

Following a period of instruction by Jesus to His disciples, He led them out from Jerusalem over against Bethany. There He lifted up His hands and blessed them. In the circumstance of His blessing the disciples, He was parted from them. Although the genuineness of the words kai anephereto eis ton ouranon (Luke 24:51) is seriously questioned, Luke undoubtedly has in mind the final departure of Jesus which is known as the ascension. Luke here gives a brief reference to the ascension which is described in more detail in the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. On this occasion of their last meeting with Jesus, they worshipped Him. From the place of the ascension the disciples returned to Jerusalem with great joy in their hearts. This great joy came to them as a result of their knowing the promise of the coming of the Holy Spirit which is referred to in verse 49 and also the additional promise of the return of Christ as we learn from Acts 1:11. In the temple of Jerusalem the disciples were blessing God for all the things which they had seen and heard.

Luke, the author of the Acts, connects this second book with "the first book" by giving further reference to the resurrection of Jesus. In Acts 1:3 the author gives a general statement when he speaks of Jesus who showed Himself alive after His passion by many reliable and convincing proofs at intervals during a period of forty days. Acts 1:3 is the only place in the New Testament where this information of the interval of time between the resurrection and the ascension is stated.

Verses 4 and 5 record one particular meeting of Jesus with His disciples. The words "being assembled" may be rendered "while sitting at meat" or "eating." The fact of the risen Lord's eating in the presence of the disciples is attested by Luke in his Gospel, chapter 24, verse 42, where Jesus eats "before" them.