

Bite Size Bible Study

Jesus' Ascension #133

By Pastor Lee

Jesus' resurrection was without a doubt one of His greatest miracles. We celebrate that resurrection on Easter Sunday each year. But He didn't leave the physical world until 40 days later when He ascended into heaven. But the significance of this day is often lost in the time between the Resurrection and Pentecost.

But the ascension 40 days after the resurrection was not His first ascension. On the day He was resurrected He ascended to the Father, and returned.

Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means "Teacher"). Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"

John 20:16-17 NIV

Luke tells us that the ascension, 40 days later, occurred on Mount Bethany, a city on the Mount of Olives, when He was taken up out of their sight.

When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven. Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. Luke 24:50-52

NIV

Mark adds:

After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven and he sat at the right hand of God. Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it. Mark 16:18-20

NIV

Luke continues in the Book of Acts:

In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. 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. Acts 1:1-3

NIV

One of the problems confronting us in today's world is their understanding of the universe during the first century. It was quite different than today's cosmology. In those days the universe was generally envisioned as a three part cosmos with the heavens above; an Earth, centered on Jerusalem, in the middle; and the underworld below. Heaven was separated from the Earth by the firmament; the visible sky, which was a

solid inverted bowl where God's palace sat on pillars in the celestial sea. Humans looking up from Earth saw the floor of Heaven as God's throne, made of bright blue lapis lazuli (Exodus 24:9-11).

From this cosmological perspective the only way one could describe going to Heaven and God's throne was to ascend up into the firmament or the clouds.

Luke, speaking in the Book of Acts, shows this perspective when he says:

After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

Acts 1:9-11 NIV

Jesus' ascension should carry a great deal of interest to all Christians. It is not only the day when He leaves this physical world, but it is the day He begins sitting in the presence of the Father interceding for all of mankind.

Jesus came to teach us how to live. He personified the Torah (God's instructions) and lived according to the teachings God had given Moses as well as others. Those instructions for living had been (as they have been today) distorted and ignored. For the most part the people had teachers that themselves had little concept of the life God had envisioned for His people.

After He had taught His disciples the correct understanding of the Torah, He returned to the Father to continue helping each individual by sending the Holy Spirit to guide their understanding and lead them into the person that they were created to be.

He continues to be an advocate for each of us. As Paul says in his book to the Romans:

Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? Romans 8:33-35

NIV

**He will return again whenever
the Father decides it is time.**

Cornerstone Community Church

PO Box 654 Lemon Grove, CA 91945-0654 – www.cornerstonecommunityonline.org

Comments and Suggestions for Topics may be sent to llogue1@cox.net