

The Ascension of Jesus Christ

Luke 24:50-53, Acts 1:9-11

“And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. ⁵¹ Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven. ⁵² And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, ⁵³ and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God...Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. ¹⁰ And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, ¹¹ who also said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This *same* Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.”

The longer I preach the Gospel, the more I understand how Paul must have felt when he said, “I preach the unsearchable riches of Christ.” **Every area, and every aspect of our Lord’s wonderful life and ministry yields abundant riches.** There is a particular aspect of our Lord’s ministry, which is neglected in many of our books, and is very seldom mentioned in many of our theologies. I refer to the **ascension** of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The life of Christ finds much fulfillment and meaning in the ascension of Christ. Every aspect of our Lord’s ministry is important, and the ascension takes its place right along side the rest of the others. In fact, Paul declared 1 Timothy 3:16, “And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the nations, believed on in the world, received up into glory.” The **ascension** of Jesus Christ is the **culmination of His earthly ministry**, and the **initiation of His heavenly session!**

Jesus Christ often predicted that He would ascend and go back to heaven. As He traveled on this earth, with the cross in His heart, He

was “homesick” to go back to Glory, and longed again to be back in the “bosom” of His Father, as seen in John 6:62, “What if you shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?” When Jesus prayed in John 17:5, He prayed words like these, “And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.” Jesus not only predicted His ascension, but our Lord gave us a marvelous picture of that time when He would be carried back into heaven, as seen at His baptismal experience, as seen in Matthew 3:16, “And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water; and lo, the heavens were opened unto him...” **His being lowered into the water by the arms of another, dramatizes His death and burial.** His being brought up out of the water by the arms of another, dramatizes His *bodily resurrection* and *glorious ascension*. At the end of the ministry of our Lord, so we would not miss the lesson, He again dramatizes His total ministry, as seen in John 13:3-5, “Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God; He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments, and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poured water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples’ feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which he was girded.” But that is not the end of the picture, for we are told in verse 12, “So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was seated again.” **Jesus Christ, who came from heaven to bathe our dirty souls in the basin of Calvary, has now completed His work, and He has sat down again at the right hand of the Father in heaven.**

Therefore, look with me as we consider the ascension of our wonderful Lord.

You know, of course, that all the facts and fundamentals of the gospel of our Savior are rooted and grounded in history. Peter tells us in 2 Peter 1:16 that the foundations of the Christian faith is not based on “cunningly devised fables,” but it resides solidly upon historical fact.

There are five extraordinary historical facts in the ministry of Jesus Christ: (1) *There is His incarnation,* (2) *His crucifixion,* (3) *His*

resurrection, (4) His ascension, and (5) His exaltation. And the ascension of Christ is inseparately linked to all four of these, especially His incarnation. Jesus Christ came down in His incarnation, that He might in His ascension call us up to Him. Christ in *incarnation* came down and was garbed with the garb of poverty, in order that through ascension He might take us up to himself to be *robed in His garb of righteousness and splendor.*

No wonder the apostle Paul said in 2 Corinthians 8:9, “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that you through his poverty might be rich.” And so, when we talk about the ascension of Jesus Christ, we are not talking about “fairy tells,” we are not talking about “myths” and “fables,” we are talking historical fact.

I believe if they had had TV cameras in that day, you could have taken a picture of Jesus Christ, and the world news programs could have seen the ascension of our wonderful Lord.

As one studies the Gospels, it is striking with the simplicity in which the ascension is presented. Matthew does not give the account of the ascension. Mark has only a very small reference to it. It is not mentioned in the gospel of John. And it is given in the book of Luke, and expanded on in the book of Acts. But you see, there was no need for elaborate language, for when Jesus came into this world, He could have said the same words the Romans general said, when he said, “I came, I saw, and I conquered.”

So, when we read the historical documents of the ascension of Jesus Christ, we find basically two things given to us. (1) First of all, the documents record an *exit*, as seen in Luke 24:50, “he led them out as far as to Bethany...” and from that place Jesus made His exit from this world!

There was no need for Jesus to stay any longer, for He had made the sacrifice that would reconcile a rebellious world to an

outraged heaven. He had put His resurrection foot upon death, and it was time for Jesus to go home. His voluntary exile of 33 years was now over, and so the Bible declares that suddenly the strongest law in this universe was broken. **That law which keeps the earth in its place.** That law which causes the planets to whirl around the sun. That universal law of gravitation was relaxed, or suspended, or broken, to let go free the Son of God!

That law could hold on to the stars in heaven to keep them in their places, but it could not hold on to “the bright and morning Star.” That law of gravitation could keep the sun in place, but it could not keep the “Son of righteousness from arising with healing in His wings.”

And so, Jesus Christ ascended back into heaven. Supernaturally if you please, miraculously if you would say, conveyed by the power of God did Jesus make His exit back to heaven.

Acts 1:9 tells us, “And, when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight.” I believe that “cloud” was the chariot of deity, none other than the Shechinah glory cloud of God! **The same cloud that guided and guarded the children of Israel on their wilderness journey.** That cloud, driven by the angels of heaven, came to bear home to glory their blessed Lord, and our blessed Savior. And so when Jesus went back to heaven there was an **exit.**

But the historical documents also record an entrance, as seen in Ephesians 4:10, “He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.” And so, up He went above that **first heaven**, where the birds fly and the clouds are born; up He went above the **second heaven**, where the Milky Way is, and the innumerable host of stars appear; up He went into the **third heaven**, where the very throne of God is, as seen in 1 Peter 3:22, “(Jesus Christ) is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.” He who came into

this world as the “Son of God” goes back into heaven as the “Son of man,” as seen in 1 Timothy 2:5, “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.” **That is the most astounding concept in all of the Word of God; there is now a glorified humanity in heaven!** He who came down as the “God-man,” is now gone back to heaven as the “Man-God,” and there is a man positioned to ascend the throne of God, as seen in Philippians 2:9-11, “Wherefore, God also has highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God, that Father.”

We know of course, that the ascension is very much at home in the realm of systematic theology, but I want to point out to you, however, that it is also equally at home in the realm of practical theology, as seen in John 16:7, “Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.” Then in John 14:12 Jesus said, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto my Father.” **Therefore, it was for our benefit that Jesus ascended back into heaven!**

Number one, when Jesus ascended back to heaven, He ascended as our Master. In his great Pentecostal sermon, Peter says this in Acts 2:33-36, “Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he hath shed forth this, which you now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens; but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore, let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom you have crucified, both Lord and Christ.” We have been told in Colossians 1:16-19, “For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers – all things were

created by him, and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church; who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence. For it pleased the Father that in him shall all fullness dwell.” We have also been told in Hebrews 2:8 that God “has put all things in subject under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him.” The Bible is simply teaching that we are living in this dispensation in two words – we are living in “not yet.” **All things are not yet made subject unto Him, but it is the desire of our wonderful Savior that you make Him the Lord of your life.**

My friend, Christ wants to be the Lord of your life, because He has the right to be, as seen in Romans 14:9, “For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and the living.”

Number two, Jesus ascended to heaven as our Forerunner. The writer of the book of Hebrews says this in Hebrews 6:19-20, “Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil, where the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.” Once a year the Old Testament high priest would go into the “holy of holies” with the “blood of the covenant,” and there where the “ark of the covenant” was covered by the “mercy seat” of gold, he would sprinkle the blood seven times before the altar to make atonement for the children of Israel.

The Bible tells us in Hebrews 9:24, “For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.” And then in Hebrews 10:12, “But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God.” The basis for my cleansing, and the reason for my salvation, is the fact that I have a High Priest in heaven, who is my Forerunner in the “holy of holies.”

Number three, Jesus ascended into heaven as our *Intercessor*.

Romans 8:34 says, “Who is he that condemneth? Shall Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us?” This truth is also shown to us in Hebrews 7:24-25, “But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore, he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto to God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.”

The work of Jesus on this earth was historical and completed, but His work in heaven continues without intermission. On earth, Jesus Christ, by His work, acquired my salvation; in heaven He maintains my salvation, and that is the basis of the doctrine of eternal security.

Number four, Jesus ascended into heaven as our *Victor*.

Ephesians 4:8 says, “Wherefore, he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto me.” I like the words of the song that says, “Just a few more days to be filled with praise, and to tell the old, old story, When twilight falls, and the Savior calls, I shall go to Him in glory.”

Do you know this ascended Christ? Have you put your trust in Him as Savior?

Every one please stand for prayer.

Father,

I ask for Your help in my daily walk with You. Give me the wisdom to renew my mind with Your Word, that my life might reflect Your life living in me. In His name I pray. Amen.