

Is the Lord Jesus in a literal, physical body of flesh and bones in heaven today?

The Bible clearly teaches that Jesus rose from the dead with a literal, physical body, that He ascended to heaven with that same body, and that He is in heaven today in a body of flesh and bones.

I. First of all, Christ rose from the dead with a literal, physical body. This can be proved first by several Scriptures which speak of the place where the Lord's body had been, but where it was no longer, after His resurrection.

Matthew 28:5,6, "...come, see the place where the Lord lay."

Mark 16:6, "...behold the place where they laid him."

John 20:12, "...where the body of Jesus had lain."

The point to notice in these verses is that the body of Jesus was no longer in the sepulcher.

In Luke 24:39, the risen Lord clearly stated that He had a body of flesh and bones. "Behold, my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have."

Again in John 20:27, He invited Thomas to thrust his hand into His riven side. "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing."

II. Christ ascended into heaven with the same body He had after He rose from the dead.

Mark 16:19 describes Christ, in His resurrection body, speaking to His disciples, then being received up into heaven. "After the Lord had spoken unto them, He was received up into heaven and sat on the right hand of God."

In Luke 24:50,51, we see the Lord lifting up His hands to bless His disciples, so He obviously had a physical body. While He blessed them, He was carried up into heaven. This can only mean a bodily ascension.

After Jesus ascended to heaven, the angels said to the disciples, "... this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." He departed with a literal, physical body; therefore, He will return with the same body.

III. The third main point is this: Christ is in heaven today in a body of flesh and bones.

When Stephen was martyred, he looked up into heaven and saw Jesus standing on the

right hand of God (Acts 7:55,56).

At His second coming, the Lord's feet will stand upon the Mount of Olives (Zechariah 14:4). Other passages speak of His coming in a visible, bodily form.

We therefore conclude that Christ ascended in the same literal body of flesh and bones with which He rose from the dead, and that He has that same body in heaven today.

In closing, perhaps we should add that the resurrection body of the Savior was the same body which He had before His death, yet in a glorified form. For instance, while He was still recognizable by His disciple, He could enter a room while all the doors were shut (John 20:19,26). It was a body which could eat broiled fish and honeycomb (Luke 24:42,43), yet it was no longer subject to death (Romans 6:9).

When the apostle Paul speaks of the resurrection body as being a spiritual body (1 Corinthians 15:44), he does not mean that it is non-material, intangible and invisible. Rather he means that it is suited to life in heaven, whereas a natural body is suited to life on earth.

TOUCH ME NOT **John 20:17 vs. Luke 24:39**

Perhaps we misunderstand Our Lord's words to Mary: "**Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father...**" These words are more literally rendered "Do not cling to me" (Berkely version, and others). He did not mean He was not to be touched but that He would not return to the former relationship. He must ascend to the Father, and assume a new relationship to His disciples. Paul wrote of this in 2 Cor. 5:16. "Henceforth know we no man after the flesh; yea though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more."

Mary had to learn she could not continue clinging to Christ in the flesh. She must learn to know Him now as glorified - He was on His way to ascension into Heaven. During our Lord's lifetime, the Apostle John had laid his head on Jesus' bosom, but when He was the Lord in His glorified state, according to Revelation 1, John "fell at His feet as dead." The disciples' personal relationship with Christ while He was on earth was a temporary relationship, never to be resumed.

The incident related in Luke 24:39 was in an entirely different setting. There the disciples were so far from trying to re-establish the old relationship that Christ had to convince them that He was the very same Person who had died on the cross, and was now resurrected. Hence He said, "**Behold, my hands and my feet, that it is I, myself: handle me, and see.**" This word handle has more the force of "touch." They were to feel His flesh, and know that He was a real Person in their midst.