

Further up, Further in

Resources for Continued Study



LOOKOUT
MOUNTAIN
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

“THE ASCENSION”

For individual study or discussion

After the wave of emotions the disciples experience during the crucifixion and resurrection, **the ascension** of Jesus in Luke 24:50–53 is a moment of profound transition, filled with blessing, glory, and a surprising response of joy! These final verses in Luke mark not only the ending of Jesus’ earthly ministry but the glorious new beginning of his heavenly reign, where he is given dominion, glory, and an everlasting kingdom that will never pass away (Dan. 7:14).

Jesus’ gracious gift: a parting blessing (v. 50)

As Jesus leads his disciples to the Mount of Olives, he lifts his hands in priestly benediction over them. Just as Aaron lifted his hands to bless the children of Israel in Numbers 6:22–27, Kelly Kopic argues that the same Aaronic blessing is personified in Jesus at his ascension: *“The great High Priest came and not only pronounced the benediction, but he became the benediction. Here the medium is the Mediator, and thus he is not to be looked beyond, but rather looked to. Those who saw the ascension witnessed the personification of Aaron’s benediction in Jesus Christ!”*¹

- In Luke 1:22, Zechariah was unable to speak the blessing over the people as he exited the temple. Discuss the significance of Luke beginning his Gospel with the image of a priest unable to bless the people while ending his account with Jesus’ parting benediction.
- Dutch theologian Herman Bavinck states, *“He [Jesus] is himself the content of all the blessings of God, the achiever, the possessor, and the distributor of them all.”*² Read Ephesians 1:3–14 and 1 Corinthians 1:30. What is the significance of Jesus being the *“content of all the blessings of God”*?

Jesus’ glorious ascension: a sign of his victory (v. 51)

When Jesus ascends into heaven, he ascends directly into the presence of God the Father. As the Son of Man, he appears before the Ancient of Days to receive an unshakable Kingdom (Dan. 7:13–14) and a reinstatement of his former glory (Jn. 17:5) of which he had voluntarily emptied himself (Phil. 2:7). According to Bavinck, Christ’s ascension is a triumph in a stronger sense than his resurrection: *“In it He triumphs over the whole earth, over all the laws of nature, over the gravity of matter. What is more, His ascension is a triumph over all the hostile diabolical and human forces which were robbed by God of their armor in the cross of Christ, were exhibited in their helplessness, and bound to Christ’s chariot of victory (Col. 2:15). They are led away now as captives by Christ Himself (Eph. 4:8).”*³

- Read Romans 8:31–34, Hebrews 1:3,13; 7:25; 8:1–2, and Revelation 12:7–10. What does Jesus’ ascension to heaven tell us about his heavenly work? How does this work affect us as believers? Why is it necessary?

The disciples’ unexpected response: great joy and expectant worship (vv. 52–53)

Jesus’ ascension shifts the disciples’ focus from his physical presence to his heavenly reign. As he is carried up into heaven, his followers finally understand and rejoice! J.C. Ryle summarizes, *“The disciples rejoiced, because now for the first time they saw all things clearly about their Master. The veil was removed from their eyes. The meaning of Christ’s humiliation and low estate—the meaning of His mysterious agony, and passion, and cross—the meaning of His being Messiah, and yet a sufferer—the meaning of His being crucified, and yet being Son of God—all, all was at length unraveled and made plain!”*⁴ The disciples understand that Christ’s departure is not abandonment but enthronement and the necessary step before the promised Holy Spirit would come (Acts 1:4–8). The Gospel of Luke concludes with joy, victory, and anticipation!

- Read Psalm 24. It paints a beautiful picture foreshadowing the ascension of Christ. In Luke 24:50–53, we are given the earthly view of the heavenly event taking place in Psalm 24, where the glorious King enters the throne room of God and is seated at his right hand amid a chorus of angels singing, *“Lift up your heads!”*

DATE: May 11, 2025

SPEAKER: Frank/Wil

SERIES: Gospel of Luke

PASSAGE: Luke 24:50–53

Family Dinner Table

Christ’s Coronation Ceremony

We sometimes talk of monarchs ascending thrones during coronation ceremonies. During a coronation ceremony, a king or queen is officially vested with royal power, and that’s exactly what happened to Jesus when he ascended into heaven. As Jesus sat down at the right hand of God, a new era of human history commenced as the Son of Man *“was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed”* (Daniel 7:14). Here’s how one pastor explains the heavenly scene as he compares it with that of the coronation of Aragorn at Minas Tirith: *“Think of Christ’s ascension like the coronation scene towards the end of Tolkien’s Return of the King. The Ring has been destroyed; Mordor is defeated; Aragorn ascends the throne having conquered the enemies of middle-earth. All things are under his feet—and elves, men and even hobbits gather for feast and festival. The Ascension is [Christ’s] triumphal entry... into the Heavenly Jerusalem as King: palms are waved in exaltation and the vault of heaven resounds, ‘Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive honor and glory and blessing.’”*⁵

- Read John 16:7, Ephesians 1:20–22, and Hebrews 7:25. What does Jesus’ ascension mean for you today?

PRAY FOR HOME MISSIONS

Lakeway Church, supported church plant in Morristown, TN

PRAY FOR WORLD MISSIONS

Bill & Melanie, supported national partners

¹ Kopic, Kelly. *Receiving Christ’s Priestly Benediction: A Biblical, Historical, and Theological Exploration of Luke:24:50–53*. <http://files1.wts.edu/uploads/pdf/publications/wtj/kopic.pdf>

² Bavinck, Herman. *Our Reasonable Faith: A Survey of Christian Doctrine*. 1956, Grand Rapids, MI. Baker House. 372

⁴ Ryle, J.C. *Expository Thoughts on the Gospels: Luke, Vol 2*. 1878, NY. Robert Carter & Brothers. 527

⁵ Schuldheisz, Samuel. C.S. *Lewis on Ascension*. June 2, 2011. <https://e-nklings-revschuldheisz.blogspot.com/search?q=ascension>