

Luke 24:49-53

October 5, 2003 AM

1046A

*Just the Beginning*

Back in 1903 my great-grandfather, Edward, along with three of his sons signed incorporation papers in New York for E. Regensburg & Sons, a cigar manufacturing company. In the 1964 E. Regensburg & Sons was sold to Bayuck Cigars and at that point ceased to exist.

For the first 16 years of my life my father managed an E. Regensburg & Sons plant. Ironically, when the company was sold my father never thought to keep so much as a piece of letterhead.

My brother and I have been reduced to bidding for company memorabilia on ebay. Since E. Regensburg & Sons made Admiration cigars I had my ebay preferences set to notify me of any auction with the name "Admiration."

One day I clicked on an ebay auction with the name "Admiration" and this is what I got. (Show Madonna "Admiration" CD.) This is a 8 song CD that Madonna made in Germany a few years back.

I thought that was interesting because this (Show Admiration logo) is the logo from E. Regensburg & Sons "admiration" cigars. Obviously E. Regensburg & Sons predates Madonna. The copyright is from 1936.

As a surviving heir of the company I figured "The Material Girl" was worth at least a few hundred thousand for copyright infringement.

Unfortunately, not only is the copyright period up, but at a point in time E. Regensburg & Sons ceased to exist. The company is gone and so are any rights to trademarks.

E. Regensburg & Sons has no authority in this country or in any country of the world. The company had a beginning and the company had an end.

This past May 30 was "Ascension Day." That's the 40th day after Easter. Many of our calendars have major religious holidays marked but not too many include Ascension day.

They don't include it, even though it's one of the most important days in Christianity. It's significant, but how many of us really know why?

**Turn with me to Luke's description of the ascension.**

**Luke 24 Pg 937 Read 49-53**

Mark covers this event in one verse: 16:19 *So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God.*

There's one more passage in the NT covering the ascension.

**Turn to Acts 1 pg 965** This is also recorded by Luke.

**Read vs 8-11**

The Bible records 11 different post-resurrection appearances of Jesus Christ. The last one is this one we're reading about today.

Forty days after his resurrection He led His little band of 11 Apostles about a mile from Jerusalem, across the Brook Kidron, up the long slope to the top of the Mt of Olives in the region of Bethany.

Jesus promised His disciples the power of the Holy Spirit and then by order of the Father, the Son was called away from this world.

This is the Ascension. The question for us is what is the significance of the Ascension? What does Jesus' ascension mean to us?

Why does Luke end his history of Jesus' life and begin his history of the early church with the ascension?

*I. In one sense the Ascension marked an end of something. It marked the end of Jesus earthly ministry.*

For 31/2 years, from the time He was baptized by John up until the cross, Jesus had a job to do. He had a mission to accomplish.

Every word that was spoken, every miracle that was done, was in the eternal plan of God. Each public action was designed to establish that the man, Jesus of Nazareth, was Israel's Messiah. These were Jesus' credentials.

Now that earthly ministry was ending. Jesus' work wasn't done because He was going to work through His people, but the physical, earthly part was finished.

The price of sin had been paid at the cross and now He was ready to take His place at

the right hand of the throne of God. So while the disciples were looking, Jesus was caught up out of their sight.

Bruce Larson writes: "I'm convinced that Jesus disappeared dramatically in a cloud to demonstrate that the disciples would not see Him again physically. If He hadn't done this and they were to hear later on that He was in Italy or Greece, they'd assume He couldn't also be with them. So, as he makes his physical departure, he tells them to wait until He comes in spirit to be totally with them all the time. I believe that the ascension was important as a demonstration that we will not see Him again until that eschatological moment when He returns."

Remember something. To us it all seems so logical. Christ came, He went to the cross, He ascended, and He's coming back again.

We never had any physical attachment to Jesus. We didn't know Him physically. We live in the church age. It's been this way for 2000 years now.

But to the disciples this was all new. They had left jobs and homes to leave a flesh and blood person. when He was crucified it just blew them away. They were shattered.

Then, after the resurrection and a couple of appearances to confirm that it was all true, they were back to that physical attachment.

Right before this they asked Him, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"

That's what they wanted, but that wasn't the program. Jesus Christ was going to be with them, but He was going to be with all of the other millions who would believe down through the centuries.

Jesus Christ was going to going to be present on earth through the Holy Spirit. He had to go. They had to make a break with the physical man Jesus.

Something was radically changing. Something was coming to an end.

In one sense it was the end. In another sense it was just the beginning.

- I. *The ascension means that Jesus finished his redemptive work on earth*
- II. *but it also means that we have a heavenly advocate*

E. Regensburg & Sons came to an end. It dosen't exist any more. It's function is over.

But in reality Jesus' ascension just marked "phase 2" of Jesus' work.

William Barclay wrote: " In one sense the ascension closes a chapter, but in another and even greater sense it begins a new chapter, for the Ascension is the necessary prelude to the events of Pentecost and to the coming of the Holy Spirit. The ascension is the necessary conclusion of one part of Jesus' ministry and the equally necessary introduction to the next and even greater part of that ministry."

Hebrews 1:3 *...who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high...*

By the way, if you're looking for "purgatory" in the Bible here it is. Purgatory literally means "of, or relating to purging."

Purgatory isn't a place where we suffer for our sins, it's the place where Jesus suffered for our sins. At the cross He purged our sins and then He sat down.

Jesus sat down because His work of purging our sins was finished. There's nothing that we can do to add to what He has done.

The Bible gives a clear, straightforward command: , *"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved..."*

Remember Jesus *"by Himself purged our sins..."*

He purged our sins and He sat down. The ascension of Jesus is an introduction to His enthronement. It's a celebrated moment when the Father welcomed the Son back to His throne of glory.

He ascended into heaven to begin His reign of power. After the humiliation and shame of the cross, and the triumph of the resurrection, Jesus took His rightful place beside the Father.

That means some things:

1.) Ephesians 1 says that the Father...*raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body...*

Jesus Christ on earth was one man in one place. In heaven, He's the head and we're the body. That means that He has feet and arms all over the world to do His work. He has all of us and we're responsible to the Head to do His work.

2.) Col 3 says: *If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.*

Jesus Christ is in heaven. That's where we're supposed to center our minds and our affections. The last thing God wants is for His people to get so wrapped up with this life that's temporary, that we neglect the things that are eternal.

3.) II Cor 5:7 *For we walk by faith, not by sight.*

W.A. Criswell has written: "If the Lord were here in this world there would be a perpetual embargo and moratorium on faith. People would struggle from one side of the planet to the other to get to Him. We would want to look on Him, touch Him, listen to Him, bring our sick to Him, and lay our dead before Him."

God has given us plenty of evidence for spiritual truth, but in the end we still have to either believe or not believe.

God calls us to a faith that trusts even when there doesn't seem to be an earthly solution our the problems. God is honored when we walk by faith.

4.) **Turn to Heb 7:25 pg 1066**  
**Read 7:25 & 8:1,2**

I John 2:1 *...if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.*

Here's what those verses mean, Jesus Christ is now in heaven taking up our cause.

When we face some calamity in life that threatens to destroy us, Jesus is at the right hand of the Father praying for us.

When temptation seems to drain our resistance, Jesus is at the right hand of the Father praying for us.

When we fall and Satan our accuser says, "see they're hopeless. How can they be a Christian?" Jesus is at the right hand of the Father praying for us.

Why did Jesus ascend into glory? To be our advocate at the very throne of heaven.

He's our brother in the flesh who lived our life, walked our earth, died our death, suffered our sorrows, and wept our tears.

The Bible says, *"He was touched with the feeling of our infirmities."*

**Turn to Rom 5:10 pg 1002 Read vs 10**

We were sinners, separated from God because of our sin. Jesus reconciled us by His death. He brought us back to God by dieing for our sins.

But we're saved by His life. What life? Not His life here on earth. We're forever saved by His life in heaven. He lives forever to intercede for us, that means for the person who's trusted Christ, their salvation is eternally assured.

Think about this: If you could send the most trustworthy, responsible, capable person to heaven to ensure your relationship with God, They'd fail. They couldn't do it because it's not humanly possible.

But Jesus Christ will never fail.

5.) The fifth ministry of Christ in heaven was to send the Holy Spirit.

John 14 *"It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you."*

*"And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever--the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. "I will not leave you orphans;"*

The Holy Spirit, who lives in, and empowers, every Christian couldn't come until Jesus Christ left.

- I. *The ascension means that Jesus finished his redemptive work on earth*
- II. *The ascension means that we have a heavenly advocate*
- III. *The Ascension means that Jesus will come again*

E. Regensburg & Sons might be gone for good, but Jesus isn't. Remember what the angel said to the disciples in Acts 1: 11 *"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."*

Luke says *He lifted up His hands and blessed them. Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven.*

The last thing the disciples saw was Jesus holding up His hands. They saw the nail prints in Jesus' hands. The last thing they saw was a reminder of the love of God that sent Christ to the cross for them.

The last thing they heard was an angelic statement, 'Don't worry, He's coming back again.'

The first time Jesus came,. He came as a baby in a manger filled with straw. When He did, all the predictions of the prophets were fulfilled.

The OT contained scores of specific prophecies that Jesus fulfilled to the letter at His first coming.

What do you think is going to happen with all of the specific prophecies about His second coming?

They're going to be fulfilled too.

For every time the first coming is mentioned in the Bible the second coming is mentioned 8 times.

Here's the Bible's description of Jesus second coming: *"Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.*

Matthew writes: *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.*

The ascension of Jesus is really an anticipation of His ultimate victory and rule.

There was a father who walked by his son's room late one night and heard talking. He opened the door and there was the boy with his head under the covers with a flashlight.

The dad got up close and heard that the boy was laughing out loud. In the middle of the laughs he was saying "Ha, if you only knew what I know." It turns out he was reading an adventure book. He had gotten to the middle and things looked really bad for the hero. The bad guy was winning and gloating while the hero was being disgraced.

Finally the boy couldn't stand it any longer so he turned to the end of the book to read how the story turned out.

When he went back to the middle again instead of agonizing he was celebrating. He knew how everything was going to end. He looked at the supposedly triumphant bad guy and said, "Ha, if you only knew what I knew, you wouldn't be so cocky."

If you've read through God's book you know how it's going to end.

The pressures and frustrations of life may come. Testings and sorrow may be just around the corner.

Things may seem out of control. We may feel overwhelmed. But if you've read the end of the book you know how it's all going to turn out.

Jesus said, *"Behold I make all things new."* The Bible promises, *"We are more than conquerors through Him who loved us."*

The Ascension of Jesus may mark an end of His earthly ministry but it also marks the beginning of His present heavenly ministry, and will lead to His final rule and reign.

When Winston Churchill was up in years he was invited to speak at the school where he studied as a boy.

The headmaster told the students, "Bring your notebooks and write down everything. You're going to hear the greatest living Englishman."



Churchill stood on the platform that day and looked out at the students. He remembered the shy, skinny boy named Winston Churchill who stuttered but who became the greatest master of English speech in modern history.

Looking out at those boys he knew that life could bring them plenty of trials and trouble. So Winston Churchill made his speech.

He said, "Never give up. Never give up. Never give up," And then he sat down.

What's the ultimate application and significance of the ascension of Christ? "Never give up. Never give up. Never give up,"

The Ascension marked the end of one era and the beginning of another. Today we have the Holy Spirit. We have the omnipotent, omnipresent Christ. We have an advocate with the Father. Our life is hid with Christ in God. Jesus Christ is coming again and all believers share in His glory.

Never give up on the Word of God.

Never give up on the promises of Christ.

Never give up on living for Christ.

Never give up on what Jesus Christ started through those 11 men 2000 years ago.

What does Jesus' ascension mean to you personally? Luke says that when the disciples saw Jesus taken up into glory *they worshiped Him*.

Does the truth that Jesus finished His work, is our advocate in heaven, and is coming again cause you to worship?