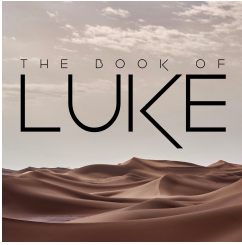


“Departing in Triumph”

Luke 24:50-53



Theme: Jesus’ ascension into Heaven certifies the success of all He has to offer those who follow Him.

Introduction: Luke has such yearning for us to adore Jesus. He began His Gospel with a detailed account of Jesus coming from Heaven to earth on the mission to save us from our sins. Throughout his writing, Luke details the works of Jesus – culminating in the death, burial, and resurrection. We come now to the end of Jesus’ earthly work as Luke provides us an account of the ascension. He then begins Acts of the Apostles with even more detail of the Ascension as the catalyst for the power in the life of the Church. I’ve no understanding why we are so eager to celebrate the incarnation of Jesus through Christmas but completely ignore the glorious certification of Jesus’ success proven in His ascension. There are so many things of which we are assured through His ascension – 1) that God has made Him to be both Lord and Christ; 2) He sent the Holy Spirit; 3) He will return for His Church, to judge the wicked, and to rule Israel as King; 4) Our own resurrection; 5) the Propriety of Worship; 6) the Reason we gather; 7) His Intercession for us; and, 8) He is busy preparing a place for us. **Jesus’ ascension into Heaven certifies the success of all He has to offer those who follow Him.**

I. The Assuring of the Saints – 24:50

A. THE PREPAREDNESS BY CHRIST

1. Obviously, there is much that occurred during the 40 days between the resurrection and our text that Luke does not include.
2. Their journey to Galilee, His provision of breakfast along the Sea of Galilee, His dialogue with Peter about shepherding Jesus’ sheep, along with a host of other events both recorded and certainly things that happened that were not recorded.
3. He spent those 40 days teaching, training, mentoring, and encouraging the disciples and they had resumed their delight in following Him.
4. Now we are told that *“He led them out as far as Bethany ...”*

The Gospel of Luke

5. “*led*” [ἐξάγω] – to lead from one place to another – indicating that Jesus had a location that He had planned and to which He was committed for the Ascension.
6. This is the event toward which Jesus had been pressing since He led them from Galilee to Jerusalem – cp. [Luke 9:51](#).
7. The language literally reads: “*He led them out until on the side of Bethany*” which causes us to understand that they were on the Mt. of Olives on the slope toward Bethany – cp. [Acts 1:12](#).
8. He “*led them*” to the specific location where He not only would ascend, but to which He will likewise return – cp. [Zechariah 14:4](#).

B. THE PROMISE OF CHRIST

1. We are told that when they reached the specific location planned by God, “*He lifted up His hands and blessed them.*”
2. When “*He lifted up His hands*” Jesus used a Heavenward gesture that symbolized the location from where every blessing comes – cp. [James 1:17](#).
3. He then “*blessed them*” [εὐλογέω] – a commendation upon someone of God’s special favor – literally “to speak well” of someone or to someone.
4. He had spent the past 40 days essentially having their faith “rehabbed” through interaction with Him, the exposition of the Scriptures, and receiving the specific instructions for how they were to take the message of the Gospel to the ends of the world.
5. Now to time had come for Jesus to depart and in an expression of affirmation, commendation, deputization, and commission, Jesus assures them of God favor upon them as He departs.

The Gospel of Luke

6. This is essentially the gesture that demonstrates His promise that despite His departure, His presence will remain with us forever through the gift of the Holy Spirit – cp. **Matthew 28:20**.
7. He had previously made a similar gesture of affirmation and promise when He breathed on them as a promise that they would receive the Holy Spirit, “not many days” cp. **John 20:22; Acts 1:4-5**.
8. These were all assurances that we are not left alone but are empowered by God for the work He has given us to do – cp. **Luke 24:47-49**.

II. The Ascension of the Savior – 24:51

A. THE PERPETUITY OF HIS BLESSING

1. Luke makes a definitive point of stating that *“While He was blessing them, He parted from them ...”*
2. There is such a low-key description of something so magnificent that it seems almost understated.
3. The exclusivity of His triumph over sin and death must be observed.
4. Although Enoch & Elijah had departed and were “taken up” by God, their destination was not specified – “heaven” in 2 Kings 2:11 can simply mean sky or what is commonly described as the 1st Heaven; the 2nd Heaven being space; and the 3rd Heaven being the place of God’s abode – cp. **2 Corinthians 12:2**.
5. It is likely that Enoch & Elijah were taken up and then delivered to Paradise since OT believers had to wait for entrance into Heaven until Jesus ascended – cp. **Ephesians 4:8**.
6. Jesus, however, *“... was carried up into heaven”* – the return to the place of God’s purest presence & manifestation.

The Gospel of Luke

7. Interestingly, the text states that as *“He parted from them,” “He was blessing them.”*
8. As long as they could see Him, His blessing upon them continued and remains His sentiment toward believers even today – cp. ***Ephesians 1:3; Romans 8:34; Hebrews 9:24.***
9. His blessing of believers would know experiential power with the provision of the Holy Spirit – ***John 14:16-17.***

B. THE PROMOTION TO HIS GLORY

1. Again, Luke declares clearly – *“... He was carried up into Heaven.”*
2. This is such a magnificent culmination of the work of Christ – the triumphal entry into glory to be promoted into preeminence in Heaven and on earth.
3. Jesus as He approached the cross, prayed that God would first honor His promise to raise Him from the dead, expressing total submission to the will of the Father regarding His suffering; and second, that upon the resurrection He would be restored to the glory that He had before the incarnation – cp. ***John 17:5.***
4. He now sits at the right hand of the Father, upon a heavenly throne of honor awaiting the ability to come and sit upon the earthly throne of David as the fulfillment of all the promises given the Abraham – ***Hebrews 2:9; Acts 5:31.***

III. Our Admiration by the Saints – 24:52-53

A. THE ADORATION BY THE SAINTS – v. 52a

1. This experience of Jesus’ ascension changes everything for the disciples.
2. The awareness of the glory of Christ, His victory, and honor bestowed upon Him by the Father caused a definitive reaction by the disciples – *“And they, after worshipping Him*

The Gospel of Luke

...”

3. It is impossible to consider Christ’s promotion to glory and exaltation in Heaven without the desire to worship Him.
4. *“worshiping”* [προσκυνέω] – from the root word meaning “kiss” – emphasizing the attitude or act of falling before someone to express their worthiness by kissing their feet.
5. It conveys complete humility and self-abandonment and adoration and honor of the object being honored – ***Luke 7:45***.
6. They didn’t have His feet to kiss physically, but in their attitude and heart they lowered themselves in honor of Him and expressed His unsurpassed worthiness and exaltation.
7. This remains the very attitude we who know Christ ought to possess when we gather to worship Him.

B. THE ANIMATION OF THE SAINTS – v. 52b

1. Two characteristics are present in those who truly worship Christ Jesus:
 - a. Deference – *“... they ... returned to Jerusalem ...”* – evidence of their obedience to the command of Jesus in v. 49 – cp. ***Acts 1:4***.
 - b. Delight – *“... with great joy”* – “mega gladness” – rejoicing in all that they now had in Christ and seeing Him as both “Lord and Christ” – their great desire is to fulfill His will – cp. ***1 John 5:2-3***.
2. Both what we do and the way we do it is animated by the reality that Jesus is in Heaven:
 - a. Preparing a place for us – ***John 14:1-3***.
 - b. Praying for us - ***Hebrews 7:25***.

C. THE ASSEMBLY OF THE SAINTS – v. 53

The Gospel of Luke

1. The awareness that Jesus will return causes our constant eagerness to gather – “... *and were continually in the temple praising God.*”
2. The Gospel of Luke ends with this event, and the Acts of the Apostles begins with this event – the pivotal event between Luke’s writings as the Spirit of God assures us that Jesus will return – cp. [Acts 1:11](#).
3. Our assembly as believers foreshadows the greater assembly we anticipate with Jesus one day in glory.
4. “*praising*” [εὐλογέω] is the exact word used of Jesus when He ascended – the believers were “speaking well” of God – declaring His praise considering what He has done in sending His Son.
5. This remains the priority of all genuine followers of Christ – the irresistible, compelling, draw to gather in the Name of Jesus to bless Him, proclaiming the excellencies of what He has done – cp. [1 Peter 2:9](#); [Hebrews 10:23-25](#).

So What?

1. **Jesus’ blessing you continues today through His Spirit who dwells in us, and His intercession for us before the Father.**
2. **The response to Jesus’ glory is deference and delight – do you struggle with obedience and joy?**
3. **Our gathering for worship is caused by our confidence that Jesus will one day return for us – do you long to join the resurrection to worship Him in glory?**

Jesus’ ascension into Heaven certifies the success of all He has to offer those who follow Him.