



The DAILY JESUS NEWS #346
Jesus' Resurrection and Eternal Ministry
Six More Resurrection Appearances of Jesus Over 40 Days

Jesus' Eleventh Resurrection Appearance: His Ascension Back to Heaven
LK 24.50-53 (Parallel Text: Acts 1.9-12)

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50 When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. 51 While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up ^Abefore their very eyes ^Linto heaven, ^Aand a cloud hid 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.”

52 ^LThen they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy ^Afrom the hill called Mount Olivet, a Sabbath day's walk from the city.

53 ^LAnd they stayed continually at the temple, praising God.

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NOTE: We use superscript identification of the source gospel in "blended texts" as follows: Matthew = ^{MT}, Mark = ^M, Luke = ^L, John = ^J, Acts = ^A. This “superscript ID” is inserted at the beginning of the quoted text, identifying that Bible book until a different superscript appears. In addition, *red italics identify the words of Jesus*. Old Testament quotations are CAPITALIZED.

	CONTEXT DIGEST
Location	The Mount of Olives, Just Outside Jerusalem
Timeline	May (Month 40)
Jesus' Life Context	Stage IX: The Resurrection and Eternal Ministry of Jesus
	The Resurrection and 40 Day Ministry of Jesus
	6 More Resurrection Appearances of Jesus Over 40 Days
Title:	Jesus' 11th Resurrection Appearance: His Ascension Back to Heaven

Today's reading marks another major transition in Jesus' life. Our Lord's eleventh resurrection appearance ended his forty days of post-resurrection ministry on this earth. He shifted his location from earth to the invisible order of reality in the spiritual dimension, which we call "heaven."

As we have noted before, heaven is not a spatial/locative term, though we commonly speak about it in the language of simple description, as though "heaven" is located above us in space. The problem with this language is that the portion of space that is "above" Jerusalem is not "above" New York, Tokyo, London, Beijing, Mexico City, Cape Town, or Buenos Aires. The earth is a sphere, and heaven does not mean the entire universe surrounding the earth. "Heaven" is the invisible order of spiritual reality that transcends space and time, in which God lives.

The ascension of Jesus from earth to "heaven" brought him fully into the arena of his eternal ministry as our High Priest--our representative within the Trinity--and as the controller and ruler of the universe. None of us can ever see, touch, or relate to Jesus in his flesh and blood body. That part of his existence is over. Now we relate to the "same" Jesus, but one with a spiritual, resurrection body that can move back and forth between the invisible, spiritual order of reality, and the physical universe.

At the ascension Jesus re-entered the invisible realm of heaven, where he will remain until his final coming. All believers now relate to the same Jesus of the gospels, in his ongoing work as Lord and Savior in heaven.

The ascension did not remove Jesus from earth. Rather, his return to the spiritual order of reality made him more accessible to us than ever, for heaven transcends space and time, and therefore is equally accessible from any place on earth, or in the universe. This is the significance of the ascension--it opened up all the possibilities of Jesus' eternal ministry to all believers--forever. The Holy Spirit then came to dwell on earth, within us, to make everything about Jesus in heaven real within us on earth, both individually and corporately.

It was important for the believers who had known Jesus in the flesh, and witnessed his resurrection appearances, to see him make the transition into the spiritual realm. This assured them that it was the same Jesus they had always known who returned to the Father to represent us in heaven. Then, the angels bore witness to the same thing. This "same Jesus" will return physically to planet earth at the end of the age.

Jesus will not change over his years in heaven. It will be the SAME--the one and only Jesus--that will return. This is what we can count on. *"Jesus Christ is the SAME--yesterday, today, and forever."*

Notice that Jesus ascended to the Father while in the act of blessing us. Jesus came to make *"every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms"* available to us (Eph. 1.3) All of his Divine fulness is now alive within us by His Spirit--we are complete in him! There is no blessing that he has withheld from us, for he gave us all of himself.

Note also that Jesus was worshipped again in this resurrection appearance. By returning to heaven he re-entered the realm of receiving worship as God that he had temporarily set aside when he left heaven 33 years earlier and became a man. This worship of Jesus was not

temporary. The disciples returned to the Temple, where they kept on praising Jesus as their God. They would proclaim him *"in his name"* there, do miracles *"in his name,"* and pray without ceasing *"in his name."* Doing all things *"in the name of Jesus"* was an expression of their worship. This was all made possible because Jesus ascended back to the right hand of the Father.

So the eleventh resurrection appearance inaugurated the eternal, heavenly stage of Jesus' ministry to and for us, that will never end. A relatively few number of people knew Jesus in the flesh. Billions of people like you and me have come to know and believe in him since he ascended into the heavenly realm. And so we will know, love, and serve him forever.

APPLICATION:

Because Jesus ascended, we can now *"abide"* in him and cling to him spiritually in a way we could never do physically. We are ever *"in him"* by faith, and he is eternally *"in us"* by His Spirit.

Because Jesus ascended, our union with him is complete, irreversible, and total. Because he ascended, we can *"keep on seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God."* Because Jesus ascended, he is nearer to us than our own thoughts, and more alive in us than our own heartbeat. Because Jesus ascended he is not far away—he entered the realm in which we live and move and have our being—his order of reality transcending and totally permeating everything about our own.

Hallelujah! Not only did Jesus rise again for the dead, he ascended to the heavenly realm!