

Resurrection Appearances – 5; The Ascension:-

Jesus ascends into heaven. (Luke 24, vs.44 -53: Acts 1, vs.6–12)

These two Bible passages only refer to the actual appearance and last instructions of the Lord Jesus Christ. For the eternal implications of the Ascension (alongside the Gospel of John, chapter 6, verse 62; Acts 2, v. 33 - 36 and Acts 3, v. 21;) we will need to read further into the later writings of the Epistles and the book of Revelation. These include Ephesians chapter 4, verses, 8 - 10; 1 Thessalonians chapter 1, verse 10; Hebrews chapter 4, verse 14; Hebrews chapter 9, verse 24; 1 Peter chapter 3, verse 22; and Revelation chapter 5, verse 6 as well as those referred to below.

The final earthly appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ :-

Read the Gospel of Luke chapter 24, verses 44 – 53 and Acts chapter 1, verses 6 – 12.

Acts chapter 1, verses 6 - 12 – The disciples ‘*came together*’ (verse 6); this would have been at the ‘*mount called Olivet*’ (verse 12). Note that the disciples were still looking for the immediate restoration of the kingdom of Israel (see Luke chapter 19, verse 11 and Mark chapter 10, verses 35 - 37). Remember that the Lord Jesus had already said that only the Father knew the day and the hour of the Last Day (Matthew chapter 24, verse 36).

In this passage the final words of our Lord Jesus Christ to his disciples was a mandate to be his witnesses “*in Jerusalem and all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth*” (note that this is the order of the growth of the infant church in the Book of the Acts of the Apostles). This was to be accomplished after they had received the power of the Holy Spirit. (verse 8).

Note that the record here simply says that “*he was lifted up and a cloud took him out of their sight*” (verse 9. Compare with the Transfiguration in Luke chapter 9, verse 34 – 36).

The appearance and words of the ‘two men in white’ leaves no doubt that this was the final goodbye. The next time the Lord Jesus would be seen on earth would be on his return on the clouds of heaven – Matthew chapter 24, verses 29 – 31.

The purpose of the Ascension:-

- 1) “I go to prepare a place for you”. - See the Gospel of John, chapter 14, verse 2.
- 2) The sending of the Holy Spirit, ‘*the Counsellor . . . even the Spirit of truth*’ (the Gospel of John chapter 15, verse 26) depends upon the return of the Lord Jesus to the Father – see the Gospel of John, chapter 16, verses 7 – 11. (The subject of next week’s study).
- 3) Jesus Christ is referred to as ‘seated’. - Hebrews, chapter 8, verse 1. A sign that his atoning work is complete and final.
- 4) He intercedes for his people. - Romans chapter 8, verse 34 and Hebrews chapter 7, verse 25.
- 5) He is waiting until his enemies are subdued, and will return as the final act in the establishment of the Kingdom of God. - Matthew chapter 24, verses 29 – 31 and 1 Corinthians chapter 15, verses 24 – 26.

Always remember - Hebrews chapter 4, verses 14 – 16 “*Since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God. . . . Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need*”. **Alleluia!**

1) *Hail the day that sees Him rise, Alleluia!
To His throne above the skies, Alleluia!
Christ, awhile to mortals given, Alleluia!
Reascends His native heaven, Alleluia!*

2) *There the glorious triumph waits, Alleluia!
Lift your heads, eternal gates, Alleluia!
Christ hath conquered death and sin, Alleluia!
Take the King of glory in, Alleluia!*

3) *Him though highest Heav’n receives, Alleluia!
Still He loves the earth He leaves, Alleluia!
Though returning to His throne, Alleluia!
Still He calls mankind His own, Alleluia!*

4) *Still for us His death He pleads, Alleluia!
Prevalent He intercedes, Alleluia!
Near Himself prepares our place, Alleluia!
Harbinger of human race, Alleluia!*

Charles Wesley 1739 (original words)