

John 17 – The Greatest Prayer. (4) Christ Jesus glorified in his ascension. (refs for Bible study 16/11/17).

*Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son also may glorify you. v1*  
*And now, O Father, glorify me together with yourself, with the glory which I had with you before the world was. v5*

Many Christians celebrate Christmas and Easter but ignore the Ascension. Yet the NT sees the cross-resurrection-ascension as one progression, Heb.1v3, Ac.2v32-33. Jesus, in his prayer, anticipates moving from 'on the earth' (v4) to (literally) 'alongside You, Father' (v5). It was very much part of his thinking, Jn.13v1, 16v28.

**The fact of the Ascension:** An event you can view from two sides. From heaven's side, eg Ps.24v7-10. From earth's side, Lk.24v50-53 & Acts 1v9-11 only. Real event: 40days after Easter, at Bethany, witnessed by 12 apostles (+others?). He was taken up to heaven. A cloud hid him from sight as they gazed in amazement. Final! Quite different from the resurrection appearances. Never again to be mistaken for a gardener. Acts 9v3-4, Rev.1v16-17.

**It was the Ascension of the Son of God:** The one who says '*the glory I had with You before the world was*' (v5) is the eternal Son of God, Jn.1v1, Jn.8v58. He prays for restoration of the glory which he had laid aside, Eph.1v20-21, Heb.2v9. His prayer contains a yearning – the Son of God is 'homesick'. Such is his love for his Father.

➤ Such is his love for you and me that he was prepared to leave heaven for this sin-sodden world.

**It was the Ascension of the Son of Man:** But he prays for more than a restoration of his previous state. Deity and humanity are everlastingly joined. His divine nature, eternal & uncreated, is joined with his human nature, 30 years old & made of flesh. The ascension is not a 'de-incarnation'. He can no more cease to be man than he can cease to be God. He did not leave a body in the grave, and he did not leave a body here on earth, Acts 2v22-23 →v32-33.

➤ '*The dust of the earth is on the throne of the universe.*' We should rejoice.

### **What the Ascension means:**

- **for him – glory:** In Ps.24 David asks a question, v3-5. But he's already answered it in Ps.14v2-3. No-one can! Yet then he sees into the far future, Ps.24v7-10, '*Oh yes, there is One!*'. Welcome to heaven's returning Son!
- **for us – Jesus' glory means blessing for us,** Jn.17v2-3, Rev.5v9-12. We have **a heavenly Sympathiser**, Heb.4v15. We have **a heavenly Guarantor** – because he is there we know we will be there, 17v24, Phil.3v21. We have **a heavenly Giver** who gives all needed gifts, Eph.4v8
  - Take heart, for he knows, he understands. Don't be anxious, e.g. about becoming old & frail. Don't fear, he will supply all that his people need.