

Returning To His Throne
Luke 24:50-53

As I read these closing words of the Book of Luke that tell about the last moments the Lord Jesus spent with us here on the earth, the words seem so few and without much pomp or celebration. Only a few disciples were there with Him at the time.

And yes, we are told here that the disciples did worship Him with great joy, but I must confess that I would have preferred that His departure be with far greater splendor and ceremony, every knee in heaven and on earth bowing in gratitude and submission.

But that is not what God chose to do for His beloved Son, at least not at that moment and in that place.

Listen as I read those few words given in Luke chapter 24 verse 50,

⁵⁰ And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. ⁵¹ Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven. ⁵² And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, ⁵³ and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God. Amen. (Luke 24:50-53)

In the Book of Acts, we're given a few more details of His home-going. There we read in Acts chapter 1 verse 4,

⁴ And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," He said, "you have heard from Me; ⁵ for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." ⁶ Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" ⁷ And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. ⁸ But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

⁹ Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. ¹⁰ And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, ¹¹ who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you

stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven." ¹² Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey. (Acts 1:4-12)

Pause with me for just a few moments, and let's ponder all that was taking place within just these few words that are given to us here.

The Lord Jesus had just finished all that He had come to do, all that He and God the Father and God the Holy Spirit had put into their great plan of redemption for mankind, crafted long before time began.

He had walked among the people of the earth and had been without sin every step of the way. He had gathered disciples to Himself and had taught them diligently for three and a half years. He had loved them and all of the other people of this earth with a love that is beyond our comprehension.

He had healed the sick, made the blind to see, raised the dead, cast out demons, and had given special gifts to men.

Then in His final days, He of His own volition had laid down His life. He was crucified, dead and buried, then was resurrected unto life, accomplishing everything that would need to be done to bring salvation to the souls of men.

After that, He had walked among His brethren for forty days, proving to them with many proofs that His resurrection was real.

He knew that they, and we, would need that extra measure of proof. It is the way of the weakness of our faith. We so often need an extra "bolster" to reinforce our faith, and His walking among them for forty days gave that solid reassurance.

He had done it all . . . and now, here in these words, we find Him returning to His throne in heaven, that throne that was always His, from eons past, that throne with all of its glory and authority that He had given up to become a lowly man, the One who would shed His blood on a cross to redeem the corrupt "apple of His Father's eye" and bring many sons to glory.

Now, here in these words, He was ready to bid His beloved disciples goodbye and to ascend into the heavens.

As I read through some of the comments given by church scholars about His ascending into the heavens, I found some interesting thoughts being given, one in particular that I thought was worthy of mention.

That bible commentator asked the question, "Why was it important that Jesus "ascended" rather than just leaving his disciples in some other manner? Does it mean that heaven is actually "up there somewhere"?"

The answer was, maybe, but probably not! Heaven is more likely to be so incomprehensible that it will take our being there to really understand it and know where it is located.

But by giving our minds the direction of "up", we do gain a right impression to follow.

Had Jesus have just walked away from them, or had He simply vanished from their sight as He had done on other occasions when he appeared to them after His resurrection, they might perhaps have been left expecting him to appear again.

If He had descended into the earth below them, that would surely have given them a wrong impression.

That is why the upward direction does seem best in conveying the clearest understanding of what was taking place. He was truly leaving them, returning to His Home in heaven, a place that is above the realms of men, and there He would sit down at the right hand of God the Father and He would reign with Him forever.

And that celebration that I mentioned a moment ago, the one that I thought He ought to have received here on earth. That celebration would actually still take place. It was awaiting Him on His arrival there in heaven, a "big" celebration.

In Psalm chapter 24 we read,

⁷ Lift up your heads, O you gates! And be lifted up, you everlasting doors! And the King of glory shall come in. ⁸ Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, The LORD mighty in battle. ⁹ Lift up your heads, O you gates! Lift up, you everlasting doors! And the King of glory shall come in. ¹⁰ Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, He is the King of glory. (Psalm 24:7-10)

Folks, I don't know much beyond these words about what might have taken place in those first moments as Jesus ascended above those clouds, but I do want to imagine what might have taken place.

Here, the King of Glory was entering into the "City Gates" of heaven. And can't you hear the resounding blasts of the trumpets of God, the heavens shaking, with an intensity that is beyond our imagination, and a rejoicing of ten thousand times ten thousand angels, singing and rejoicing and praising the Lord and declaring "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was, and is, and is to come!"

We get some vision for our imagination of this celebration from words in Isaiah chapter 6 . . . Listen!

³ (An angel) called out to another and said, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts, The whole earth is full of His glory." ⁴ And the foundations of the thresholds trembled at the voice of him who called out, while the temple was filling with smoke. (Isaiah 6:3-4)

Oh dear Christian, I am convinced that there is always a wonderful time taking place in heaven, a continual celebration. But for such an occasion as this, the "King of Glory" coming home, WOW, that would have been a celebration above all celebrations.

And while we are imagining, may we imagine what God the Father was doing as He saw His beloved Son entering into the Gates of Heaven?

Perhaps He was like the Father who was waiting for his beloved son in the parable of the "Prodigal Son".

And no, Jesus was certainly no prodigal child, but the Lord Jesus had just taken the sins of the world into His flesh, had suffered and died for them and was now

resurrected and cleansed from all that He had endured. So, yes, the Father's response might well have been similar.

From that parable, we get the understanding that the father had watched and waited and longed daily for his son to return. And then seeing his son coming "a great way off", with great joy, He ran to welcome Him home.

Listen! These words given in Luke chapter 15,

²⁰ And he (the son) arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. (Luke 15:20)

From these words, we can know that this earthly father loved his son with a deep, abiding love. And certainly, God the Father loved His Son, the Lord Jesus, far more.

And just as this earthly father gave a great banquet for his son, so also God the Father would give a great banquet for His beloved Son, the Wedding Banquet of the Lamb, that special banquet when all of the redeemed bride of Christ will join with Him in paradise.

While we can only imagine much of what I have been saying here in my ponderings, there are some things that we do know for sure about those moments just after Jesus disappeared into the clouds.

As I mentioned a moment ago, we know that He was immediately restored to the Kingship that He had always enjoyed as God the Son. He was seated on His throne at the right hand of God the Father.

From there, He would immediately begin preparing a place for each of us, His redeemed bride, those who have received the salvation He provided. Listen, these words given in John chapter 14,

¹ "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. ² In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. (John 14:1-3)

Did you hear those last few words folks? Jesus said, "if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also."

The place Jesus is preparing for you and me will be the home we will live in as His beloved bride. It's described for us in the Book of Revelation as being the "New Jerusalem". And it will be glorious, far more splendid than the "Old Jerusalem". Listen to this description given in Revelation chapter 21. Here, an angel of God said to the Apostle John,

⁹ . . . "Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife." ¹⁰ And he (the angel) carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, ¹¹ having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. ¹² Also she had a great and high wall with twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates, and names written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. (Revelation 21:9-12)

And the glorious description goes on and on.

And folks, we also know that while we remain here in the flesh, Jesus is there in heaven watching out for us, making intercession for us moment by moment within all the many daily occurrences of our lives.

Listen . . . this is taking place every moment of every day! Romans chapter 8, verse 33,

³³ Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. (Romans 8:33-34)

And also in Hebrews chapter 7 we're told that,

²⁴ . . . He (Jesus), because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. ²⁵ Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. (Hebrews 7:24-25)

Oh dear Christian, the Lord Jesus is ever and always loving, providing, interceding and protecting His beloved bride, you and me, as we live out our days here on this earth.

And as if that were not enough, as He sits there on His throne, He is also, at the same time, always at work actually holding all of the fabric of the whole world together, sustaining everything this world needs.

Those words given in Hebrews chapter 1,

¹ God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, ² in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. ³ And He (the Lord Jesus) is the radiance of His (Father's) glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. (Hebrews 1:1-3)

Those last words "upholds all things by the word of His power" mean that, moment by moment Jesus upholds, sustains, keeps in good working order, everything that takes place in all of existence. He holds the stars and the planets in place, He brings rain and He brings sunshine to the earth. He even keeps the very air that we breathe pure and safe to breathe.

And oh dear Christians, there are so many, many other things that Jesus is doing since He returned home, so many that time and many books could not contain. But I would like to make mention of at least one more of His responsibilities, and then we will close.

The first time that Jesus came to the earth, He came as a merciful Savior, "to seek and to save those who are lost". But at some point in the future, perhaps today, perhaps later, He'll come again, at a moment that we'll not know about. And He will gather His loved ones, you and me, to Himself.

And after He does that, He will call all the things of this earth to a close, and then He will sit down on His throne and He will judge everyone for everything that they, that we, have ever done in this life. Listen to these words given in Revelation chapter 20.

¹¹ Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. ¹² And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before

the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. 14 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. 15 And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.
(Revelation 20:11-15)

Listen also to the way that this is described for us in the Book of Matthew chapter 25,

³¹ "When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. ³² All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. ³³ And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. ³⁴ Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. (Matthew 25:31-34)

And in verse 41,

⁴¹ Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.
(Matthew 25:41)

Dear friends, knowing that Jesus will surely return for us, the only question that remains is a simple one, one that asks, "Have you personally received the salvation that Jesus has provided for you through His death on the cross the first time He came to us?"

If you have done that, then yes, He is now ever and always at work for your blessing and benefit in heaven, interceding for you and preparing a home for you for all eternity.

But oh dear friends, I really do need also to say, with great concern, "woe be to anyone who has not received Him." Those words about judgment are true and they await anyone who has not received Jesus as Savior and Lord.

As we close our thoughts for today, may I ask you to take a close inspection of your own condition of soul? And if there is any doubt within you about your salvation, then I plead with you, as we are clearly warned in 2 Corinthians chapter 6, this is the day of salvation.

Those words as we close,

² For He (our Lord) says: "In an acceptable time I have heard you, And in the day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation. (1 Corinthians 6:2)

Pray with me.