

Nearly two thousand years ago eleven men stood on a hill outside of Jerusalem, looking up into heaven, in great bewilderment. They had just been talking with their Master, the Lord Jesus Christ, who had recently been raised from the dead. Suddenly He had begun to rise up into the heavens, and now a cloud had received ~~th~~ Him out of their sight. The eleven men looked up bewildered, wondering, uncertain. Just then they noticed, ~~that two men in white apparel were~~ standing beside them, two men in white apparel, who addressed them as follows: "~~Yo~~Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus who ~~has gone~~ ^{is taken} up from you into heaven will so come in like manner as you have seen him go into heaven.*

*Acts 1:11.

The disciples went back into Jerusalem. There they continued in prayer for a number of days. At the end of that time Pentecost occurred. The Holy Spirit came down from heaven and filled them with energy and spiritual power so that they went out carrying the message ~~the~~ of salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ. Through this message individuals were converted, one by one, to salvation through faith in Christ. ~~In a few decades the Roman empire was sprinkled with groups of Christians; within three hundred years they had become so numerous that the mighty empire capitulated, and Christianity became its leading religion.~~ ~~with groups of Christians. Persecution and martyrdom were unable to stop the onward progress of the Gospel;~~

Within a few decades groups of Christians could be found in almost any section of the Roman empire; in three centuries they had become so numerous, despite persecution and martyrdom, that the mighty empire capitulated and Christianity became its leading religion.