

very real sense in which at the ascension Jesus went away and in which He is going to come back when all shall see Him coming on the clouds of heaven and comes to this earth to make a tremendous change in the situation of everyone and everything on this earth.

So when the story tells about His going away and His coming back later, and His inquiring what was done it does describe the Lord Jesus Christ leaving His disciples on earth here and then coming back and asking for an accounting of what we have done. But as far as we individually are concerned, the beginning and end of it are not so far apart. For each of us individually the beginning of it is when we receive Jesus Christ. That is when to us the Lord who has given us salvation goes away in a sense and leaves us with the talents He has entrusted to us to use them for His purposes.

He coming back as far as we individually are concerned may come very suddenly to anyone of us for we never know at what moment the Lord may choose to take us. We do not know any of us how much longer the Lord is going to leave us here. So the time element(?) of this is much more restricted. But for everyone of us there is a definite time between when we were saved and when our time on earth ends either by our death or by the Lord coming back, there is a definite period in which the teaching of this story is extremely important to us.

During that period the Lord has work for us to do and He has given us talents for that work. Of course talents in the Bible here is a term that describes a certain amount of money. But it can very well be a figure for the ability, the means, the resources we may have to carry out His purposes. His purposes for us fall under two heads, and these two heads are both tremendously important.

The Lord's great purpose for each one of us is that we may develop into the form, the stature, the resemblance of our Lord Jesus Christ. He leaves us on earth here with great purposes in mind for our development. Our ~~own~~ work is tremendously important to Him. He could do it all himself, or He could appoint others~~x~~ for it. But He is interested in every single one of us to know whether we are simply lying back and not making progress or whether we are moving forward in the development of those qualities He wants us to have in order to have fellowship with Him through all the ages. It is very important that we give thought to this aspect of it.

The more visible aspect is our accomplishment as God's representatives on earth. For that purpose He has given us talents, given us abilities, but these abilities are not always immediately apparent to us. We cannot really compare these abilities. As we look at ~~xxx~~ people some seem to have