Question: “What is Jesus doing for the church today?” In other words, “What is Jesus’ Ministry during the church age?”

Many people seem to be under the impression that Jesus is sitting back on a cloud somewhere soaking up some rays and drinking pina coladas while waiting for Gabriel to blow his horn. Nothing could be further from the truth. He is very busy right now. Knowing what He is doing for you and me and His “bride,” the church will help us to live more effectively for Him in the here and now.

**Focus on the Ascension:**

After Christ’s resurrection, he interacted with the disciples for about 40 days. He suddenly appeared in rooms with locked doors and then left. He appeared to two men on the road to Emmaus and then vanished without a word. He appeared to the disciples on the shores of Galilee. He appeared to more than 500 believers at once. See 1 Corinthians chapter 15 for a good discussion of these appearances. However, in Acts chapter 1 when Jesus ascended, there was something different about His departure that day. The disciples could watch Him physically leave their presence until He was out of sight. He seemed to be saying “goodbye.” The angel said that he would eventually come again. There seemed to be something that said this would be the end of that period of interaction with Him. We want to focus on Acts 1:6-12, the passage that discusses Jesus’ ascension, and then look at a number of different passages that discuss His current ministry roles.

6 So when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, “Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?” 7 He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; 8 but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”

9 And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. 10 And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was going, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them. 11 They also said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven.”

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

**The Place** Acts 1:12, The Mount of Olives about ½ mile from Jerusalem. It overlooks Jerusalem with a breathtaking view of the city.

Question: Is there anything significant about the place of Jesus’ Ascension?

**The People** Acts 1:11 “men of Galilee” All of the 12 disciples were from Galilee except for one, Judas Iscariot. He was from Judea. Only loving and loyal eyes saw Him.

**The Procedure** Acts 1:9 “lifted up” In Acts 27:40 this word is used of hoisting a sail. It seems to have been gradual, visible, bodily, and He was received into a cloud.

Question: Is there anything significantly different about the way that Jesus left this time in comparison with the way He left his disciples before?

**The Prediction** Was the Ascension predicted? Going back to the Father was very important to Christ. He mentioned it several times. It is also mentioned in the Old Testament and the New Testament.

Psalm 110:1

A PSALM OF DAVID.

1 The LORD says to my Lord: 
   “Sit at My right hand 
   Until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.”

John 7:33 32 The Pharisees heard the crowd muttering these things about Him, and the chief priests and the Pharisees sent officers to seize Him. 33 Therefore Jesus said, “For a little while longer I am with you, then I go to Him who sent Me. 34 You will seek Me, and will not find Me; and where I am, you cannot come.” 35 The Jews then said to one another, “Where does this man intend to go that we will not find Him? He is not intending to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks, is He? 36 What is this statement that He said, ‘You will seek Me, and will not find Me; and where I am, you cannot come’?”

John 16:28 28 “I came forth from the Father and have come into the world; I am leaving the world again and going to the Father.”

The ascension was important to Jesus because it marked the end of His earthly ministry and the beginning of His present work. It also marked the end of His self-limitation, “kenosis.” (see Philippians 2:5-11)

John 17:5 5 Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.
10 Reasons for the Ascension, or “What is Jesus doing right now?”

#1 He assumed His rightful position of honor. Hebrews 1:3

#2 He assumed His position as Lord of Creation. Ephesians 1:22, 1 Peter 3:22

#3 He assumed His position as Head of the Church. Colossians 1:18, Ephesians 5:23

#4 He sent the Holy Spirit to His Church. Acts 2:33 (Pentecost), John 16:7

#5 He is preparing a place for His Church. John 14:2

#6 He is preparing the Church for Heaven. Ephesians 5:25-27

“Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people.” A. C. Gaebelien

#7 He is a “forerunner” of all who believe. 1 Corinthians 15:23

#8 He receives genuine believers into glory. Acts 7:56, 59

“I won’t have to cross Jordan alone.”

Psalm 23 “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for thou art with me.”

#9 He serves as our High Priest. Hebrews 4:15-16, Romans 8:34, (cf. Jesus’ prayer in John 17), Hebrews 7:25

Name some of the benefits of having Jesus as your High Priest.

- When you are tempted
- When you are tired
- When you are ready to quit
- When you are depressed and discouraged
- When you are suffering
- When there is disharmony at home
- When you are witnessing for Christ

#10 He is the believer’s Advocate. 1 John 2:1-2

An advocate is a defense attorney. Someone who defends you when you have been accused. Satan is the “accuser” (Revelation 12).
The Promise of Jesus’ Future Return

Acts 1:10-11 Two “men,” (though it seems clear they were angels), promise that Jesus will return.

10 And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was going, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them. 11 They also said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven.”

This is a clear reference to the “Second Coming” (not rapture) of Jesus Christ.

Revelation 1:7 Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen.

John 14:3 If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.


Jesus’ future return is a huge emphasis in the New Testament, not a minor point.

When will Jesus return?

Apparently there are two parts to His return. First He returns “for His church, in the rapture” (cf. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). This also ushers in a 7 year period known as the Tribulation. Second, after the Tribulation, Jesus returns “with His church” which is called the “Second Coming.” During the “second coming” He will punish sin and set up His Kingdom.

It seems that the rapture is stealth, while the Second Coming is open and bold like a conquering King.

Acts 1:11 seems to describe the “second coming” of Jesus, not the rapture.

He will return “in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven.”

How did He leave? (How He left determines How He will Return)

- Visibly
- Bodily
- Historically
- In the Clouds  c.f. Mark 13:26
- From the Mount of Olives  c.f. Zechariah 14:1-4