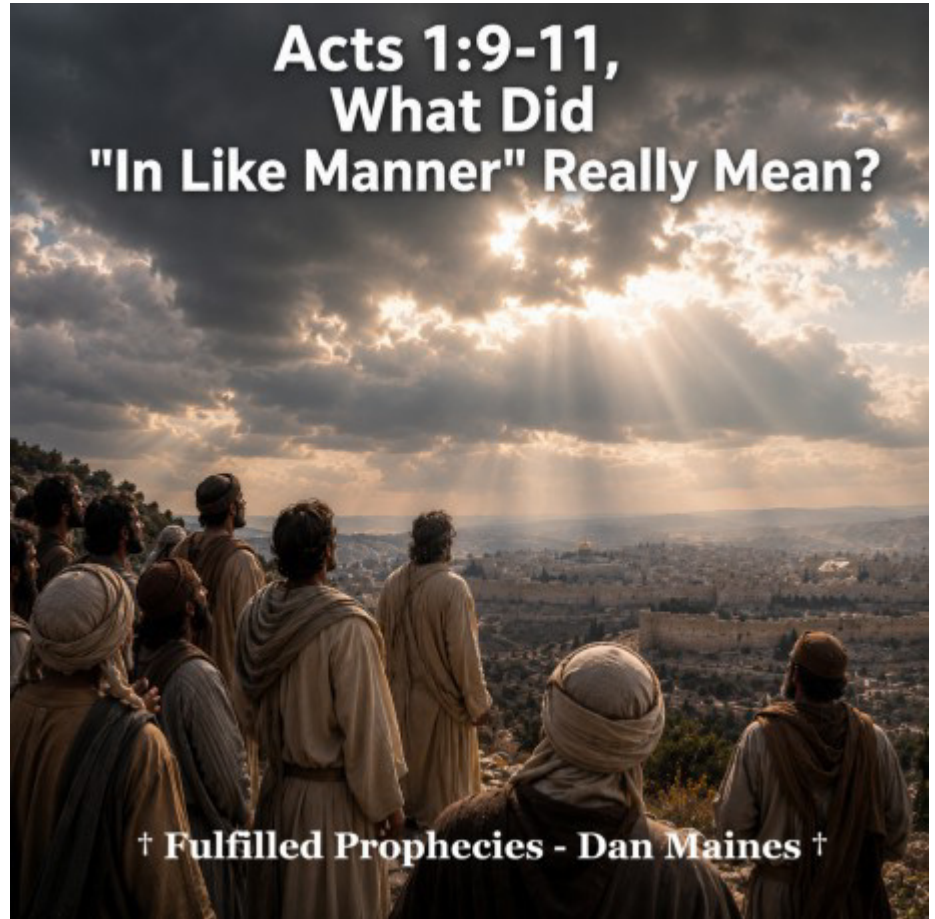
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**Acts 1:9-11, What Did "In Like Manner" Really Mean?**



By Dan Maines

**Acts 1:9-11, What Did "In Like Manner" Really Mean?**

## Introduction

† Acts 1:9-11 is one of the most quoted passages used to support a future physical return of Christ to earth.

† Many assume the angels were teaching that Jesus would someday physically descend from heaven in the exact same visible way He ascended.

† But when we allow scripture to interpret scripture, we discover the focus was not on a future physical descent to earth, but on His coming in judgment and authority exactly as the prophets had foretold.

† The question isn't whether Jesus would come again. The question is how He would come and when He said it would occur.

## **Acts 1:9-11**

And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were watching, and a cloud took Him up, out of their sight. And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was going, then behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them, and they said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven."

† The cloud is the first key to understanding this passage. Throughout scripture, clouds are repeatedly associated with God's presence, authority, and judgment. (Exodus 13:21; Psalm 104:3; Isaiah 19:1)

† Jesus wasn't disappearing into outer space. He was being received into the heavenly realm and enthroned at the Father's right hand. (Daniel 7:13-14; Acts 2:33-36)

† The disciples saw Him taken from their sight, but scripture never says they watched Him travel endlessly upward into heaven. A cloud received Him.

† The phrase in like manner does not mean every detail must be identical.

† Jesus ascended in a cloud, and scripture repeatedly describes His coming in clouds. (Matthew 24:30; Revelation 1:7)

† Jesus ascended after receiving authority from the Father, and His coming would be the manifestation of that authority in judgment. (Daniel 7:13-14; Matthew 26:64)

### **Isaiah 19:1**

The pronouncement concerning Egypt:

Behold, the LORD is riding on a swift cloud and is about to come to Egypt;

The idols of Egypt will tremble at His presence,  
And the heart of the Egyptians will melt within them.

† Isaiah establishes the biblical meaning of cloud-coming language.

† God is described as coming on a cloud against Egypt, yet no one expected a literal visible descent from heaven.

† The language represents divine judgment and authority being exercised against a nation.

† Jesus used the same prophetic language concerning His coming against Jerusalem. (Matthew 24:30)

### **Daniel 7:13-14**

"I kept looking in the night visions,  
And behold, with the clouds of heaven  
One like a son of man was coming,  
And He came up to the Ancient of Days  
And was presented before Him.

And to Him was given dominion,  
Honor, and a kingdom,  
So that all the peoples, nations, and populations of all  
languages  
Might serve Him.  
His dominion is an everlasting dominion  
Which will not pass away;  
And His kingdom is one  
Which will not be destroyed.

† This is one of the most important passages for understanding Acts 1:11.

† Notice that the Son of Man comes with the clouds to the Ancient of Days.

† The movement is toward the Father, not from heaven to earth.

† Daniel's vision shows Christ receiving kingdom authority.

† Acts 1 and Daniel 7 both describe Christ's exaltation, authority, and kingship.

### **Matthew 24:30-34**

And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory. And He will send forth His angels with A GREAT TRUMPET BLAST, and THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.

"Now learn the parable from the fig tree: as soon as its branch has become tender and sprouts its leaves, you know that summer is near; so you too, when you see all these things,

recognize that He is near, right at the door. Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.

† Jesus connected His cloud-coming directly to that generation.

† The timing is not left open-ended.

† Christ Himself declared that all these things would occur before that generation passed away.

† Acts 1:11 must agree with Christ's own time statements.

### **Matthew 26:64**

Jesus said to him, "You have said it yourself. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming on the clouds of heaven."

† Jesus addressed the high priest directly.

† The high priest was told he would see the Son of Man coming on the clouds.

† The high priest isn't alive today.

† This places the fulfillment in the first century exactly where Jesus placed it.

### **Revelation 1:7**

BEHOLD, HE IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen.

† Revelation repeats the same cloud-coming imagery.

† Those who pierced Christ are specifically identified.

† The men responsible for His crucifixion lived in the first century.

† This confirms the nearness of the event and harmonizes with Christ's time statements.

## **Historical References**

† Eusebius recorded the destruction of Jerusalem as the fulfillment of Christ's warnings concerning that generation.

† Josephus described the horrors of Jerusalem's fall exactly as Jesus foretold in the Olivet Discourse.

† Early Christians fled Jerusalem before its destruction because they believed Jesus' warnings would be fulfilled in their lifetime.

† The historical record confirms that the judgment Jesus predicted came upon first century Jerusalem just as He said.

## **How It Applies To Us Today**

† We don't have to push Christ's coming thousands of years beyond the audience He addressed.

† We can trust Jesus' time statements exactly as they were spoken.

† We can understand cloud-coming language through the Old Testament rather than through modern assumptions.

† We live under the reign of the King who has already received all authority in heaven and on earth.

† The kingdom isn't waiting to begin, it's already established.

† Understanding Acts 1:11 correctly strengthens our confidence that every promise Christ made was fulfilled exactly on time.

## **Q & A Appendix**

**Q:** Did the angels say Jesus would physically return to the Mount of Olives?

**A:** No. Acts 1:11 says He would come in like manner. The passage never says He would physically stand again on the Mount of Olives. (Acts 1:11; Daniel 7:13-14)

**Q:** What does in like manner mean?

**A:** Jesus ascended in a cloud and came in clouds. He ascended as King and came in judgment as King. The manner refers to the nature of the coming, not identical physical movements. (Acts 1:9-11; Matthew 24:30)

**Q:** How do we know this was first century?

**A:** Jesus repeatedly placed His coming within the lifetime of His audience. (Matthew 24:34; Matthew 26:64)

**Q:** Did anyone in that generation see His coming?

**A:** Yes. Jesus told the high priest he would see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven. (Matthew 26:64)

**Q:** Why do many people assume Acts 1:11 teaches a future bodily descent to earth?

**A:** Because the phrase in like manner is often interpreted apart from Old Testament cloud-coming language and apart from Jesus' own time statements. (Isaiah 19:1; Matthew 24:34)

**Q:** Does Acts 1:11 say Jesus will return to earth?

**A:** No. The verse says He would come in like manner. It never states that He would return to earth or physically stand again on the Mount of Olives. (Acts 1:11)

**Q:** If the disciples watched Him go upward, doesn't that require a downward return?

**A:** No. The focus is the cloud-coming itself, not a reversal of direction. Daniel 7 shows the Son of Man coming with clouds to the Ancient of Days. (Daniel 7:13-14)

**Q:** Why were the disciples told to stop staring into heaven?

**A:** Because the focus was not where Jesus had gone, but what He would accomplish as the enthroned King and Judge. (Acts 1:10-11)

**Q:** How does Daniel 7 explain Acts 1:11?

**A:** Daniel shows the Son of Man coming with clouds to receive authority from the Ancient of Days. Acts 1 and Daniel 7 both describe Christ's exaltation and royal authority. (Daniel 7:13-14)

**Q:** How does Revelation 1:7 fit Acts 1:11?

**A:** Revelation says those who pierced Him would see His coming. Since they lived in the first century, the fulfillment belonged to their generation. (Revelation 1:7)

**Q:** How does return in a like manner relate to the Day of the Lord coming in judgment?

**A:** Throughout the Old Testament, the Day of the Lord was not a physical appearance of God on earth but a coming in judgment against nations. God was said to come on clouds against Egypt, Babylon, Edom, and other nations. (Isaiah 19:1; Isaiah 13:9-13; Joel 2:1-2) Jesus used the same prophetic language when describing His coming against Jerusalem. The "like manner" of Acts 1:11 is consistent with the biblical pattern of cloud-coming judgment. Christ came in the authority and power of the enthroned King, manifesting His judgment upon the covenant-breaking nation exactly as He foretold. (Matthew 24:30-34; Luke 21:20-22)

**† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †**

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## Source Index

† Acts 1:9-11; Isaiah 19:1; Daniel 7:13-14; Matthew 24:30-34; Matthew 26:64; Revelation 1:7

† Josephus, Wars of the Jews; Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History

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