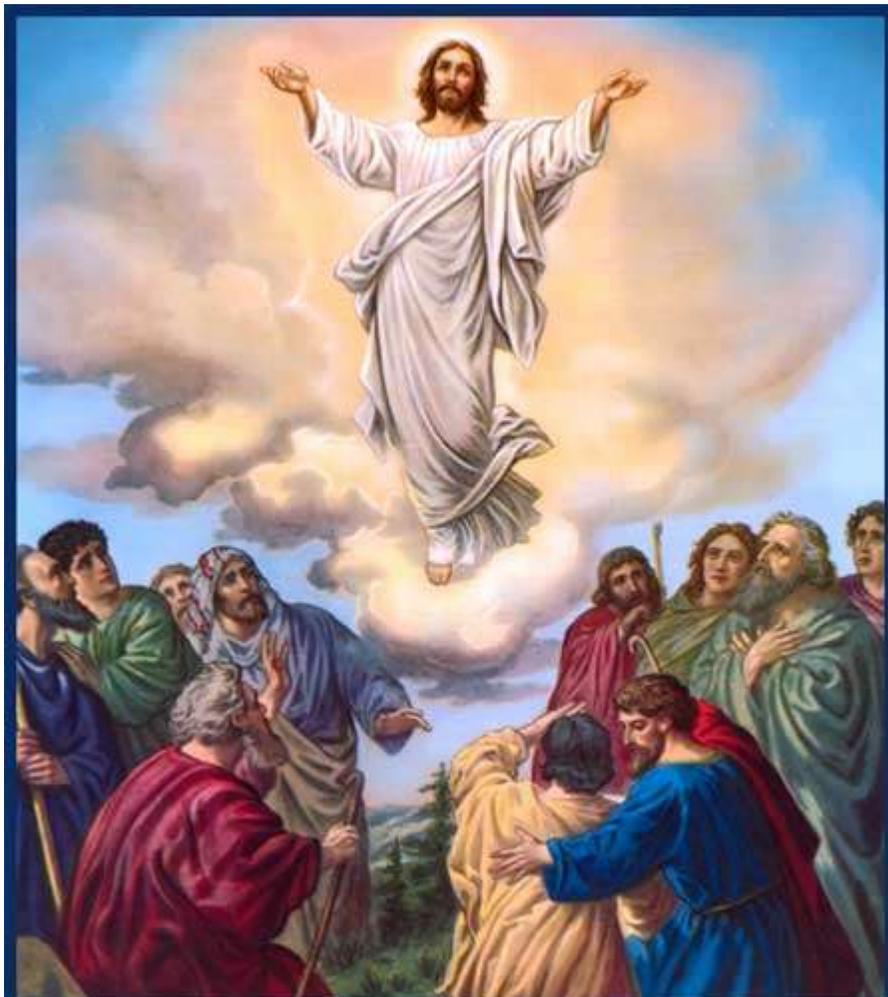


A CLOSER LOOK AT HIS HOLY HANDS

[Luke 24:50-51](#) “And he led them out as far as Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.”

Parting is often a sad event, and the last scene sometimes lingers in the memory for years. All of us must separate at some time or another, for nothing is permanent on this earth.

On Ascension Day Jesus withdrew His visible presence from the disciples and the world. The last picture we have of Him is with His hands lifted up in blessing the disciples. Jesus' farewell address is a blessing for everyone who will receive it. Those hands raised in blessing express a heart full of love and mercy, and we want to remember our Lord that way. Today we are so attracted to His holy hands that we wish to take a closer look at them.



The Ascension of the Lord

A CLOSER LOOK AT HIS HOLY HANDS

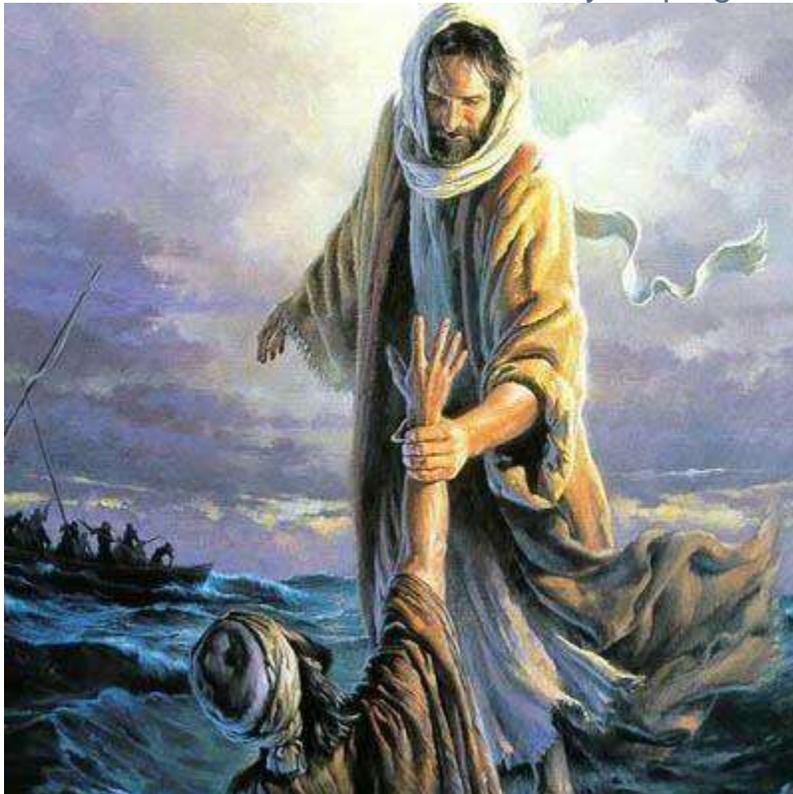
1. HIS HANDS IN HUMILIATION

In His childhood Jesus obeyed and helped His parents. Those little hands did odd jobs and learned to carry many things. They were willing hands because they were holy hands. Mary and Joseph taught the little boy how to fold His hands in prayer and devotion. Joseph likely taught Jesus how to work with wood. Perhaps there were many tables, benches, yokes, etc. in Galilee built by His hands. What an honor to use an object built by the blessed hands of the Lord Himself!

When the storm raged over the sea of Galilee, the disciples were terrified and cried to Jesus for help. The wind and the waves obeyed His almighty hands as He held them out over the troubled waters. His hands took some mud and placed it on a blind man's eyes, and he received his sight, for the omnipotence of God was in those hands.

We remember how Jesus took up the little children into His arms, put His hands upon them and blessed them. How gently and lovingly Jesus patted those little ones on the head. His were certainly not rough hands.

Peter tried to walk to Jesus on the water, but he lost confidence and cried to Jesus for help. Immediately Jesus stretched forth His hand and saved Peter. His hallowed hands were truly helping hands.



His hand took hold of Jairus' daughter's hand and the breath of life returned to her again. His hand also touched the bier of the youth of Nain, and he was restored to life. In His hands is the fullness of the Godhead.

How often did not our Lord fold His hands in prayer. He prayed for us also, "I pray for them also which shall believe on me through their word." We shall never forget how earnestly He prayed in Gethsemane.

At the last Passover with His disciples His hands distributed the bread and wine and thereby gave us the blessed Sacrament.

Above all, when they nailed His holy hands to the cross, He thereby paid for all of our sins. Through faith in the Lord with the pierced hands we can be saved and go to heaven. If we take a closer look as He is blessing the disciples we can still see the print of the nails.



Jesus was not only crucified, but He also died on the cross for the sins of the world. In death His hands became very white and cold and still.

This is a short history of His holy hands from His birth until His death when He was in the so-called state of humiliation. He was always God, but He did not always and fully use His divine power and majesty. He humbled Himself so that He could pay for our sins on the cross. We are thankful for those holy hands which were obedient to the Father and thereby redeemed us from all iniquity and sin.

2. HIS HANDS IN EXALTATION

After His death, Jesus entered into the state of exaltation, in which He used His Godhead continuously. His work of salvation accomplished, it was not necessary to remain on earth with His visible presence. He did remain on earth for forty days after Easter, and one of the first things He did was to offer His hands as evidence and proof to His disciples that He truly rose from the dead. "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself," said the Lord to His amazed Apostles. To doubting Thomas He said, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands." The pierced hands proved His identity and His resurrection.

Just before He ascended into heaven, our text says, "And he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven." That is the simple story of the ascension. All the blessings of His sufferings and death He can now place upon His disciples; forgiveness of sins, faith, hope, love, peace of conscience, and great joy. His are hands of hope and happiness to all who believe in Him and His cross.

His hands had done their work on earth, so the Lord returned to heaven from whence He came. He and His blessing hands are now invisible, but will be seen again on Judgment Day when His hands will separate the sheep from the goats. On that great day may He beckon to us with His hands and say, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom." We have had a closer look at His holy hands. Now let us take a closer look at our hands. What do we see? We see sinful hands and that have committed much evil and done much wrong. **How many times have our hands been used in the service of sin?** But we need not despair for Jesus has washed our hands pure and white in His blood. Now let us fold our hands in prayer and ask God for the forgiveness of all our sins for Jesus' sake and plead with our God to keep us from falling from faith. Today may we dedicate our hands anew for use in the Lord's kingdom and sing with restored zeal, "Take my hands and let them move at the impulse of Thy love."

The verses following our text tell us how the ascension of Jesus effected the Apostles, "And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God." May the ascension of our Lord into the highest heavens have the same effect upon us as on the disciples, and may our hearts be filled with a new hope and joy in the ascended Lord.

May we never forget this last view of Jesus before the departure into heaven. Remember, those hands of Jesus are still lifted up to bless all who trust in Him for salvation, and whosoever is blessed by His hands is truly blessed forever and ever. In Jesus we, too, shall have our ascension into heaven, there to live and reign with Him in eternal glory. AMEN.

PRAYER. Dear ascended Savior, we long to be with Thee in glory and our eyes are ever turned heavenward to Thee. We are looking forward with joyous anticipation to the time of our reunion with Thee in eternal glory. Help us always to remember that last blessed view of Thyself with Thy holy hands lifted up in blessings upon us. Bless all Thy dear children and

forsake us not, according to Thy promise. Praise, honor, and glory be to
Thee, O blessed Trinity now and forevermore.
AMEN