

The resurrection, ascension and exaltation of Jesus

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[0:00] We're going to look at this question, what happened to Jesus after the resurrection?! Let me just divest myself of my keys.!

You might be thinking, family life is like a war zone. We have no sleep, we're all scratchy and irritable with each other, and the car just failed its MOT.

You might be thinking, I've come along to church this morning, nobody knows this, but I've offended God so badly, I feel I have no hope. You might be thinking, the Christian life isn't working for me.

I have nothing to be grateful for, I have no comfort, I have no help, and nothing tangible to lean on.

You might not be thinking any of those things, but somebody, I'm sure somewhere, is thinking each of those things.

And the response to each of those is the answer to this question, what happened to Jesus after the resurrection?

[1:27] That's not the complete answer, but it is the first answer to all of those issues above. So let's look together at this question, what happened to Jesus after the resurrection?

So my plan is that we'll look at the texts, we'll survey some of them, and I'd like you to get a feel for the emphasis of the New Testament on the Old Testament in this question about what happened to Jesus after the resurrection.

Then, secondly, I'd like to put the texts together. And then thirdly, I'd like to see the implications.

And I thought of seven implications which will reflect back on the questions that were raised right at the beginning.

So that's the plan. Are you with me? Good. Good. Because Mark is usually the one who says he's with me, but he's not here. So you will need to be a bit awake.

You will need to put some effort in. And I hope that as we do so, God will bless us in looking at that. So let's look at the texts.

[2:45] Please note the motif of footstool and right hand.

This crops up a number of times. And once you've seen it, you think, how could I not have seen that before? That is just so emphatic.

Right. So let's look. Will you turn with me to Acts chapter 1? And, of course, this deals historically with what happened to Jesus after the resurrection. So in Acts chapter 1, the writer, Dr. Luke, has his person that he's writing to, whom he calls Theophilus.

And he says, I wrote Luke's gospel about all the things that Jesus began to do and teach until the day he was taken up into 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.

[3:58] So Luke says it's resurrection. He says there's proofs, confirmation, and that Jesus taught things in that intervening period.

He gave instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. And he goes on to say, on one occasion, verse 4, while he was eating with them, he gave 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, 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? So he mentions the coming of the Holy Spirit.

He mentions this as a gift and a promise, the promised Holy Spirit. And he links it, well he says it's a baptism with the Holy Spirit.

[5:03] And the disciples link this with the idea of the kingdom. Now the kingdom, the only kingdom would be the kingdom of David, the kingdom of Israel, the kingdom of God.

And Jesus doesn't give them a specific reply on that. But he does say, verse 8, You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you.

You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth. So there is a thought about a global expansion of witness.

And then it says, verse 9, After 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.

[6:11] So he ascends, he goes up physically and literally. He also goes up in terms of his status.

He goes into heaven and there is promised that he, in due course, will return from heaven in a similar way. So he's raised.

These various themes are brought out. He goes into heaven and he will come back from heaven. Let's look into chapter 2.

Because this is the day of Pentecost, which is a fulfillment of what was said about the coming of the Holy Spirit. The day of Pentecost came there all together in one place.

Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven, filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then they saw what seemed to be tongues of fire coming to rest on each of them.

[7:07] And all of them were filled with the Holy Spirit. And they began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. So the other tongues thing takes up that theme of globalness.

So we're not thinking of now just being limited to Israel. We're thinking of going out into all the different nationalities. And if we now jump over to verse 29, this is how Peter is explaining what just happened.

And he explains it as follows. Chapter 2, verse 29. Brothers, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David, King David, died and was buried and his tomb is here to this day.

But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. Seeing what was ahead, he spoke of the resurrection of Christ, that he was not abandoned to the grave, nor did his body see decay.

God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses, exalted to the right hand of God.

[8:24] He received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said, The Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.

Do you remember singing something like that? That's from Psalm 110. Do you see the right hand there? And the footstool? Okay, let's continue gathering these texts.

You notice that Jesus is not simply raised, but he's exalted, verse 33, to the right hand of God. So he's raised, he ascends, and he's exalted to the right hand of God.

These things fit together. And being exalted to the right hand of God, it says, verse 33, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit, and he, Jesus, has poured out what you now see and hear.

So that reference to the baptism, that's what you do with a lot of water. Jesus does with the Holy Spirit. He pours out the Holy Spirit onto his church.

[9:55] And we notice the right hand and the footstool. So those are some of the texts. Let's look at the text. Are you with me so far?

So we just, that's what it says in Acts. I'll just go through that. Now let's look at what he was quoting, because he is connecting with Psalm 110.

So let's look at Psalm 110. And the thing is, that the New Testament sees this psalm as being absolutely key to understanding who Jesus is and what he does.

And to us that might sound a bit unfamiliar, because it's an unusual psalm. But this psalm is quoted a number of times, and see whether you see right hand and footstool in this.

Psalm 110. The Lord says to my Lord, this is from David speaking, sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.

[11:01] What's the womb of the dawn?

What does he mean by the dew of your youth? Well, it's some sort of quite visionary poetic reference to a sort of renewal and freshness, which I think with hindsight we could say is really the resurrection.

But the psalm talks about the womb of the dawn and receiving the dew of your youth. But look what it is clearly saying, that this person, this Lord, is declared by the Lord God, come and sit at my right hand.

So God is in heaven, in the place of power, and the right hand is the place where you're right there, you could almost say in partnership with God.

And this Lord, to this Lord, the Lord God says, sit at my right hand until I make all your enemies a footstool for your feet.

[12:29] That's quite a promise, isn't it? That's quite a statement. This person goes to the, you know, sits in the next seat to God and God says, you have enemies, but I'm going to put them all so that you can prop your feet on them.

Like you might be thinking, well, just nice, be comfortable in these church chairs. If I could just prop my feet on some small child and I'd be nice and comfortable. Do you? Siatic are a world of good. But he says, your enemies will be a footstool. You'll rest your feet on all your enemies. This is a process that's going to take some time.

Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet. But that's what this psalm says God is going to do. Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet. And it's put in the context of battle. You will rule. Your people will be willing. And there will be this refreshment.

[13:38] So let's just take those ideas from that psalm and let's go to Psalm 8 which also gets quoted. And again, a psalm that in the New Testament they say this has got keys in it as well to understanding who Jesus is.

And again, a psalm that we're perhaps not so familiar with. But the bit that the New Testament picks up on is around about verse 6.

You made him ruler over the works of your hands. You put everything under his feet. You don't get right hand there but you do get feet.

You put everything under his feet. Now, this is referring back to Adam's role in creation that he would have charge of everything and it would all be in order with Adam taking his orders from God and then creation taking their orders from Adam.

But we know that that beautiful arrangement has been spoiled by sin. The New Testament picks that up and says but it is true of somebody.

[15:02] It is true of the man if you put him with a capital M. Everything under his feet that's true of Jesus. He suffered and became lower than the angels and he is now crowned with glory and honor and everything is being put under his feet.

And the New Testament will pick up on that as well. So there's two more texts to put into the mix. Let's look of the many that we could look at.

Let's look I think this is the last one in 1 Corinthians 15. So we're going to look in 1 Corinthians chapter 15 from verse now do I mean 35?

I think I mean 25. I put 35 but I meant 25. So here Paul is talking about the resurrection of Jesus and how significant it is and it says in verse 25 he must reign that's Jesus must reign until he until he has put all his enemies under his feet.

Does that ring a bell? Enemies under the feet? The last enemy to be destroyed is death. So death is one of those enemies that will be destroyed.

[16:40] And then he goes on to say for he has put everything under his feet. When it says everything has been put under him it is clear that does not include God himself who has put everything under Christ.

So he goes on to say that the final reordering everything will include God as all and in all and the son as subject to God and the world as subject to the son.

But it's picking up on that very idea of his reigning until all the enemies get put under his feet. Until everything is finally put right and there's that period until the final destruction of death.

So that's just a few of the texts that pick up on these ideas. In particular the right hand and the footstool. We'll see some more texts in due course.

But let's make do with that for the time being. So let's try and put those you okay with those texts? We did them quite quickly. You may or may not be familiar with them but I hope that makes a bit of sense. Let's try and put them together.

[17:56] So I haven't broken the diagram down into bits that click up individually. You've got the whole thing at one go. Here's time going along here and the time goes as follows.

Jesus existed before this diagram starts. Jesus unlike us we're born into this world we don't exist before that.

Jesus was born into this world but he existed before that. He came into this world and we would call his coming the incarnation. So that's the coming there.

and then he lives in this world and even as he lives he endures contradiction and deprivation. He isn't in the glory that he was in before.

He suffers even as he lives and then he suffers as he dies and of course that suffering he bears our sins as he does that.

[18:58] Then he is raised from the dead. That's the resurrection. resurrection. And then he ascends to heaven. So I put another arrow going even further upwards.

And then he's enthroned in heaven. Do you remember those references to David's kingdom and sitting at the right hand of God? There's a sort of throne involved with that.

And then he having seated at the right hand of God he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit which he pours out as enthroned king he pours out the Spirit to his church.

He gives the Spirit to his church. And he gives gifts the gifts in many ways people but he gives gifts to his church.

And then there is this time interval during which he reigns until all his enemies are put under his feet. And then he comes oh incidentally we're here.

[20:01] we're in this bit in the middle. And he finally comes in glory to make a new heaven and a new earth. So the question what happened after the resurrection well there's a sequence of things that happen.

After the resurrection he ascends, he's enthroned, he sits in heaven and he will come and make everything right and we're here in the middle before the coming has occurred.

So that was putting all the text together. Does that make sense? So let's think of the implications. So yes.

that arrow ought to be a bit over there a bit but still. Yeah. Carry on. Is that all right?

Yeah. So we're not at the second coming yet. I should have put the arrow over here. Is that okay? Anybody else want to ask anything? Quite open to the asked questions.

[21:06] Right. So seven implications. And these will refer back to those texts.

Number one. Jesus is publicly recognized by God as Lord and Christ. Let's look at the texts which say that. So in 224 it says you put him to death by nailing him to the cross but God raised him from the dead freeing him from the agony of death.

You put him to death but God raised him from the dead. 233 says that he is exalted to the right hand of God and 236 says therefore let all Israel be assured of this.

God has made this Jesus whom you crucified both Lord and Christ. So in there if I go back to that in this part of the diagram when Jesus suffers and is not recognized and is not honored but the resurrection and ascension and athronement overturn that and God says I want you publicly to understand that this Jesus is both Lord and Christ.

That is a hugely strong statement. Who is Lord? Well if you're a good Roman in those days you'd say Caesar is Lord but God has said no he isn't.

[22:54] Jesus is Lord. Who is Lord? Lord. Jesus is Lord. Who is the true Christ? Who is the Messiah?

Jesus is the true Christ. God has made this Jesus whom you crucified both Lord and Christ. Christ. And Ephesians 1 quotes that thought and says let me find it says he raised he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms far above all rule authority power and dominion and every title that can be given not only in the present age but also in the one to come and God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church which is his body the fullness of him who feels everything in every way.

So in Ephesians he's picking up on that Jesus has been placed he's been raised from the dead and placed at the right hand of the father everything is under his feet he rules it all for the church that is a hugely important statement who is Lord answer Jesus is Lord what does the resurrection and ascension enthronement say it says Jesus is Lord Lord so who is Lord of your stressful work answer Jesus is Lord of it who is Lord over the car that fails its MOT Jesus is Lord of that who is Lord when your washing machine springs a leak and sprays water all over the people in the flat underneath you Jesus is Lord over that who is

Lord over your health your stomach your back your head your brain who is Lord over all that Jesus is Lord over it who is Lord of the future who holds the future in his hand who knows the day of your death who knows how your health will pan out who knows what will happen to your children and your grandchildren Jesus does Jesus is Lord who is Lord of the French elections Jesus is Lord who is Lord of what Donald Trump will tweet next Jesus is Lord of it who is Lord over what goes on in the head of King John II King whatever you just said who is Lord Jesus is Lord who is Lord over the success of the gospel who sent the people out to be a witness to the ends of the earth

Jesus is Lord what does the resurrection and ascension and exaltation of Jesus say he is Lord I think that makes a huge difference doesn't it because our first reaction when the washing machine springs leak is to say this has all gone terribly wrong it's all out of control what am I going to do and we should actually first stop and think well none of this happens apart from the Lordship of Jesus he's not under my control I wasn't expecting the washing machine to break or whatever but Jesus has it all in his hands that's a very important first thing to understand isn't it okay second implication Jesus exalted by God as a sovereign saviour sovereign meaning all powerful would you like to look at Acts chapter 5 verses 29 to 31 Acts chapter 5 29 to 31 this is

[27:11] Peter recounting much the same sequence of events Acts 5 verse 29 Peter and the other apostles replied we must obey God rather than men the God of our fathers raised Jesus from the dead whom you had killed by hanging him on a tree God look exalted him to his own right hand remember that as prince and saviour that he might give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel we are witnesses of these things so is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey him but notice that bit he's exalted to God's right hand and then the aspect that he picks up on is he's a prince and a saviour okay he's in this place of power and rule but he's also a place of salvation you you killed him God raised him God exalted him to his right hand and put him there as a prince a king and a saviour a powerful place for a saviour to be to give he says repentance and forgiveness of sins to

Israel so just ponder that this place of power where Jesus now is this place of I think we say a place of omnipotence where he is the he his will cannot be thwarted there is no higher power than him all the other powers are underneath him and you might say I've sinned does anybody have enough authority to forgive my sins I suppose you could apply to the local magistrate and the magistrate would say well I'll give you a not guilty but this might be taken on appeal to a higher court and they might reverse that and you take it to the higher court and then they might reverse that or we might take it to a higher court but you know where does it all stop who has enough authority to say sins are forgiven that's it there's no appeal because this is the highest court this is the person who with whom the buck stops and the answer is

Jesus he's exalted to the right hand to be a prince and a saviour to give repentance and forgiveness it's brilliant isn't it if he gives it there's nobody else who can say hold on you didn't have the right to

do that if Jesus could do that he has authority to forgive my sins I think that's good I'm going to say the same thing sort of in a different way forgiveness is real and possible for everyone now my son can ride a bike on its back wheel he can go can you do that no it is possible but for most of us that is not a realistic possibility do you agree with that Rosemary you don't fancy riding a bike on its back wheel like my son it is it's it's possible but it's not realistic for most of us flying to America on the other hand which a hundred years ago people said that's totally impossible!

actually is not only possible but you could do that couldn't you? I don't think Tim could do that in his glider but anybody can go to America can't they?

Well assuming they get the correct permissions but physically speaking you can say we've saved up enough money I can probably do that it's real and possible now go back to Acts chapter 2 where these people who according to the preacher were responsible for the death of Jesus were saying what on earth can we do Acts chapter 2 verse 37 and Peter says repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit so let's take the forgiveness of sins first repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins and they would say really but you just told us that we're the one who crucified the Messiah we did and he says if you repent if you come to

[32:07] God in faith the very death of Jesus is the reason why you can be forgiven it is real and it's possible and you could say if it was possible for that crowd in Jerusalem who had actually murdered Jesus pretty much with their own hands then it would be possible for you and me you might be thinking well God can't forgive what I've done you don't you know God we look on the outside of one another and we don't see what goes on inside the heart and sometimes people sit and think well you don't know what I've done you don't know what I've thought you wouldn't if you really knew you wouldn't probably wouldn't talk to me but God sees the inside and if God could forgive those people he can forgive you isn't that brilliant forgiveness is real and possible if it was possible for them it's possible for anyone the new life of the spirit is real and possible for anyone he says repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of

Jesus for the forgiveness of sins and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off for all whom the Lord our God will call there's a promise involved in this new spiritual life and you might be thinking well a lot of these people in this church are very spiritually minded but I'm not and I don't think I could ever have the spiritual life that they have but God promises differently and those Israelites might have been saying we're the ones who killed Jesus I couldn't have this new spiritual life and Peter says the promise is for you and for your children and then the foreigners who are there say it wouldn't count for us because we're far off and the promises That's for you who are far off as well for everybody across the whole world whom the

Lord our God will call it is possible and real and possible for anyone to have real spiritual life was promised even to them and to us and it worked 3,000 people accepted his word and they accepted it very quickly now I don't necessarily think that it always works quickly I think sometimes people take quite a long time to get the point a friend in north of England husband was converted took seven years of coming to church just listening not getting it listening still not getting it listening being prayed for coming along seven years but in the end he got it so it doesn't always happen quickly but it does happen and he the condition is essentially faith now I know it says repent but it's faith is repentance repentance is faith put into action

I know it says be baptized and baptism is faith that is prepared to go public the essence of it is will you trust the promises of God are you sufficiently convinced by Jesus to trust him and then I put it the other way around without faith it is not possible to live the Christian life so you can't live the Christian life by being a Sunday school teacher that doesn't make you a Christian you have to have faith you have to put your trust you have to lean the whole weight of your life on Jesus you have to bow before him being Lord who is Lord Jesus is Lord number five

I think it was number five yeah number five we have a focus for our lives that is not part of this visible world let's take the Colossians and there's another right hand going on here Colossians three one where it says since you have been raised with Christ set your hearts on things above

where Christ is seated at the right hand of God set your minds on things above not on earthly things that's another right hand text isn't it and he says this is Christian people you've been linked with Christ resurrection now seek set your heart set your minds focus your life focus your thinking on things above where Christ is at the right hand of

[37:37] God those are the things to set our minds on I don't think that's particularly easy actually I think there's all sorts of mind setting messages that come to us through the radio and the TV and the internet which tells us to set our minds on very different things it's only God's word that says set your minds outside this world where Christ is at the right hand of God so I could ask you where do you set your mind where is the focal point that you calibrate your mind that's where I'm fixed and all the other things sort of are peripheral but that's the point that my mind well it could be yourself and the resurrection and ascension of Jesus says actually it's not all about you it's about him he's the exalted one the world revolves around him it doesn't revolve around you but then to be honest people can set their minds on money you don't have to earn a lot of money to be filled with the mentality of money you can be on national minimum wage and trying to get as many hours in as you possibly can and actually the focus of your life is money don't think it's just millionaires who are consumed with the prospect of money or study if you're a student

I hope you take your studies seriously but you will know as well as I do that there is a pressure to make the centre of your life instead of Christ the next exam what am I living for the next exam what am I living for to get the best grades what am I living for set your minds on Christ what have I set my heart on my leisure my hobby my house football bar there's all sorts of things in this world that can take the place that's the thing my mind is set on that's the thing I'm seeking and the ascension of Jesus says actually your mind should be set where Christ is at the right hand of God all sorts of good things we could set on the world of nature mountains photography social justice all sorts of good things but the

Bible says all these things only work properly if the first centre of attention is Jesus Christ that was number five we have a focus for our lives that is not part of this world number six the truth about this world is spiritual conflict so we've talked about a footstool for enemies death the king sits at the right hand of the Lord until his enemies are a footstool his people will be willing on the day of battle that means that we live in a world in which Christ is at work subduing his and our enemies that is a conflict situation and it reminds us that we live in a spiritually hostile environment now if you live in a very cold place like Siberia you know you can't step outside without a proper woolly hat and loads and loads of layers if you live in a very hot place you know that it is foolish to step out into the high street in

Colombo at midday without an umbrella over your head to ward off the sun we live in a spiritually hostile world Satan has snipers dirty tricks booby traps and we are in that situation we should be prepared for that means that we will have to endure suffering and frustration because that's what soldiers do whether they're in active service and protective clothing must be worn at all times what's the protective clothing the armour of God we don't step out into the world without our protective clothing without prayer and the word of God and all those things that it says in Ephesians 6 seventh I think this is the last one God is working until all his enemies are subdued so there is this time gap he's ascended he will come again he's ascended he's exalted until all his enemies are footstool for his feet there is this time gap

God is working until all his enemies are subdued and we'll see that we should work too there's a time consuming process we are not there yet we live in the in between time we don't live in the world of perfection we live in the world of imperfection if we want the world to be perfect we're going to be sorely sorely disappointed we live between his ascension and his coming back and Paul when he has dealt at length with this whole matter of the resurrection and the final consummation of all things and has said therefore thanks to God he gives us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord so he has that wonderful theology of resurrection and the return of Jesus and this is his next sentence therefore dear brothers stand firm let nothing move you always give yourselves fully to the work of the

[44:05] Lord because you know that your labor is not in the Lord is not in vain it's an interesting final point of application isn't it Christ is ascended he is coming back in the meantime!

Give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord because you know your labor in the Lord is not in vain God is working until his enemies are subdued and we should work too those seven points now I don't know whether I can flick back through them quickly you might like to see over lunch time how many of them you can remember I might like to see the same thing too number one Jesus is publicly recognized by God as Lord and Christ so who is Lord Jesus is Lord secondly Jesus is exalted by God as a sovereign savior he can give forgiveness and repentance third one forgiveness is real and possible for anyone fourthly the new life of the spirit is real and possible for anyone fifthly we have a focus that is not part of this visible world set our hearts where Christ is at the right hand of God sixthly we live in a time of spiritual conflict and seventhly God is working until all his enemies are subdued and we should be working too let's sing together we're going to sing number 482 do to to to to to!
to