

NOTES: The ASCENSION OF JESUS

What it Means to Me

by Jimmy Sites

Introduction: The second sweetest homecoming.

Transition to Text: Let me tell you about the homecoming that was even sweeter. It is recorded in the Bible.

Text (composite): Matthew 28:16-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:45-49; Mark 16:19; Luke 24:50-51; Acts 1:6-11; Luke 24:52

I. The Homecoming

A. If resurrection Sunday was the most exciting day of the disciples' lives, for Jesus it was probably the day of Ascension.

B. John 17:4-5

1. *"Before the world began."*

C. The reaction of the disciples.

II. Delegating the Mission

A. "Prism" Ministry

B. "Dandelion" Ministry

III. The Second Incarnation

A. The Dilemma

B. The sending of the Comforter

Conclusion: The Ascension serves as a constant reminder that we are on a mission from God as we live on this earth. It foreshadows our own ascension into glory some day in the future... the ultimate homecoming.



Composite Text for Lesson

Composite Text: Matthew 28:16-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:45-49; Mark 16:19; Luke 24:50-51; Acts 1:6-11; Luke 24:52 (CSB)

The Commission.

Jesus came near and said to them, "All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.

Parting Instructions.

Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures. He also said to them, "This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead the third day, and repentance for forgiveness of sins will be proclaimed in his name to all the nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And look, I am sending you what my Father promised. As for you, stay in the city until you are empowered from on high."

The Ascension.

Then he led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them. So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, are you restoring the kingdom to Israel at this time?" He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." After he had said this, he was taken up as they were watching, and a cloud took him out of their sight. While he was going, they were gazing into heaven, and suddenly two men in white clothes stood by them. They said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up into heaven? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come in the same way that you have seen him going into heaven."

The Outcome

After worshiping him, they returned to Jerusalem with great joy.



STUDY GUIDE: The ASCENSION OF JESUS

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REFLECT

1. What is the greatest homecoming you have ever experienced?

- How did you feel as you were traveling and getting closer towards home?
- What emotions did you feel as you were back in the arms of your loved ones?

2. In *John 17* Jesus prays a prayer. He says this prayer near the end of his life on earth. Many have labeled this prayer as a "**Unity Prayer.**" While Jesus does make reference to the unity of the disciples, he also seems to be reflecting on the mission that God had given him to accomplish. Therefore, some might call it a "**Mission Prayer.**" However, I suggest yet a different label for this prayer. I believe that Jesus is praying an "**Ascension Prayer.**" In other words, Jesus has one major thought in mind as he prays... the thought that he will soon be returning home to heaven. Consider the following elements of the prayer as they appear in sequence.





JOHN 17

- **Verses 1-5** — *Jesus reflects on his mission as he anticipates his homecoming.*
- **Verses 6-19** — *Jesus acknowledges the delegation of his mission to the disciples and makes requests for them as he anticipates his homecoming.*
- **Verses 20-26** — *Jesus foretells the delegation of his mission to Christians of future generations and makes requests for them as he anticipates his homecoming.*

3. React to the following statement made by Jimmy during the lesson;

"If Resurrection Sunday was the most exciting day of the disciples' lives for Jesus it was probably the day of Ascension."

Do you agree or disagree? Why?





DIG DEEPER

4. At one point in Jimmy's lesson he asked four back to back questions:

- (1) *Why did Jesus have to leave?*
- (2) *Why did he leave and leave his disciples on the earth?*
- (3) *Why didn't he take them with him to his homecoming?*
- (4) *Why doesn't he take us straight to heaven when we become christians in this century?*

What is your answer to these questions?

5. Jimmy described the delegating of Jesus' mission to the disciples as "prism ministry" and "dandelion ministry." Can you think of another analogy to describe the transfer of mission from Jesus to Christians today?

6. While the Resurrection of Jesus may be hard for some people to believe, the Ascension of Jesus may actually appear even more absurd to some. Jimmy explained why with the following statement;

"Because at the Ascension, Jesus left the keys of the kingdom in the fumbling hands of people - - sinful, distorted people. He left the church to be the second incarnation of God in flesh."

What did God do to remove the absurdity of this "second incarnation" ... to make sure Christians were not alone in facing this dilemma?

(see Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8; 2:38; Romans 8:15, 26; etc.)

7. Reflect on the following statement made during the lesson;

"The Holy Spirit is very much part of the second incarnation. At the Ascension Jesus did not leave us alone to fend for ourselves. The Holy Spirit is the greatest gift of Ascension, and He will remain with us during the 'window of time' between the Ascension and the Return of Jesus. That is comforting! Maybe that is why he is called 'the Comforter.'"

What are your thoughts about this?



LETS GET PERSONAL

8. Three important conclusions emerge from our study of the Ascension:

- (1) The Ascension marked the end of Jesus' mission on earth. It served as his homecoming, a joyful event no doubt for the one who had suffered so much as well as for the Father who had sent him.**

- (2) The Ascension did not mark the end of God's presence on earth through incarnation, but rather served as the transition point of incarnation from Jesus to his disciples.**

- (3) The Ascension served as the Catalyst for the sending of the Holy Spirit to all of Jesus' followers who would be assuming His mission during the "window of time" between the Ascension and Return of Jesus.**

Considering this conclusions, now complete the following "Mission Statement":

MISSION AGREEMENT

I, _____, do acknowledge that the Ascension of Jesus serves as a constant reminder to me that I am on a mission from God for as long as I live on this earth. I also acknowledge that the Ascension of Jesus foreshadows my own ascension into glory some day in the future. I, too, shall be lifted by God's power into the sky to meet the Lord face to face and participate in the ultimate homecoming. Until that day, I promise to live as the "second incarnation" of Jesus.

Signature

Date

