

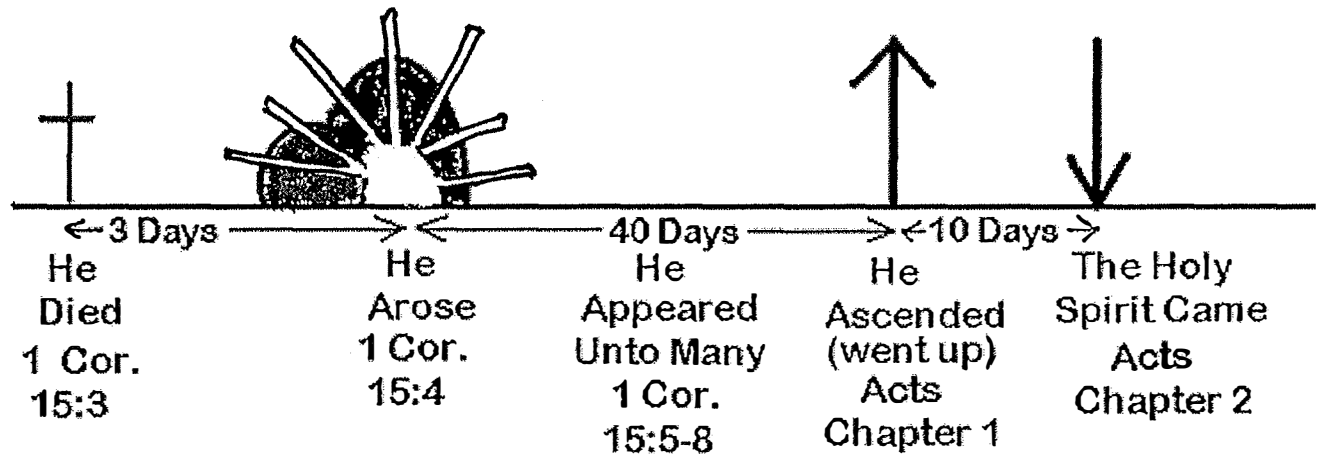
CHAPTER 13

Where Is He Now?

The Lord Jesus Christ arose! He lives! He Himself said, "I am He that _____ and was dead; and, behold, I am _____ for _____, Amen" (Revelation 1:18). He is forever alive! The Bible says, "He E L _____" (Hebrews 7:25), but **WHERE IS HE NOW?** We do not see Him in our world today. Why not? What happened? Where did He go? Where is He today? What is He doing?

In 1 Peter 3:22 we are told **where** the Lord Jesus went: "who (Jesus Christ) is _____ into _____, and is on the _____ of God, angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him." According to this verse, where is He today? _____

We have already studied the **death** and **resurrection** of the Lord Jesus Christ. The following time chart shows some of the important events that took place in those days:

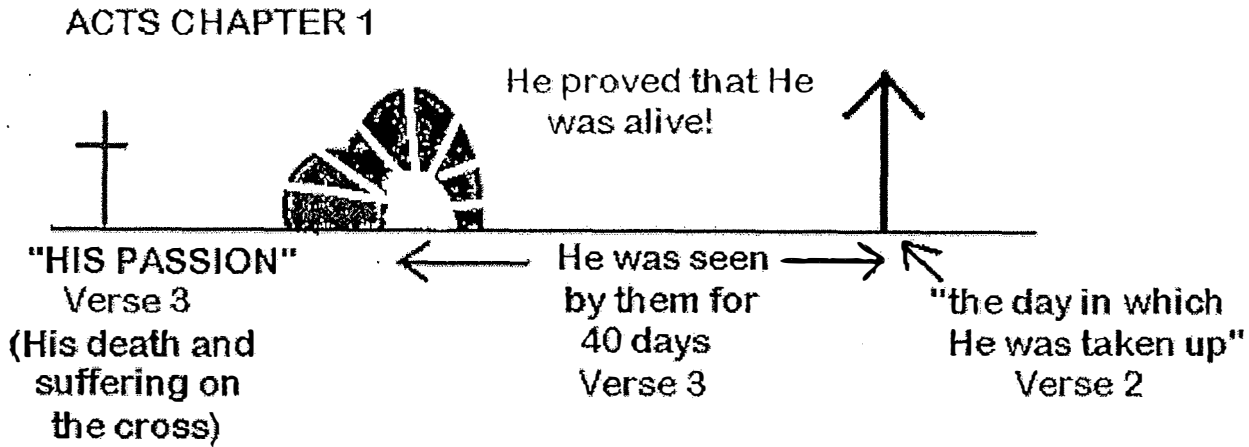


In Acts chapter 1 we see that the Lord **ASCENDED** (went up) and in Acts chapter 2 we see that the Holy Spirit **DESCENDED** (came down). Note: Both of these words can be found in Romans 10:6-7 and in Ephesians 4:9-10. Sometimes we talk about our Lord's **ascension**, which means His going up or His returning to heaven.

Why Did the Lord Linger for 40 Days?

After the resurrection why didn't the Lord return to heaven immediately? Why did He wait 40 days? What did He do during these 40 days?

The passage in the Bible which tells us about these 40 days is Acts 1:2-3. To help you understand these verses, here is a chart:



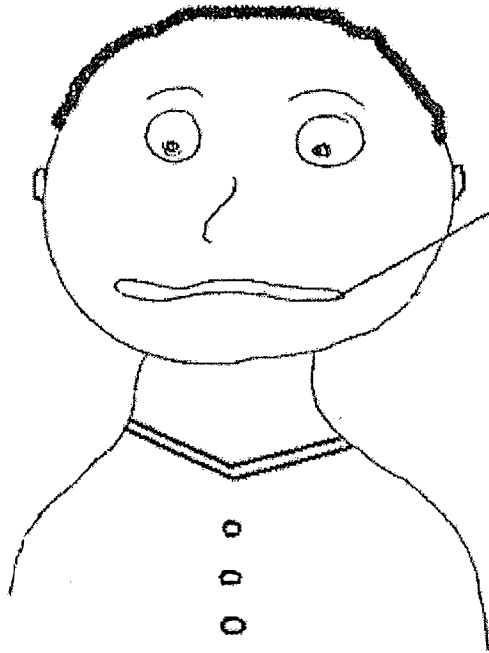
During this forty-day period the Lord Jesus convinced the disciples and others that He was really alive! Did you know that after the resurrection there were many people (including the disciples) who **doubted** and who were not convinced that Jesus was alive? Thomas was not the only one who did not believe. There were others. In fact, all four of the gospels tell us about certain ones who did not believe or who doubted. In the following passages, see if you can find the verses which tell us about those who doubted or disbelieved the resurrection:

1. Matthew 28:16-18
Verse(s) showing doubt or disbelief: _____
2. Mark 16:9-14
Verse(s) showing doubt or disbelief: _____
3. Luke 24:6-12,18-27
Verse(s) showing doubt or disbelief: _____
4. John 20:24-29
Verse(s) showing doubt or disbelief: _____

Consider this last passage in John. Did "doubting Thomas" become "convinced Thomas"?
 _____ Why? What caused him to be convinced that Jesus was alive?
 _____ There were others who needed to be convinced just like Thomas.

When the apostles (disciples) went forth to preach after the Holy Spirit came, what message of good news did they boldly proclaim? (See Acts 4:2 and see also Acts 2:24,32; 3:15,26; 4:10; etc.) _____

These men needed to **know for sure** that their Saviour and Lord was **alive**. Otherwise they would go forth to preach with a very uncertain message:



"I have good news for you, I hope. Jesus Christ is alive..... at least I think He is but I'm not really sure. I think He rose again from the dead but I may be mistaken. I would like to believe that He is alive and perhaps you would like to believe this too."

The disciples and others were **eyewitnesses** of the resurrection. They saw the risen Lord with their very own eyes, and they were convinced that He was alive. During this forty-day period the Lord appeared to certain people at different times and in different ways to **prove** that He was alive. At the end of these 40 days there were no more doubters among these people. **They were convinced!**

Peek-a-boo

What did the Lord do during these 40 days? Did He spend all of these days with the disciples? Was He with them every minute of every day? Did they always know where He was?

Most of the time Jesus was not with the disciples. During these 40 days He was absent more than He was present. During this period of time He appeared to them at different times and in different places. Sometimes He appeared to many; sometimes He appeared to few. Sometimes He appeared to them in the early morning, sometimes in broad daylight and sometimes in the evening. Sometimes He appeared to them in Judaea; He also appeared to them in Galilee (see your Bible maps). The appearances never lasted very long, but long enough so that those who saw Him knew for sure that He was alive.

Why did the Lord do this? What was He trying to teach His disciples?

Did you ever play "peek-a-boo" with your little baby brother or sister? This is a favorite game that parents like to play with little ones, and it teaches the child something that is very important. The baby is learning that the person is still there *even though the person can't be seen*. For example, Daddy can't be seen at all, then all of a sudden Daddy's big face appears and he says, "PEEKABOO!" The baby smiles and laughs and begins to learn that Daddy was really there all the time.

For a period of 40 days the Lord Jesus was teaching His disciples through His appearances and disappearances. He would appear and then disappear. They would see Him, but then He would

be gone! One time it says that "He _____ out of their _____" (Luke 24:31). They would see Him on different occasions, but usually they did not see Him.

Please supply the correct verses for the following:

One time Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene (see John 20).

One time He appeared to the disciples when Thomas was absent (see John 20).

One time He appeared to the disciples with Thomas present (see John 20).

One time He appeared to two other disciples as they were walking (see Luke 24).

One time He appeared to seven disciples by the Sea of Tiberias (the Sea of Galilee) -- (see John 21) _____

One time He appeared to more than 500 people at one time (see 1 Corinthians 15).

One time He appeared to Saul of Tarsus (Paul) -- (see Acts 9) _____

Most of the time they did not see the Lord. He was out of sight more than He was in sight. Why? He wanted to teach them that He was with them even though they could not see Him! This was a very important lesson for them to learn. Soon the 40 days would be over and the Lord Jesus would leave His disciples and return to heaven. Would He really be leaving them? What promise did the Lord give to them as found in Matthew 28:20? "Lo, I am _____, even unto the end of the world (age)." He would be at the right hand of God in heaven (1 Pet. 3:22) but He would also be present with His disciples. How can He be both there and here at the same time? He can do this *because He is God!* According to Mark 16:19, where is the Lord Jesus?

_____ But in the very next verse (Mark 16:20) we learn that the Lord Jesus was **working with** His disciples **on earth!** He was present and active, though **unseen**.

Can you see the Lord Jesus Christ today? Is He with you even though you cannot see Him? When is He with you? How do you know this for sure? (see Hebrews 13:5 and compare Psalm 23:4)? _____ Why is He with you? For how long will He be with you?

Special Commands are Given

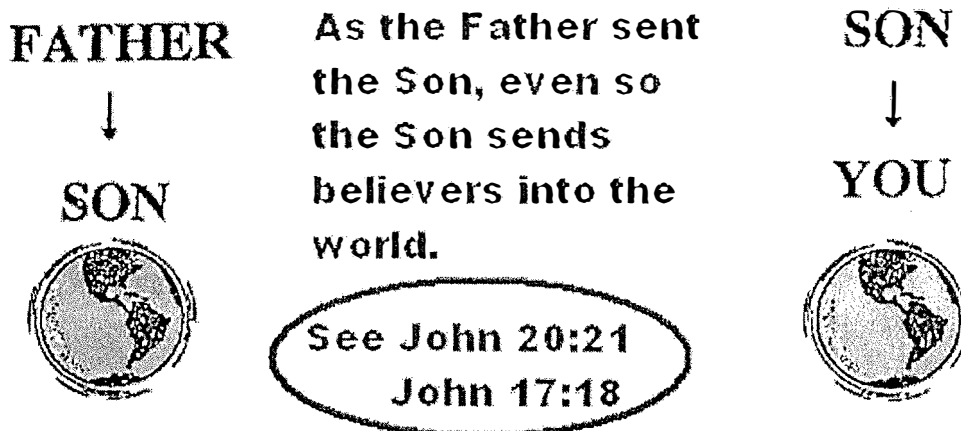
Another reason for this forty-day period is seen in Acts 1:2-3. We are told that the Lord Jesus "had given C _____ unto the apostles whom He had chosen." When did He give these commandments? Acts 1:2 tells us that these commandments were given before He was taken up into heaven. Acts 1:3 tells us that these commandments were

given after His passion (His death on the cross) and after His resurrection.

Thus these commands were given during the forty-day period between the resurrection and the ascension. The Lord Jesus wanted to show that He was alive (Acts 1:3) and He wanted to show His apostles what He wanted them to do. He gave them their **orders**, their **commands**, their **instructions**.

People often remember the last words that a person says. The disciples did not forget the last words that Jesus gave to them before He returned to heaven, His final instructions and commands. Today we call these commands the **Great Commission**.

The word "**apostles**" (see Acts 1:2) means "**sent ones**." They were sent by Jesus Christ. The Father had sent Christ into the world and Christ sent His disciples into the world:



Why were the disciples sent? What were they to do? What commands were they given? What was their job to be? If you are a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, what are you to be doing in this world?

The answer is found in Mark 16:15. Let us first think about what this verse **does not** say:

Go ye into all the world and tell people to love their neighbors and do good to other people.

Go ye into all the world and preach the Ten Commandments and tell people to obey these laws.

Go ye into all the world and feed the hungry, build houses for the poor and build hospitals for the sick.

Go ye into all the world and try to change the world and make it a better place to live.

What does Mark 16:15 actually say?

"Go ye into all the world and

The word "**gospel**" means "good news, glad tidings." What is the good news that Christ's disciples are to preach (see 1 Cor.15:1-4)?

The good news is all about Jesus Christ and what He did. If you take away Jesus Christ then you have no good news and no gospel.

Why is the death of Christ on the cross good news (see 1 Cor. 15:3)? What is so good about His death? What good things has His death done for you? Are you thankful that He died? Why? How do 1 Peter 3:18 and 2 Corinthians 5:21 help in understanding the death of Christ and what this accomplished for the believer? If Christ had not died, why would this be bad news?

Why is the resurrection of Christ from the dead good news (see 1 Cor. 15:14)? Why is His resurrection important to you? Are you thankful that He lives? Why? If Christ had not risen from the dead, why would this have been bad news (see 1 Cor. 15:13-19)?

Is it important to believe that Jesus Christ rose again from the dead (Romans 10:9-10)? _____

Do you know people that need to hear the gospel? Do you have friends that need to hear the gospel and need to believe the gospel? God wants to use you to share the good news with others.

The Ascension

The "going up" of the Lord Jesus into heaven is described in Acts 1:9-11. Who were these two men dressed in white? _____ These men helped the disciples to understand what was happening. Did the Lord Jesus go away permanently (so as to never come back) or is He someday going to return? _____ He **went up**, and some day He is going to **come down!** He'll be gone, but He will return! He left, but He's coming back! This world has not seen the last of the Lord Jesus Christ. This world will someday see Him again. His first coming is **history**. He already came. His second coming is **prophecy**. It has not yet happened, but God said that it will happen, so we know it surely will. **He will come again.**

See John 14:3. The Lord Jesus said: "**I go...I will come again.**" Where did He go (John 14:2)?

What is He doing there (John 14:2)?

_____ Why will He come again (John 14:3)? _____ Those who are truly believers (verse 1) have a wonderful heavenly expectation (verse 3).

While the Lord Jesus is absent from the earth, whom does He send to be with the believers and to be **in** the believers? (See John 14:16-18; 15:26; 16:5-11.)

The Lord Jesus left but the Spirit of God came. Where the Spirit of God is, there is Jesus also

(Romans 8:9). If the Spirit is with us then Christ is with us, and this is exactly what our Lord said (Matthew 28:20). *Even though we cannot see Him, He is with us!*

Can People See the Lord Jesus Today?

There are some people today who claim that they have seen Jesus or that Jesus has appeared unto them. Does the Lord Jesus really appear to people today? And if He does, why does He appear to some and not to others?

According to the Bible, should we expect to see the Lord Jesus today? In John 16:10 the Lord made a clear statement about His present day visibility: "I go to my _____ and ye _____ me N _____ M _____." According to these words, if the Lord Jesus has gone to His Father, should we expect to see Him? _____

The Lord Jesus appeared to men for a period of 40 days, as we have already studied. He then returned to His Heavenly Father. The time of His appearances is over. He is not appearing to men on earth today. He is not making Himself visible to men on earth today. People may say that they have seen Christ but this does not mean that they really have. We need to go by what the Bible says, no matter what people may think they have seen or experienced.

Today how should believers live--by faith or by sight (2 Cor. 5:7)? _____ Thomas walked by sight and believed because he saw with his eyes (John 20:24-29). In John 20:29 the Lord said, "Blessed are they that have _____ seen, and yet have _____." Are you convinced that Jesus Christ is **living** today? How can you be so sure? Have you ever seen Him?

I know so because God said so! We can be sure, not because we have seen, but because we have believed what God has said. God's Word is **sure** and we need to "**Amen!**" what God has said. If the Bible says that **He is alive today**, does that settle it for you? If you refuse to believe until you see the Lord, then you may wait a long time! And when you do see Him, it will be too late to believe! Why?

Consider 1 Peter 1:8 which tells us the relationship that believers now have to their Lord who is in heaven. Do we see Him? _____ Do we love Him? _____ Do we believe? _____ Do we rejoice? _____ In 1 Peter 1:7 we are reminded that someday **we will see Him** because He will **appear!** The Lord will not stay in heaven forever! He will return! Will all the believers see Him then (1 John 3:2; Titus 2:13)? _____ Indeed, when Christ returns to this earth as King, the Bible says that "every _____ shall _____ Him" (Revelation 1:7). No one will doubt whether He is alive then.

How Long Will He Be Gone?

How long will the Lord Jesus be gone from this earth? How long will it be until He returns? The disciples asked a similar question in Acts 1:6 and the answer is found in verse 7: "It is _____ for you to know the _____ or the _____ which the Father hath put in His own power."

There are some things that God has not told us (see Matthew 24:36,42). God wants us to be ready for His Son whenever He should come. If God were to tell us that His Son would return in

ten years, then we would probably not get ready for His return until the last minute! God does not want us to "**get ready**." He wants us to "**be ready**" at all times! We need to look for and long for and love His appearing whenever it might be (2 Timothy 4:8).

The story is told about a certain man who visited a small one-room country school. He made the promise that he would give a prize to the student whose desk was found in the very best order when he came back. He gave no indication, not even a hint, when it would be. He had just left the room when one of the students announced that she meant to win the prize. She was a girl whose desk was usually a mess. Her schoolmates laughed at her saying, "Why Mary, your desk is always out of order. It's never clean." "But, starting right now," Mary responded, "I'm going to clean it every Monday morning." "But, supposing our visitor comes at the **end** of the week?" someone asked. "Well then," Mary said, "I'll clean it up every morning." "But, what if he comes at the end of the day?" Then her face lit up and she said, "I know what I'll do. I'll just keep it clean **all the time!**"

The Lord Jesus Christ may come at any time. Therefore we must keep our lives clean and pure for Him **all the time!** Are you ready **right now** for His return?

FROM ONE WHO KNEW HIM WELL

