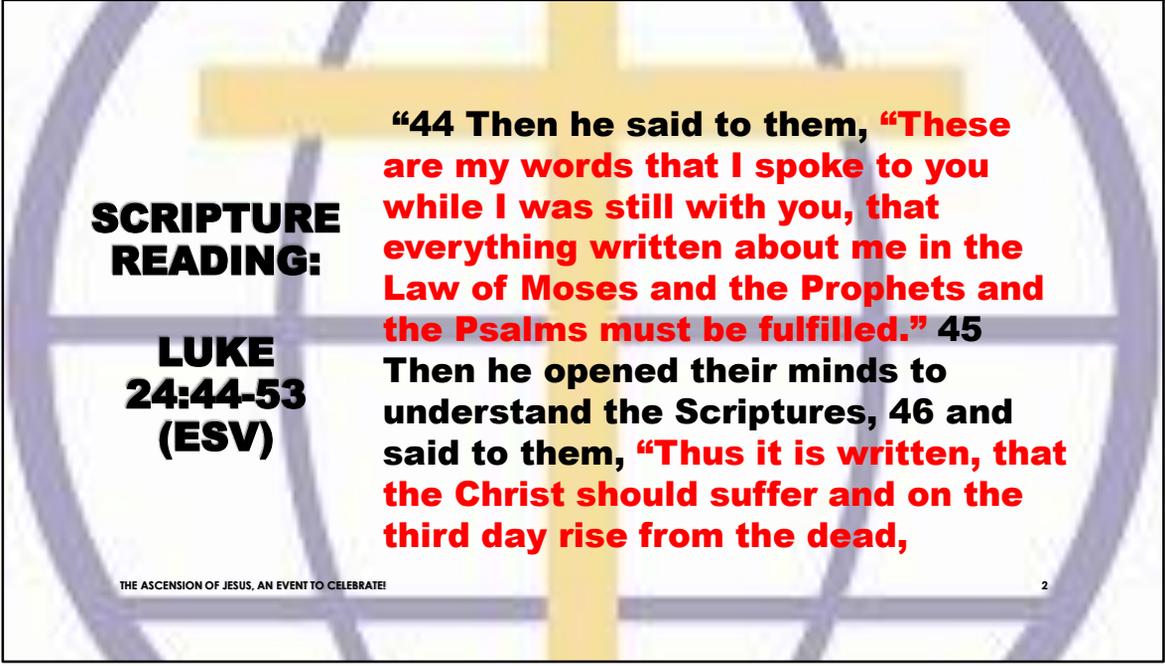


THE ASCENSION OF JESUS, AN EVENT TO CELEBRATE!

**Grace Communion International
Minister: Eric Vautour**

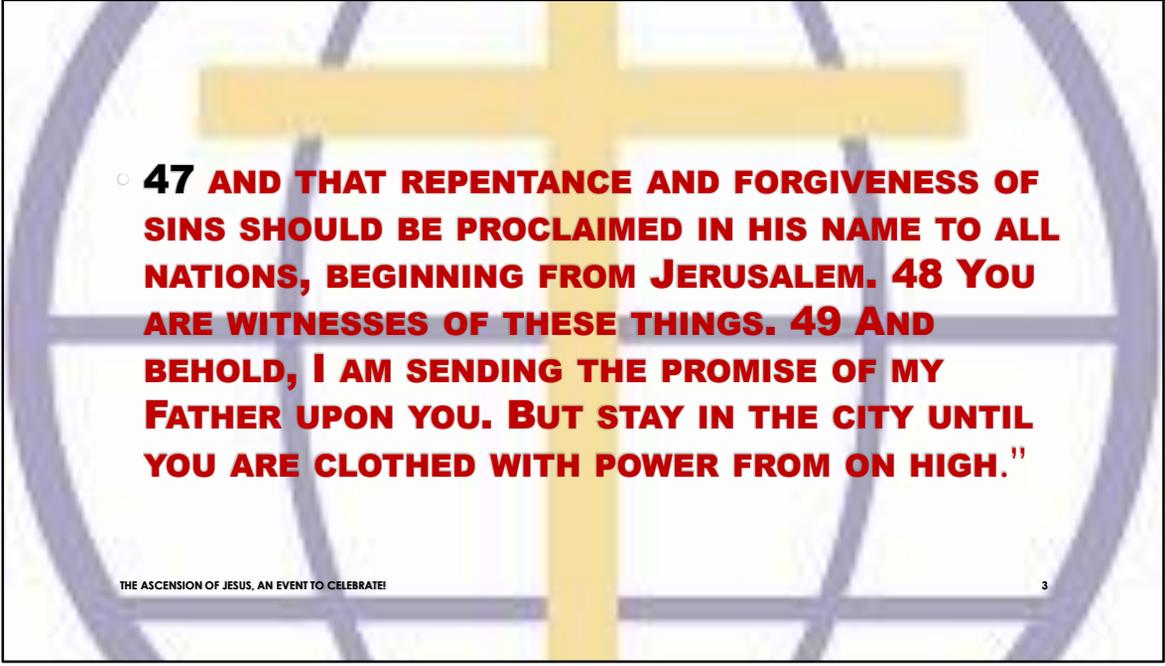
Date: June 2, 2019

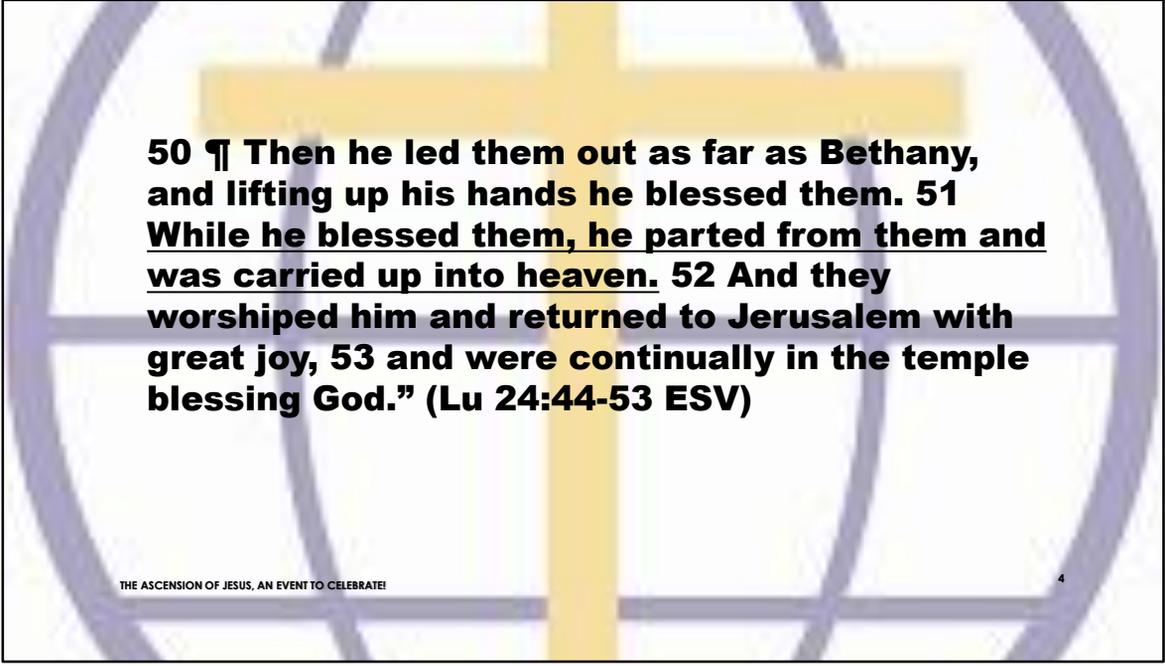


**SCRIPTURE
READING:**

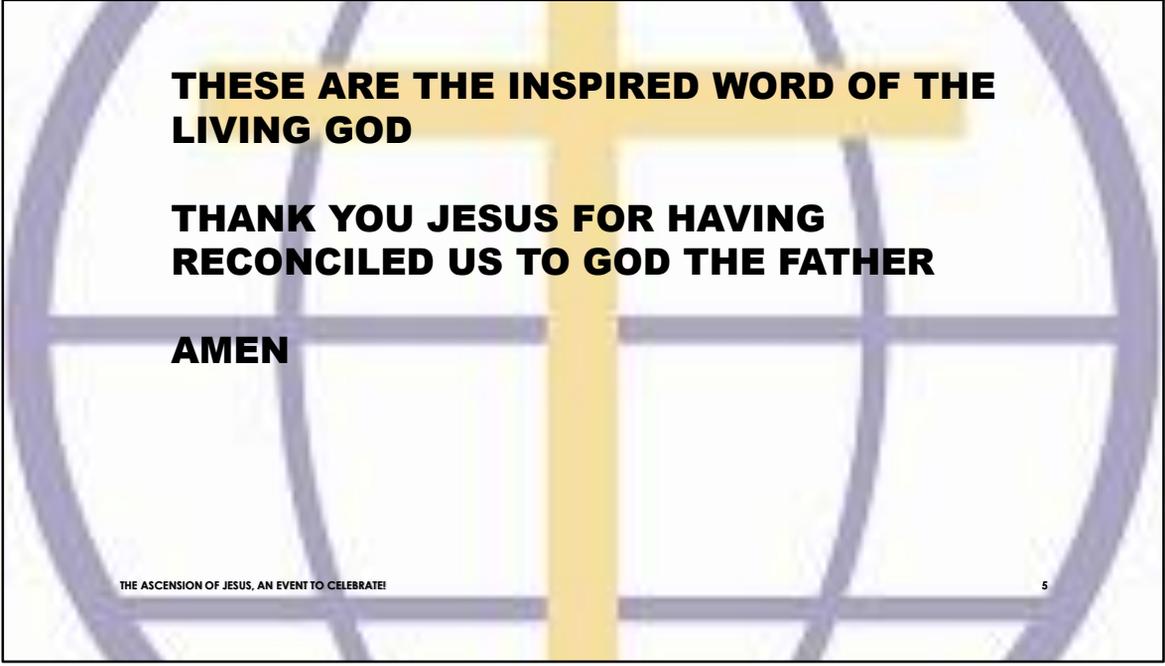
**LUKE
24:44-53
(ESV)**

“44 Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” 45 Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, 46 and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead,

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- **47 AND THAT REPENTANCE AND FORGIVENESS OF SINS SHOULD BE PROCLAIMED IN HIS NAME TO ALL NATIONS, BEGINNING FROM JERUSALEM. 48 YOU ARE WITNESSES OF THESE THINGS. 49 AND BEHOLD, I AM SENDING THE PROMISE OF MY FATHER UPON YOU. BUT STAY IN THE CITY UNTIL YOU ARE CLOTHED WITH POWER FROM ON HIGH."**



50 ¶ Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them. 51 While he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven. 52 And they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, 53 and were continually in the temple blessing God.” (Lu 24:44-53 ESV)



**THESE ARE THE INSPIRED WORD OF THE
LIVING GOD**

**THANK YOU JESUS FOR HAVING
RECONCILED US TO GOD THE FATHER**

AMEN

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5

Today, we are celebrating the ascension of Jesus Christ at the right hand of God the Father. During today's sermon, we are going to consider what the ascension of Christ where the Father dwells means for humanity and for us. During a short sermon, we can only capture a little. God loves us so much. I hope that during this sermon, knowing his greatness and love for us, we will love Jesus more and more. I hope that this love will prompt us more and more to walk in the joy of the Holy Spirit and in the will of God.

The apostle Paul is very emphatic that if Christ is not been raised, then his preaching was in vain and our faith is in vain. If Christ is not been raised from the dead then the dead will not be raised either. If Christ has not been raised, our faith is futile and we are still in our sin. Consequently, those who have fallen asleep in Christ are we have died in Christ have perished. Christ is our hope because if we have hope only in this life we are most to be pitied. (See 1 Corinthians 15:14-19)

(Next slide)



“19 We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain, 20 where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.” (Heb 6:19-20 ESV)

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If Christ has not ascended to the heavenly throne as a man, in the fullness of humanity, then we have no anchor within the veil or at the throne of God. If he has not ascended to heaven in full humanity then there would be no hope for men and women who are flesh and blood.

If in the presentation of the gospel, we dehumanize Christ, then we have no gospel at all.

It is important to understand that Jesus is fully God and fully man in his one nature.

The early church fathers ***“have always claimed that the eternal Logos did enter space and time, not merely as Creator but as himself made creature, within the creaturely limits of space and time, and he did not cease to be what he was eternally in himself, the creator Word in whom all things consist and by whom all things derive and continue to have their being”.***

(ATONEMENT: The Person and Work of Christ edited by Robert T. Walker page 282).

This is very important to understand that Jesus when he came to the earth completely assumed our fallen human nature. He judged it and cleansed it at the cross. This becomes real for us when God reveals himself to us and we accept in faith that we are reconciled to him. Now, this is all of God's doing. We bring nothing to the cross. We offer ourselves as living sacrifices (Romans 12) as the hymn **Rock of Ages** says so well in verse 3:

3. Nothing in my hand I bring,
simply to the cross I cling;
naked, come to thee for dress;
helpless, look to thee for grace;
foul, I to the fountain fly;
wash me, Savior, or I die.

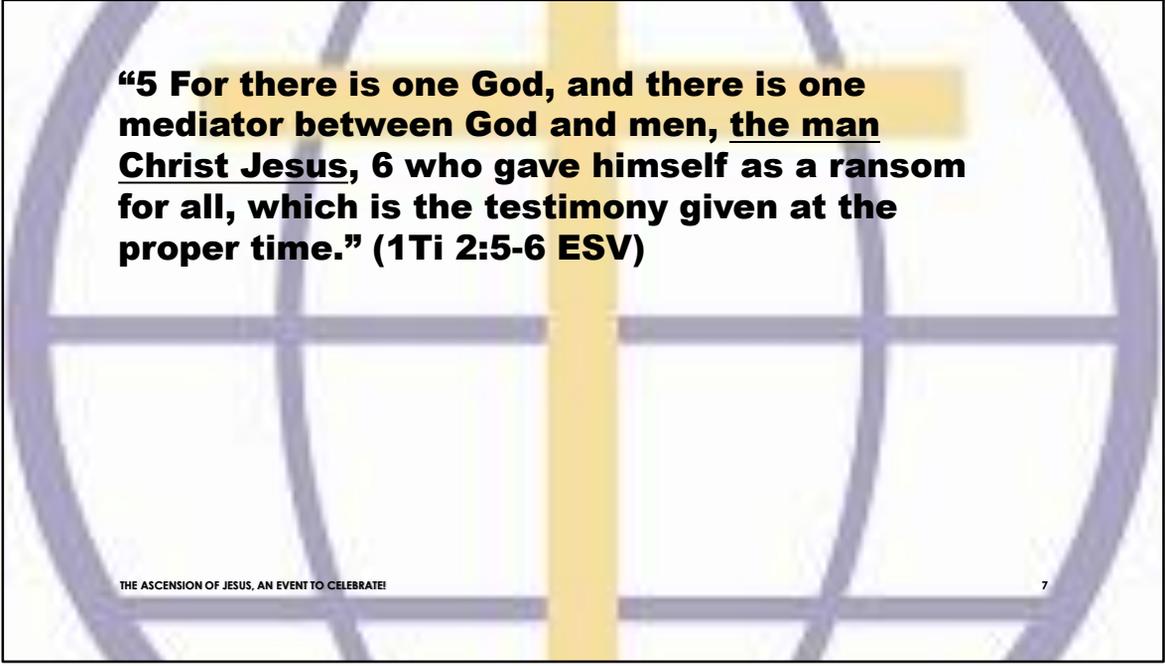
The resurrected Jesus is exactly how man is meant to be without being tainted by sin at all.

Jesus came to our physical world. Being man without ceasing to be God, Jesus entered our physical world in space and time. Jesus is the temple of God on earth. **When Jesus came to the earth, he was the point where humanity met with God.** Jesus was the place where heaven and earth met. As a man, he represented all of mankind because being a man without stopping being God. He is our Creator.

Jesus ascending to heaven is the reverse of the incarnation. **"As in the incarnation we have to think of God the Son becoming man without ceasing to be transcended God, so in his ascension we have to think of Christ as ascending above all space and time without ceasing to be man or without any diminishment of his physical historical existence." (Idem page 287).**

We have to remember that when we think of God we have to bring our minds outside space and time if you will. God is the Creator of space and time. Consequently, he lives outside space and time although in Jesus, he has entered in space and time as a man. **"7 but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. 9 Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Php 2:7-11 ESV)**

Jesus has ascended to heaven where God is. God has eternally existed in his triune relationship of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.



“5 For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, 6 who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time.” (1Ti 2:5-6 ESV)

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What is the role of Jesus as our mediator? What is his role now that he is in heaven as God and as man in his person? Remember, when we say God, we say Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one God in 3 persons.

1 – Christ the King

- **“5 And one of the elders said to me, “Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.” 6 ¶ And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.” (Re 5:5-6 ESV)**

1 – When Christ ascended to heaven, he was enthroned at the right hand of the Father. Now we don't physically see Christ being King and ruler of the universe. His reign is veiled from our eyes. He directs all things from the mercy seat of God.

In the book of Revelation, we see Jesus as the lion of the tribe of Judah. The Apocalypse or the book of Revelation which is an unveiling by Jesus Christ to the apostle John, was given the view of the throne of God. He saw and heard Jesus, the lion of the tribe of Judah was worthy to open the scroll. What he saw was Jesus as the Lamb standing as though it had been slain. (See next bullet—Rev. 5.5-6.)

Even in the ascension, and the power of Jesus is exercised through his sacrifice in which he has taken away our guilt. He mediates this through his eternal priesthood.

In Jesus, all humanity has been gathered in his sacrifice, his death, his resurrection and his ascension. This is superlatively encouraging for everyone. **Jesus is the head of the new humanity.** He is the Prince of the new creation. It has to be new creation because when Jesus died, the apostle Paul tells us that we all died. The resurrection of Jesus is a completely new life. **Because the man Jesus has a new life, we also have a new life which becomes actualize through faith in him.**

2 – Christ Is Apostle and Priest

- **“For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.” (Ho 6:6 ESV)**
- **“2 looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.” (Heb 12:1 ESV)**
- **“a minister in the holy places, in the true tent that the Lord set up, not man.” (Heb 8:2 ESV)**
- **“26 ¶ Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. 27 And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.” (Ro 8:26-27 ESV)**

When God instituted Aaron as a priest, he was called to witness and to obedience to the word of God. When Jesus came to the earth, the priests at that time had overstepped their boundaries. The priestly function was to proclaim the word of God and to be subordinate to it. The religious leadership at the time was failing in both instances.

The Old Testament prophets corrected the priests and prophets calling them to obedience and not sacrifice. (See **Bullet of Hosea 6:6**).

When on earth, Jesus corrected the religious leaders for elevating themselves above God’s instructions and their submission to the inspired word of God. Jesus criticized their hardened hearts and their man-made traditions with the kingdom of God who had come near, Jesus himself. He showed them the importance of forgiveness. He healed people. **He brought forth the liturgy of praise and thanksgiving from despised sinners and little children.** He put to shame the arrogant and blind attitude of the religious leaders.

When Jesus came to the earth. He lived as a man, being a man without ceasing to be God. However, he lived the full human experience in our flesh with the same pulls of

the flesh without ever giving in to it but submitting totally to the will of the Father for us. He was the perfect response of man to the word and will of God as he offered himself both in life and in death.

As the book of Hebrews tells us, Jesus, and his ascension, is the perfect high priest. He is both the high priest and the sacrifice. He took away our sins. In taking away our sins, he removes and cleanses our guilt. As our eternal high priest, he represents and brings us in the presence of God the Father. Being the perfect sacrifice, being sinless, he offered himself once for all for all of us. This is why we are to look to Jesus always. (See bullet Hebrews 12:2)

As high priest, Jesus is not only the high priest but he is also a minister. In the original language this word means, "**leitourgos: a public servant, a minister, a servant**—Strong's Concordance). In the New Testament, **it points to serving God in His sublime 'otherness' and sharing this with others. (Hub Bible).** Jesus is the perfect human high priest, perfect minister on our behalf. He continues to serve us beautifully and faithfully. He is alive and well!

Christ is therefore the leader of the heavenly worship and CEO, as it were, of the kingdom of heaven. His sacrifice was taken eternally in the life of the eternal God. He continually intervenes for us in this powerful perfect role.

Because Jesus lived as one of us, he has united himself to us and called us his brothers. This is a tremendous honour to have such a high priest standing before the throne of God for all of us. What an honour to be called his brothers! How dearly he considers us!

Because Jesus has united himself to us in his humanity and because he is our perfect high priest, representative, and worship leader if you will, we can approach the throne of God with assurance because we know that in him we have been judged cleansed and purified. In him, our prayers are perfectly accepted.. (**See bullet Hebrews 8:2**)

I often hear that we do not know how to pray. The following verse (**see bullet Romans 8:26**) for encouragement.

We pray through Jesus. **'Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name.'** (Heb 13:15 ESV)

Jesus is the leader of our worship. Everything goes through him to the Father because he is our perfect representative. Consequently, he intercedes for us continually as the mediator, the man Jesus at the Father's throne.

Being God, he also receives our prayers. Because Jesus has attached himself to us in a self-giving and loving way, we are secure in him beyond what we can ever understand in this present life. We accept and know this to be true in faith.

Jesus is the eternal self-sacrifice on our behalf! This does not mean that he sacrifices himself continually. **It simply means that his sacrifice on the cross is eternally effective for us in the Trinitarian and loving relationship of the one God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit**, one God in three distinct persons who indwell one another in a perfect relationship of self-giving and outgoing love.

Because he is a high priest, and because he has identified himself with us completely, he lives in us and we live in him. Because he is a member of the one God, the whole God lives in us and we live in the whole God in our humanity as we abide in him.

3 – Christ the Prophet

“Therefore, holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, *the apostle and high priest of our confession*,” (Heb 3:1 ESV)

“19 ¶ So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. 20 And they went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by accompanying signs.” (Mr 16:19-20 ¹⁰ ESV)

From the biblical point of view, we know that a prophecy is a message inspired by God. Prophecy is a divine revelation. **“20 knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone’s own interpretation. 21 For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.” (2Pe 1:20-21 ESV).**

The book of Hebrews tells us that in these last days, God has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the world.

A prophecy is a **message inspired by God**, a divine revelation. The Bible says that prophets **“spoke from God as they were moved by Holy Spirit.” (2 Peter 1:20, 21)** So a prophet is one who receives God’s message and transmits it to others.—**Acts 3:18.**

Jesus came into the world to reveal the Father and to draw us to himself. He tells us to repent. In his prophetic role, he is also an apostle.(See bullet Hebrews 3:1).

When Jesus came to the earth, he not only came to reveal the Father but he also revealed who he is.

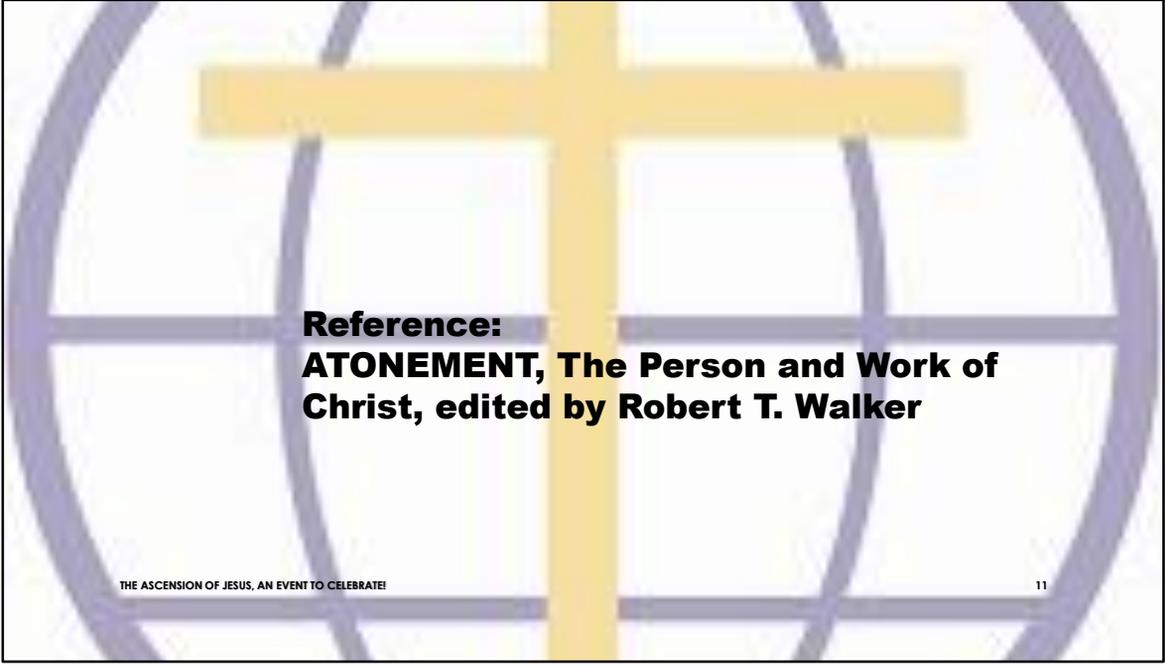
Christ ascended then, as the Word made flesh, as he who is both word from God to humanity and word from humanity to God. He is God's own Word translated into human form in reality and returning back to the Father as answering word in perfect fulfilment of his will. It is in that identity of Word of God and word of man that Christ's prophetic ministry is fulfilled. (Idem page 277).

The church is called to proclaim Christ. The church, being given the Holy Spirit, continues Christ ministry on earth by proclaiming the word of God. The church is to preach the very same message that Christ preached because we are his body Christ on earth. (See bullet Mark 16:19-20)

Let us thank God. Let us offer a sacrifice of praise for having a Savior who accepted to go to such lengths to reconcile us to God in his person. Let us thank him that He is on His throne and that we are with him. **“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,” (Eph 1:3 ESV)**

“and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,” (Eph 2:6 ESV).

(PS – Next week we will be celebrating Pentecost – when God the Holy Spirit was sent forth to the earth from the Father through the Son!)



Reference:
**ATONEMENT, The Person and Work of
Christ, edited by Robert T. Walker**