

## Where is Jesus Now?

**Jesus** the Christ rose from the dead some three days after his crucifixion! This is vital truth. Then for a period of forty days he appeared many times to various disciples. Paul relates a brief summary in 1 Corinthians 15:4 ff: "...he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, <sup>5</sup> and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. <sup>6</sup> Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. <sup>7</sup> Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. <sup>8</sup> Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me."

The long ending of Mark relates: "Now when he rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons. <sup>10</sup> She went and told those who had been with him, as they mourned and wept. <sup>11</sup> But when they heard that he was alive and had been seen by her, they would not believe it.

<sup>12</sup> After these things he appeared in another form to two of them, as they were walking into the country. <sup>13</sup> And they went back and told the rest, but they did not believe them.

<sup>14</sup> Afterward he appeared to the eleven themselves as they were reclining at table, and he rebuked them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who saw him after he had risen." Mark 16:9-14

Luke opens his account about Jesus to Theophilus: "I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, <sup>2</sup> until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. <sup>3</sup> He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God". Acts 1:1-3

When we read the accounts of Jesus' post-resurrection appearances, we notice that it is the same Jesus who had died on the cross, but there were changes to his body. We know he spend significant time with his followers showing many proofs of his being alive and giving them detailed instructions. But the relationship they had had to his physical body was changed. He told Mary not to cling to him as if to keep him from ever leaving again. "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 20:17) This next event was in fulfillment of his

declarations to his disciples. Jesus said, "For a little while longer I am with you, then I go to Him who sent Me" (John 7:33). "I came from the Father and entered the world; now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father" (John 16:28).

During his after-resurrection ministry Jesus came and went. They never seemed to know when he would appear nor how long he might stay. His comings and goings were of a temporary nature. The time that was soon coming was going to be a permanent departure because he had to return to the Father. When the last of his meetings with them occurred, they knew it would now be different because of the manner of his departure. For the 40 days, usually he would suddenly appear and then disappear. On this occasion he stayed and when he was on the verge of leaving them, he lifted his hands in a priestly benediction. Then his body began to slowly ascend until he disappeared into a cloud. The disciples were transfixed by the sight. They were unable to take their eyes off the cloud that had received him.

Luke records the event for us in Luke 24 and Acts 1.

*So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, led them out as far as Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. It happened, while he blessed them that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. They worshiped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God.*

Why is the ascension of Jesus so important? There are several reasons but consider just two. *First, the ascension is so significant because Jesus, who descended for us humans, now returned to the glory he had had with the Father.* Jesus prayed before he went to the cross: *"I glorified you on the earth. I have accomplished the work which you have given me to do. Now, Father, glorify me with your own self with the glory which I had with you before the world existed"* John 17:4f.

Jesus completed his mission on earth and the resurrection is the receipt. Paul wrote *"he was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead."* The Father declared redemption complete. As the incarnate man, Christ Jesus is now crowned with glory. As the author of Hebrews, explaining Psalm 8, relates – *we see Jesus, who was made lower than the angels for a little while, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.* (Hebrews 2:9)

For the time of his life on earth the eternal Son of the eternal Father took to himself a human nature. His incarnation was not temporary. It was permanent. Jesus was born

with a post-fall body capable of suffering and dying. It was mortal but in his resurrection his body was transfigured and it is now immortal. Paul writes in Philippians 2:5-11:

“Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup> who, existing in the form of God, didn’t consider equality with God a thing to be grasped, <sup>7</sup> but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men. <sup>8</sup> And being found in human form, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to the point of death, yes, the death of the cross. <sup>9</sup> Therefore God also highly exalted him, and gave to him the name which is above every name, <sup>10</sup> that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, those on earth, and those under the earth, <sup>11</sup> and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

Because Jesus in his ascended, exalted state, remains forever one person in two natures - humanity and deity - he is our Mediator. <sup>5</sup> *For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.* 1 Tim. 2:5

*Second, the ascension of Jesus is so significant because it marks the entrance of Jesus upon his reign as King.* This event was his coronation day! Jesus came, bringing in his own person the kingdom of God in fulfillment of the prophecies of old. The New Testament writers refer to Psalm 2 which speaks of the Messianic king as fulfilled in Jesus Christ. As God’s king in his ministry on earth, Jesus was manifesting the presence of the kingdom, and he was conquering the forces of darkness - he forgave sins, healed bodies, and drove out demons and even commanded the forces of nature. This psalm is quoted in several places as being fulfilled in Jesus’ resurrection and ascension. Peter on the day of Pentecost proclaimed: “Therefore let all the house of Israel know with certainty that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah!” Acts 2:36

Paul in Acts 13:32-34 preached - “And we ourselves proclaim to you the good news of the promise that was made to our ancestors. <sup>33</sup> God has fulfilled this for us, their children, by raising up Jesus, as it is written in the second Psalm:

***You are My Son;  
today I have become Your Father.***

<sup>34</sup> Since He raised Him from the dead, never to return to decay, He has spoken in this way, I will grant you the faithful covenant blessings<sup>[C]</sup> made to David.

Consider also Hebrew 1:5, <sup>5</sup> For to which of the angels did God ever say,

***"You are my Son,  
today I have begotten you"?***

Or again,

***"I will be to him a father,  
and he shall be to me a son"?***

Paul wrote of God's power in raising Christ, "He exercised this power in Christ by raising him from the dead and seating him at his right hand in the heavens— <sup>21</sup> far above every ruler and authority, power and dominion, and every title given, not only in this age but also in the one to come. <sup>22</sup> And **he subjected everything under his feet** and appointed him as head over everything for the church, <sup>23</sup> which is his body, the fullness of the one who fills all things in every way." Ephesians 1:20-23

A key verse to Jesus' own understanding of his person and mission is referenced by him in his trial before Caiaphas – which is Daniel 7:13-14. Daniel relates:

I continued watching in the night visions,

and suddenly one like a son of man  
was coming with the clouds of heaven.

He approached the Ancient of Days  
and was escorted before him.

<sup>14</sup> He was given dominion  
and glory and a kingdom,  
so that those of every people,  
nation, and language  
should serve him.

His dominion is an everlasting dominion  
that will not pass away,  
and his kingdom is one  
that will not be destroyed.

When Jesus kept silent before his accusers, the high priest said to him, "I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God."

<sup>64</sup> "You have said it," Jesus told him. "But I tell you, in the future you will see **the Son of Man seated at the right hand** of Power and **coming on the clouds of heaven.**" Matt. 26:64

During his ministry days on earth Jesus was declared the king of God's kingdom. On the day of his return to the Father, Jesus was crowned King of kings and Lord of lords. This reality will be manifested to all when he returns to earth in glory!

John in Revelation 1:7 affirms:

**Look, 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.

With Peter we confess this truth – "Jesus Christ is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him. 1 Peter 3:22

Jesus is Lord!

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