

Acts

Week 3, Taken Up

1:9, Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.

1 Thessalonians 4:17, Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.

It is difficult for us to imagine an event so spectacular that anyone could just be taken up as it says here of Jesus. It is very important that it happen as the disciples watched, there was once again someone to witness the event. If you ran to your friends after seeing something like this and nobody else saw it, do you think they would believe you? Look at our second verse and the power of faith, what it did for Paul in having faced Jesus on the road to Damascus and realizing when he met Jesus for the first time Jesus had already been crucified. In Acts 9:7 it says, as Jesus spoke to Paul, **“And the men who journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice but seeing no one.”**

Now let us go to verse, **Acts 1:10-11, And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, “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.”** Will so come in like manner. That Jesus will come again in like manner? I’m not sure but I think had I been with the disciples and these events were taking place I might react a bit differently. I think the excitement of witnessing something so amazing and so inconceivable would send one out shouting about it and yet these men stand in silence and watch. Duh! The entire event should consume a person’s joy and thoughts and had sent excitement through their bones. Yet, they just stand there.

The two men in white who we believe to be angels once again plainly ask, verse 11, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This seems a foolish question to ask. We believe these two to be angels for two particular issues, one the white in which they are dressed, λευκός leukós, lyoo-kos'; from λύκη lýkē ("light"); white:—white. “spoken of the garments of angels, and of those exalted to the splendor of the heavenly state.”¹

Next we learn these two men knew where the Apostles were from, except for Judas Iscariot all were from Galilee of Nazareth. It is believed Judas came from a place called Kerioth, "Judas, man of Kerioth," son of Simon. See John 6:71, 13:2, 13:26. Judas Iscariot was from Kerioth, a city 15 miles south of Hebron, in Israel. The Hebrew word Ishkeriyyoth, for Iscariot means “man of the village of Keriyoyth.”²

¹ <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g3022/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

² <https://www.beliefnet.com/faiths/christianity/galleries/10-things-you-didnt-know-about-judas-iscariot.aspx>

This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.”

Jesus did not abandon His disciples as they may have worried and the angels give cause to remind them of what Jesus had previously taught them, “will so in like manner”. See John 14:3, Acts 15:16.

Ascended, but we must remember Jesus first came down. In his book, *Miracles*, C. S. Lewis writes of the skeptics and the manner in which natural man may view the teaching of Jesus coming down and going back up and how it appears a ridiculous commentary. The skeptic mocks the idea as though this God of Christianity has a palace in heaven from which He sends His Son down from heaven, and to later return and later yet repeat it once again. The mocker makes this out to be as a yoyo, but the believer should find strength in. If a believer believes in somethings of God they should believe in all things God, to deny any part of God is to deny all of God.

“from which He had sent down His ‘Son’ like a parachutist. He finds that this ‘Son’ then ‘descended into Hell’—into some land of the dead under the surface of a (presumably) flat earth—and thence ‘ascended’ again, as if by a balloon, into his Father’s sky-palace, where He finally sat down in a decorated chair placed a little to His Father’s right.”³

How the mocker needs to mock, as through his gains others who will follow and stumble as he has, into ruin they boastfully go. What of you, believer? Do you believe in such events? Do you trust and place your faith in one who appears beyond the natural man? We must go back to the second question Warren Wiersbe asked, **Why do you think it was so important for the church that Jesus continued to minister after His resurrection?** The visual appearances, and not some illusionary smoke like Wizard of Oz, Jesus renders support to the true nature and personhood of who our Christ Jesus truly is. Although Jesus was born of woman, was raised and walked amongst us, that He performed many miracles while yet being fully man, we find He was also fully God. This makes our Christ, our Father God and our Holy Spirit different from any other God people may believe in. Had all things Jesus died and ended there in the tomb so much of what He promised would have proved powerless.

Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day’s journey.

“Sabbath Day’s Journey: supposed to be a distance of 2,000 cubits, or less than half-a-mile, the distance to which, according to Jewish tradition, it was allowable to travel on the Sabbath day without violating the law (Act 1:12; Exd 16:29; Num 35:5; Jos 3:4).”⁴

³ Lewis, C. S.. *Miracles* (Collected Letters of C.S. Lewis) (p. 108). Harper One. Kindle Edition..

⁴ Blue Letter Bible, dictionary, Sabbath Day’s Journey,

<https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/Dictionary/viewTopic.cfm?topic=ET0003171,IT0007535,NT0004204>

What is the importance of Mt. Olive or Olivet as is sometimes used? As King David was being pursued by his son Absalom word came to him that Absalom was coming toward Jerusalem. David prepared his people to flee, and as they traveled they went up to the top of the Mount of Olives to pray for God's protection, 2 Samuel 15:30.

King Solomon would later build places to worship pagan gods at the top of the **Mt. 1 Kings 11:7-8, On the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, he even built a pagan shrine for Chemosh, the detestable god of Moab, and another for Molech, the detestable god of the Ammonites. 8 Solomon built such shrines for all his foreign wives to use for burning incense and sacrificing to their gods.**

Ezekiel 11:23; And the glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city and stood on the mountain, which is on the east side of the city.

Would this become a place of dishonor, a place of great rejection toward God and His people? Not at all, in Luke 21:37 we find that Jesus would spend His days in the temple but at night He would go to the Mt. and lodge there. Anytime Jesus was in the area of Jerusalem He would go to Mt Olive with His disciples, Luke 22:39.

Mount Olivet was the place Jesus delivered the famous Olivet Discourse, it was the place He sat and wept over Jerusalem wanting so much to have them believe in Him and His reasons for being on earth; but they were a stiff neck people.

The Garden of Gethsemane is located on the Mt. where Jesus sweat drops of blood, Luke 22:44. This would be the beginning of the process He would endure for our salvation. Jesus' ascension was from Mt. Olives, see Acts 1:12. As we find numerous ups and downs on the Mt. there remains a greater purpose and attraction found in prophecy. We find in **Zechariah 14:3-4, Then the LORD will go forth And fight against those nations, As He fights in the day of battle. On that day his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives that lies before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall be split in two from east to west by a very wide valley, so that one half of the Mount shall move northward, and the other half southward.**

Jesus returns to the Mt. and comes as a conqueror to defeat all who would come after His people.