



session 11 group study guide

the ascension of Jesus

message

After His resurrection, Jesus appeared to His followers during the next 40 days before His ascension—or “rising upwards”—into heaven. Read the following passage from Acts 1:1-11. As you read, keep in mind the following questions: (1) What might the disciples have been thinking during the ascension? (2) Why didn’t Jesus just remain on earth after His resurrection?

In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”

So when they met together, they asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?”

He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white 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 1:1-11).

dig

1. How does the disciples' statement, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" demonstrate that the disciples still did not fully understand the complete role of Jesus Christ? (Remember that at this time, the Jews were under Roman domination and believed that Jesus would bring political independence to the Jews and restore the nation of Israel.)

2. Although Jesus leaves the disciples, He tells them that God will send the Holy Spirit. According to the following verses, what is the role of the Holy Spirit?

John 14:26

John 16:7-8

Acts 9:31

1 Corinthians 6:19

3. What event is foretold in verse 11 of the passage in Acts?

4. According to Mark 16:19, where did Christ go after the ascension?

5. According to the following verses, what is Christ doing in heaven?

John 14:1-3

Romans 8:34

apply

The disciples had seen Jesus work miracles. They had observed the agony of His death and the joy and confusion of His resurrection. Now, after 40 days on earth in His resurrected body, Jesus had ascended into heaven, where He would sit at the right hand of God. The disciples had watched, amazed and stunned, as He disappeared into the sky. After the ascension, the disciples were transformed people.

Our response in the twenty-first century should be the same response as the disciples had back in the first century.

joy and worship

1. Read Luke 24:50-53. What was the response of the disciples after Jesus ascended into heaven?

2. Imagine you are a disciple. How would you have felt if you had just witnessed Jesus rising up into heaven?

3. Are joy and worship in the Lord a central part of your spiritual life? If not, what steps can you take to make these elements a greater portion of your life?

power

1. What kind of power is Jesus talking about in Acts 1:8?

2. What kind of help does the Holy Spirit provide to us?

3. Do you find it easy or hard to call on the Holy Spirit for guidance and support? Why?

4. God promises that all things are possible through Him (see Philippians 4:13). What difficulties are you facing that you need to rely on the aid of the Holy Spirit to guide you through?

proclamation

1. According to Mark 16:19-20, what did the disciples do when Jesus was taken up to heaven?

2. The word “proclaim” means to announce, tell or preach. The disciples proclaimed to people everywhere the resurrection and the new life available in Jesus. Of course, proclaiming truth can have consequences. What might have been some of the consequences for the disciples—or for us today—of proclaiming the risen Jesus?

3. What would have happened if the disciples had not fervently and passionately gone out into the world and proclaimed the good news of Jesus?

4. How are you proclaiming Christ in your own life? What things can you do to proclaim Him more?

reflect

1. Why do you think Jesus ascended into heaven? Why not just stay on earth?

2. The disciples had the opportunity to walk and talk with Jesus. If you had that same opportunity today, what would you ask? What would you want to know or understand?

3. Although you may not have witnessed a miracle, describe a time when you witnessed the hand of God on your life.

4. How did this experience affect your faith?

5. Who do you know who needs the good news of Jesus Christ proclaimed to them?

6. What fears hinder you from proclaiming Jesus to those in your life who do not know Him?

7. In Acts 1:7, Jesus says, "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority." What does this mean? How can we apply these words to our own lives?

meditation



Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

HEBREWS 12:1-3