

# The Ascension of Jesus

## Luke 24:50-53 and Acts 1:9-12

**DIG:** Why do the apostles react so differently to Jesus being taken away now compared to when He was taken away to the cross? As a disciple, what is the impact on you of Jesus' departure? What is the impact on you of the angels promise? When Yeshua ascended, where did He go? Did Mary ascend to heaven just like Christ?

**REFLECT:** What is your "Jerusalem" to which you are called to bear witness? How do you sense a need for the Ruach HaKodesh to help you? How do you feel about the Lion of the Tribe of Judah (Revelation 5:5) returning to the earth? Does it become a compelling motive to be a witness and use your spiritual gifts for His glory? When He ascended, where does the Bible say you're seated? What does that mean for you? What is He doing for you right now?

Today, on the highest point of the **Mount of Olives**, there is a church called the Church of the Ascension. In fact, there is even a slab of stone with two footprints in it that they say was the footprints of Christ as He was taken up to heaven. But that is impossible because Luke said He led them out as far as of Bethany, which is on the eastern slope of the **Mount of Olives**. It was from Bethany where Yeshua made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem before His crucifixion, and it was from Bethany that He made His triumphal entry back to heaven after His glorification.

After Jesus said this, He led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, He lifted up His hands and blessed them. While He was blessing them, they were looking intently at Him, suddenly they realized that His feet were not longer touching the ground. They were spellbound with awe as Messiah was taken up into heaven before their very eyes, and a cloud, or the Shechinah glory, hid Him from their sight (Luke 24:50-51; Acts 1:9). Christ had told them in the Upper Room on the eve of the crucifixion that He would return to His Father's house (John 14:2) and to the Father Himself (Yochanan 16:17). He stated plainly: **I AM leaving the world and going back to the Father** (John 16:28).

There are eleven reasons why the ascension is important for believers today. First, it affirmed Yeshua's truthfulness (John 14:28); secondly, it means that Christ is preparing a place for us (John 14:2); thirdly, it marks His exaltation (Ephesians 1:20-23); fourthly, it signals that He is the Head of the body, the Church (Colossians 1:18); fifthly, it means that there is a man sitting on **the right side of God the Father** (Acts 2:32-35); sixthly, it began His high priestly ministry in heaven (Hebrews 4:14-16); seventh, it prepared the

way for **the Holy Spirit to come** (**John 16:7** and **Acts 2:33**), eighth, it made **Messiah** the forerunner, the firstfruits, or a first in move to come, **into heaven** (**Hebrews 6:20**), ninth, it assured our position in **Christ** as being in the heavenly places (**Ephesians 1:20-21a**), tenth, because **He ascended**, **God the Holy Spirit** can give us spiritual gifts (**Ephesians 4:7-11**); and lastly, **His ascension** provided the manner of **His** return (**Acts 1:9-11**).

But because the Roman Church places Mary in an equal position with **Christ Himself**, Catholics duplicate her ascension with **His**. On November 1, 1950, with the *ex cathedra* pronouncement by pope Pius XII from St. Peter's chair, declared that Mary's body was raised from the grave shortly after she died, that her body and soul were reunited, and that she was taken up and enthroned as Queen of Heaven. From that day forward it is a mortal sin for any Catholic to refuse to believe this doctrine. In other words, Catholics teach that any member who does not believe this will go to hell. Now, there are undoubtedly practicing Catholics who do not believe this, but the Catholic Church still considers it a mortal sin.

This is what pope Pius XII wrote: "On the third day after Mary's death, when the apostles gathered around her tomb, they found it empty. The sacred body had been carried up to the celestial paradise. **Jesus Himself** came to conduct her there; the whole court of heaven came to welcome [her] with songs of triumph the Mother of the divine **Lord**. What a chorus of exultation! Hark how they cry, "Lift up your gates, O you princes, and be you lifted up, O eternal gates, and the Queen of Glory shall enter in."

Thus Mary's body was supposedly preserved from corruption and her resurrection and ascension are made parallel to **Christ's** resurrection and ascension. And she, like **Him**, is said to be enthroned in heaven where she makes intercession for the millions of people throughout the world who seek her assistance.

The doctrine of the assumption of Mary is merely one of the so-called "logical conclusions" that the Roman theologians have drawn to support their system. Since Mary was sinless it is illogical, we are told, to assume that her body remained in the grave. But the Bible counters with the truth: **For the wages of sin is death (Rom 6:23a)**. If Mary was sinless, why did she have to die at all? **Death** is the penalty for **sin**, and where there is no **sin** there can be no penalty. **God** would be unjust if **He** punished the innocent. Either Mary was sinless and did not die, or she was a sinner, died and her body remained in the grave. Period. It seems clear that as far as the Roman Catholic Church is concerned we shall no longer have a Trinity . . . but a Quartet!<sup>1707</sup>

When the messianic community was instituted at Shavu'ot **there** was only one **name given** among **mankind by which we must be saved**, that of **Jesus (Acts 4:12)**. Wherever grace is found in the Church, there is no mention of Mary. Surely this silence is a rebuke to those who would build a system of salvation around her. **God** has given us all we need to know concerning Mary, and the Bible does not indicate that worship or veneration in any form is to be given to her. How complete, then, is the lie that the Roman Catholic Church gives the primary worship and devotion to her!<sup>1708</sup>

For a few moments, they remained in worship, **gazing intently up into the sky as He was going**, when suddenly they were aware of **two** angels who appeared as **men dressed in white and 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 1:10-11). The **angels** did not say that **Jesus** would come back to the same *place* (see my commentary on **Isaiah Kg - The Second Coming of Jesus Christ to Bozrah**). They said that **He** would come back *in the same way*. **He** went up in the Shechinah glory and **He** will come back *in the same way* in the Shechinah glory (see my commentary on **Revelation Ai - A Preview of the Second Coming**). **The Father** welcomed Him saying: **Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet** (Psalm 110:1)

Having ascended, **He** sat down at **the right hand of the Mighty One, God the Father** (Matthew 26:64; Luke 22:69; Acts 2:33). But even more remarkable, we are seated with Him! Rabbi Sha'ul tell us: **And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order in the coming ages He might show the incomparable riches of His grace, expressed in His kindness to us in Christ Jesus** (Ephesians 2:6-7). Can you possibly imagine the honor of being **seated with Messiah in the heavenly realms**? The riches of His grace are incomparable. That **He** would give us such a privilege is beyond comprehension. Do you see the incredible **kindness** of our **Lord** in saying to a beggar who has known only rejection, "**Come, sit with Me at My right hand?**"

**The right hand of God's** throne is the center of authority and power in the whole universe (see my commentary on **Revelation Cf - You Are Worthy To Take the Scroll**). That power was given the ascended **Lord**. The elevation of **His people with Him to the heavenly realms** means that we share **His** authority. As **His children**, we sit with Him as heirs. **The Ruach HaKodesh Himself** bears witness with our own spirits that we are children of **God**; and if we are children, then we are also heirs, heirs of **God** and joint-heirs with the **Messiah** - provided we are suffering with Him in order also to be glorified with Him (Romans 8:16-17 GJB).

The significance of this can't be overstated. Many people who don't experience freedom in **Christ** feel as though they are caught between two equal and opposite forces. Satan on one side and **ADONAI** on the other, and poor little 'ole me hanging between the two like a pawn. That is a lie from the pit of hell. The truth is that **God** is omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent, kind and loving in all **His** ways. Satan is a defeated foe, and we are in **Christ Jesus** (see Kt - **I AM the True Vine**), seated with Him in the heavenly realms.

Notice the parallel account. For in **Christ** all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and in **Christ** you have been brought to fullness. He is the head over every power and authority. When you came to **Christ**, you were "circumcised," but not by a physical procedure. **Christ** performed a spiritual circumcision - the cutting away of your sinful nature . . . You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then **God** made you alive with **Christ**, for He forgave all our sins. He canceled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross. In this way, He disarmed the spiritual powers and authorities. He shamed them publically by His victory over them on the cross (Colossians 2:9-11, 13-15 NLT).

The best way to show the incomparable riches of His grace (Ephesians 2:7) is through our testimony. As Revelation 12:10b-11a says: Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our **God**, and the authority of His **Messiah**. For the accuser of our brother and sisters, who accuses them before our **God** day and night, has been hurled down. They triumph over **Satan** by the blood of the **Lamb** and by the word of their testimony. The **Lord** knows that responsibility can't be delegated without having the authority to carry it out. Because we are seated with **Messiah**, we have authority over the kingdom of darkness. But our authority is not independent. We don't get to do whatever we want. This is not an authority over each other either, because we are to submit to one another out of reverence for **Christ** (Ephesians 5:21). What we do have . . . is the authority to pray in, and to do, **God's** will.<sup>1709</sup>

Then the apostles worshiped Him and returned the Shabbat-walk distance from the Mount of Olives to Yerushalayim. The Shabbat-walk distance was the maximum distance one was permitted to travel on the Sabbath under the Oral Law (see Ei - **The Oral Law**). They returned with great joy. And they stayed continually at the Temple, praising **God** (Luke 24:52-53; Acts 1:12 CJB). Ten days later the Church would be born.

Our task has ended and we also look up. And we go back from this sight into a hostile world, to love, to live, and to work for the risen **Messiah**. So as the earth's day is dawning, we sound the shofar from the highest point on the Temple Mount. We bring our offerings and worship in faith, for this same **Jesus**, who has been taken from [us] into heaven, will come back in the same way (Acts 1:11). Amen. Come **Lord Jesus** (Rev 22:20c).

**You may not know Me, but I know everything about you.** Psalm 139:1 **I know when you sit down and when you rise up.** Psalm 139:2 **I am familiar with all your ways.** Psalm 130:3 **Even the very hairs on your head are numbered.** Matthew 10:29-31 **For you were made in My image.** Genesis 1:27 **In Me you live and move and have your being.** Act 17:28 **For you are My offspring.** Acts 17:28 **I knew you even before you were conceived.** Jeremiah 1:4-5 **I chose you when I planned creation.** Ephesians 1:11-12 **You were not a mistake, for all your days are written in My book.** Psalm 139:15-16 **I determined the exact time of your birth and where you would live.** Acts 17:26 **You are fearfully and wonderfully made.** Psalm 139:14 **I knit you together in your mother's womb.** Psalm 139:13 **I brought you forth on the day you were born.** Psalm 71:6 **I have been misrepresented by those who don't know Me.** John 8:41-44 **I am not distant or angry, but am the complete expression of love.** I John 4:16 **And it is My desire to lavish My love on you.** I John 3:4 **Simply because you are My child and I am your Father.** I John 3:1 **I offer you more than your earthly father ever could.** Matthew 7:11 **For I am perfect Father.** Matthew 5:48 **Every good gift that you receive comes from My hand.** James 1:17 **For I am your provider and I meet all your needs.** Matthew 6:31-33 **My plan for your future has always been filled with hope.** Jeremiah 29:11 **Because I love you with an everlasting love.** Jeremiah 31:3 **My thoughts toward you are countless as the sand on the seashore.** Psalms 139:17-18 **And I rejoice over you with singing.** Zephaniah 3:17 **I will never stop doing good for you.** Jeremiah 32:40 **For you are My treasured possession.** Exodus 19:5 **I desire to establish you with all My heart and all My soul.** Jeremiah 32:41 **And I want to show you great and marvelous things.** Jeremiah 33:3 **If you seek Me with all your heart, you will find Me.** Deuteronomy 4:29 **Delight in Me and I will give you the desires of your heart.** Psalm 37:4 **For it is I who gave you those desires.** Philippians 2:13 **I am able to do more for you than you could possibly imagine.** Ephesians 3:20 **For I am your greatest encourager.** II Thessalonians 2:16-17 **I am also the Father who comforts you in all your troubles.** II Corinthians 1:3-4 **When you are brokenhearted, I am close to you.** Psalm 34:18 **As a shepherd carries a lamb, I have carried you close to my heart.** Isaiah 40:11 **One day I will wipe away every tear from your eyes.** Revelation 21:3-4 **I am your Father, and I love you even as I love My son, Jesus** John 17:23 **For in Yeshua, My love for you is revealed.** John 17:26 **He is the exact representation of My being.** Hebrews 1:3 **He came to demonstrate that I am for you, not against you.** Romans 8:31 **And to tell you that I am not counting your sins.** II Corinthians 5:18-19 **Jesus died so that you and I could be reconciled.** II Corinthians 5:18-19 **His death was the ultimate expression of My love for you.** I John 4:10 **I gave up everything I loved that I might gain your love.** Romans 8:31-32 **If you receive the gift of My son Jesus, you receive Me.** I John 2:23 **And nothing will ever separate you from My love again.** Romans 8:38-39 **Come home and I'll throw the biggest party heaven has ever seen.** Luke 15:7 **I have always been the Father, and will always be the Father.** Ephesians 3:14-15 **My question is . . . Will you be My child?** Yochanan 1:12-13 **I am waiting for you.** Luke 15:11-32 end notes: 1710