

The VINDICATIVE ASCENSION of Christ



VINDICATIVE

- FROM Latin VERB
vindicāre to lay legal claim to (property),
- **to assert one's right to a possession**
- to uphold or justify by argument or evidence:
to vindicate a claim.
- *Roman and Civil Law.* **to regain possession, under claim of title of property**
- *to vindicate someone's honor*

- Today , I'd like us to think of Jesus Christ as the one who ascended BACK into heaven, so that we are able to answer our Lord's very provocative question of **John 6:62, "What then if you should see the Son of Man ascending where He was before?"**
- In other words, what does the ascension mean to us? What differences should it make in our belief and behavior?
- **IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT, LIKE ISAIAH, WE SEE THE LORD EXALTED, OR HIGH AND LIFTED UP REGARDLESS OF WHAT IS HAPPENING ON EARTH (Isaiah 6)**
- **There must be a connection between our VISION of the ascended Lord and our VOCATION if the ascension will have the right impact on our individual lives.**

- **Our study today, will demonstrate that the ascension is one of the important truths of the Bible, and that it occupies a large portion in the Word of God.**
- **The ascension is a vital link in the entire chain of events, in the human life of Christ, all of which are essential.**
- **It is the link between His past finished work and His present and future work.**
- **It demonstrates Jesus Christ to be the final solution for man's need of prophet, priest, and king.**

- **In general, the church has not given as much attention to the doctrine of the ascension of Christ as it should, and tends to neglect it.**
- **The ascension of Christ has been overshadowed, on the one hand, by the importance of the incarnation, the death, and the resurrection of Christ; and, on the other hand, it has been eclipsed by the present work and future work of Christ.**
- **Whereas we overlook and give far too little attention to the ascension as we do to His birth, temptation, baptism, transfiguration, miracles and death, all these earlier events in the life of our Lord would lose their significance without the fact of His ascension, because **the ascension completes Jesus's earthly mission and signifies his enthronement as heavenly king, and that Jesus has completed his Father's mission and that he now rules with all authority and intercedes with all sympathy as our mediator and high priest.****

- The Ascension is regarded as the point of contact between the Christ of the gospels and of the epistles, since the gift of the Spirit is said to have come from the ascended Christ.
 - The Ascension is the culminating point of Christ's glorification after His resurrection, and is regarded as necessary for His heavenly exaltation.
 - It is the culmination of the Incarnation, the reward of Christ's redemptive work, and the entrance upon a wider sphere of work in His glorified condition, as the Lord and High Priest of His church ([John 7:39](#); [16:7](#)).
- The ascension, was undoubtedly an important event in the life of Christ marking the conclusion of His earthly ministry and bringing to culmination that series of events which had begun with His incarnation.**

- In studying the ascension of our Lord it is noteworthy that it was
- **(1) Represented in the Types of the Old Testament.** Just as the High Priest entered into the “holiest of all” with the blood of atonement, so our Lord has entered into the “holy place” for us –as taught in Hebrews 9:11-12.
- **(2) Declared by Old Testament Prophecy.** (Psalm 68:18 and Ephesians 4:8-10.)
- **(3) Anticipated by our Lord Himself.** Christ anticipated His return to glory, which He referred to as the return to the glory which He once had Lk9:51; John 6:62;7:33;14:12.28; 16:5,10.16,17.28.
- He anticipated His ascension in three ways:
 - **in Prayer** (John 17:11-13);
 - **in Parable** (Luke 19:11-27), especially verse 12; and
 - **in Promise** (John 7:33; John 14:12; John 14:28; John 16:5; John 16:9-10 and John 20:17).
- **(4) Recorded in History.** Just as His birth, His life and His death are recorded in history, so is His ascension. *Each* historic fact is necessary to the integrity of the whole record.
- **(5) Confirmed by the Angels.** Just as angels announced His birth (Luke 2:9-10); and His resurrection (Mark 16:6-7); so His ascension was confirmed by angelic beings (Acts 1:9-11).

- **Let us now examine the scriptures on the ascension by detailing how this historic event is confirmed,**
- **by prophecy**
- **by the anticipation of Christ,**
- **by the historic record of the ascension, and**
- **by the allusions in the epistles to the ascension as a fact.**

**Detailing how the ascension is
confirmed by**

PROPHECY

- **PROPHETS ANTICIPATED THE ASCENSION**

- Belief in the ascension and its accomplishments has its source in the expectations and promises of Old Testament prophecy.
- The idea of the ascension was not some last minute idea thought up by hapless and hopeless disciples; rather, we realize that the ascension of Christ was always a part of the overall plan of God.
- Isaiah 52:13 Behold, My servant will prosper, He will be high and lifted up, and greatly exalted.
- Psalms 16:8-11 I have set the LORD continually before me; Because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. ⁹ Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices; My flesh also will dwell securely. ¹⁰ For Thou wilt not abandon my soul to Sheol; Neither wilt Thou allow Thy Holy One to undergo decay. ¹¹ Thou wilt make known to me the path of life; In Thy presence is fulness of joy; In Thy right hand there are pleasures forever.
- **This prophecy traces Christ from the cross through resurrection back into His glory at God's right hand through the ascension (cf. Acts 2:24-36).**

- **Psalm 68:18** Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, *for* the rebellious also, that the LORD God might dwell *among them*.
- **This prophecy is reiterated and corroborated in Ephesians 4:8-10 thus.**
- **Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)**

- **Psalm 110:1-5** The LORD says to my Lord: “Sit at My right hand, Until I make Thine enemies a footstool for Thy feet.” . . . ⁵ The Lord is at Thy right hand; He will shatter kings in the day of His wrath.
- Also compare:
- **Matthew 22:41-44** Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question, ⁴² saying, “What do you think about the Christ, whose son is He?” They said to Him, “*The son of David.*” ⁴³ He said to them, “Then how does David in the Spirit call Him ‘Lord,’ saying, ⁴⁴ ‘The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand, Until I put Thine enemies beneath Thy feet”’?”
- Christ used this Old Testament passage which anticipated the ascension of David’s son to God’s right hand to demonstrate just who Messiah was and what this should mean to mankind.
- Messiah would be David’s son but also David’s Lord--one who shared God’s throne as God Himself. The ascension is alluded to in the words “at my right hand.”
- This shows us that an understanding of what the ascension means and teaches us about Jesus Christ is vital for right thinking and response to the person of Christ.
- The Lord’s ascension was anticipated in the Old Testament and viewed as essential to a proper understanding of just who Messiah is and of His ministry to men.

**Detailing how the ascension is
confirmed by**

**THE ANTICIPATION OR
PREDICTION OF CHRIST**

- **CHRIST ANTICIPATED THE ASCENSION**

- The ascension was no surprise to the Lord. From the very beginning of His ministry, the Lord was not only aware that He had come to die for our sin, but anticipated both the resurrection and the ascension.
- Christ knew that both were foretold in the Old Testament and that like His death, the resurrection and ascension were essential for fulfilling God's purposes and solving man's dilemma. There must be both the DESCENT from heaven and the ASCENT back into heaven.
- The Ascension is alluded to in some fifteen or more passages in the Gospels in the course of our Lord's earthly ministry, in which the Lord speaks of the ascension or alludes to it in one way or another.
- These passages show that the event was constantly in view, and anticipated by our Lord.
- In each of these passages the Lord used the ascension much like the fact of the resurrection, to authenticate His person and to indicate why His person and work demands a verdict--the verdict of faith and commitment.
- The Ascension is also clearly implied in the allusions to His coming back to earth on clouds of heaven, since He can not come back, if he had not ascended.

- **Let us review a few of these passages**
- John 3:13 “And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, *even* the Son of man which is in heaven.
- *What* and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? (John 6:62)
- Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end. (John 13:1.)
- Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.(John 14:1-3)
- And he said unto them, How say they that Christ is David's son? And David himself saith in the book of Psalms, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Till I make thine enemies thy footstool. David therefore calleth him Lord, how is he then his son?(Luke 20:41-44)
- The fact that the ascension is singled out in the thinking and prophetic ministry of Christ makes clear that the ascension was important.
- Other passages include ([Matthew 24:30; 26:64](#)). ([Luke 9:31,51](#);
- [John 7:33; 12:32; 14:12,28; 16:5,10,17,28; 20:17](#)).

**Detailing how the ascension is
confirmed by**

**THE HISTORIC RECORD IN
ACTS 1, ESPECIALLY**

- **THE ASCENSION WAS DULY RECORDED**
- **The ascension is not prominently recorded in the gospels, being only mentioned briefly in Mark 16:19-20 and Luke 24:50-53.**
- **While Luke did not emphasize it at the conclusion of his first book (Luke), he certainly highlighted it at the beginning of his second volume (Acts).**
- **No mention is made by Matthew of the Ascension of Christ. This is in perfect accord with the theme and scope of this Gospel, which speaks of him as King.**

- There is no account of Christ's Ascension in John's Gospel, either, since this gospel speaks of the Deity of the Lord Jesus.
- As God the Son He was omnipresent, and so, needed not to ascend.
- As God the Son He fills both heaven and earth.
- In ([Mar 16:19-20](#)) , we read **So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with *them* and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen.**

- The Ascension is mentioned or implied in several passages in [Acts 2:33](#); [3:21](#); [7:55](#); [9:3-5](#); [22:6-8](#); [26:13-15](#), which all assert the present life and activity of Jesus Christ in heaven.
- However, the main reference is given in Acts 1:6-11. For the purposes of our study, we are going to focus our attention on this account, which reads
- And so when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, “Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?” He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has fixed by His own authority; but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth. “ And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was departing, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them; and they also said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven.”

- **THE CONTEXT OF THE ASCENSION**
- First, we want to note the context in which the ascension occurs.
- This passage shows us there was an expressed concern and longing for the restoration of the kingdom of Israel by the disciples, as taught by the prophets .
- This would mean the reign of righteousness with Jesus Christ on the throne, and an end to the times of the Gentiles and the turmoil that they knew because of Roman occupation.
- And so the disciples asked a reasonable question about when the restoration of the kingdom of Israel would happen.
- The Lord gave a two-fold response to this pressing question of the disciples, by telling that they were not to be overly concerned about the timing of the restoration of the Kingdom to Israel, since they were assured of its certainty and its splendor.
- He told the disciples this was all in the Father's sovereign plan and timing (vs. 7), and that while they were waiting for this event to occur, they had the responsibility of representing Him to the world--a responsibility for which they would be adequately supplied by the power of the Holy Spirit , who would soon to indwell the church, the body of Christ (vs. 8).

- **Immediately after the promise of the Holy Spirit (again) and instructions regarding the purpose and mission of the church in verse 8, the ascension occurred .**
- **The Lord was lifted up by a cloud of glory and disappeared out of their sight and taken into heaven to the right hand of the Father from whence He would send the Holy Spirit to empower them for ministry.**
- **There also He would sit to represent them by providing access into God's presence.**
- **The ascension was a glorious and a gracious event that was a display of the splendor and glory of the coming Kingdom.**
- **As such it was a reassurance to the disciples that their hopes would be realized and that the coming Kingdom was the same as they had previously been instructed.**
- **It also provided an incentive to faith and courage, and a motivation to ministry.**

• **THE TIME OF THE ASCENSION**

- Although it is most improbable that Christ ascended in a formal way to heaven until the event of Acts 1, a number of expositors teach that Christ ascended to heaven on the day of His resurrection based on the “implications” or misinterpretations of John 20:17 and Hebrews 9:6-20.
- Let me suggest a few reasons why this is unlikely:
- (1) In Hebrews 9:11-12 the statement, “through His own blood” (or in the KJV, “with His blood”) has been taken to mean Christ took His actual blood into heaven. They say that in John 20:17, Christ was telling Mary not to touch Him because this had not yet been done. But the Greek text here uses a construction which means **“through the agency of” or “by means of”** which simply means that Christ was able to enter heaven once and for all by means of (or through) or because of His death on the cross...not that He did so carrying His blood.
- (2) The Lord did not actually say in John 20:17 He would ascend immediately, or at a time prior to the record in Luke 24 and Acts 1.
- **“I ascend” is a prediction and illustrates what Greek grammarians call a “futuristic use of the present tense.”** This is a well established use of the present tense in the New Testament.

- In the classic passage on the ascension in Acts, four Greek words are used to describe various aspects of the ascension.
- (a) In verse 9, it is stated, "As they were looking, he was taken or lifted up, or raised." The Greek for "taken up" *eperthe* is from a verb commonly used to indicate something which is lifted up, such as, for instance, in relation to hoisting a sail, as in [Acts 27:40](#).
- This first word, is used to make clear that the ascension was upward and shows that the Father was taking His Son up into heaven, and that the ascension was an act of exaltation and an affirmation of Christ's person.

- (b) In verse 9b, it is revealed that "a cloud received him out of their sight." The Greek word for "received up" or literally the cloud 'took under him' is *hupolambano*. It means "to take or bear up by supporting from beneath."
- This second word, indicates that once Christ was in the atmospheric heaven He appeared to be supported or received by a cloud.
- It is noteworthy that that clouds are mentioned not only in connection with the ascension of Christ, but also in relation to His return in power and glory to the earth as pointed out to the high priest at one of his mock trials ([Matt 24:30](#); [26:64](#); [Mark 13:26](#); [14:62](#); [Luke 21:27](#); and in [Rev 1:7](#)).

- **While the disciples watched, Jesus ascended up into a cloud. What cloud was this?**
- **There is no indication in the text that the cloud is other than a natural one, but many believe it was the shekinah cloud, a symbol of the glory of God. In other words, it was a supernatural cloud, that symbolized the glorification of the Son since He was resuming His preincarnate glory--the glory He had before the incarnation.**
- **Some believe it was the cloud which appeared to Ezekiel, the chariot made up of cherubim and angels.**
- **Others posit that It was the cloud which filled Solomon's temple or the cloud that descended on the tabernacle in the wilderness and formed a pillar of cloud to lead the people through the wilderness or that it was the cloud that surrounded Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration.**

- (c) In verse 10, a third word is used, to translate "as he went, or "while He was departing." "Departing" is the Greek *poreuomai*."
- This was a common word meaning "to pursue a journey" which would lead to the conclusion that the ascension was not merely a disappearance or a change of state, but an actual journey from earth to heaven.
- This third word connotes that the ascension was both a departure from earth and also a journey to heaven.
- The Son of Man who was the Son of God was passing through the heavens into the heaven of heavens, into the very presence of God to appear there for us (cf. Heb. 4:14; 7:20; 9:24).

- (d) A fourth Greek work is used in [Acts 1:11](#), *analambano*, translated "received or taken up" (cf. [Mark 16:19](#); [Luke 24:51](#)) concludes the picture by indicating that Christ was received into heaven as the destination of His journey.
- It is used in [Acts 20:13-14](#) of being taken aboard a ship.
- This is probably best understood as culminative or climatic and describes His reception into heaven.
- It describes the final results of the ascension and declares the fact of Christ's arrival in heaven. By the testimony of two angels from heaven we are told He had reached His destination.
- Everywhere we turn in the New Testament thereafter we find the Lord Jesus declared to be in heaven at the right hand of the Father in the PLACE OF GLORY, POWER, AUTHORITY, AND PROVISION FOR US.
- For Him to have got to this place HE HAD TO HAVE ASCENDED THERE.

- **"After he said this, he was taken up** (Greek *epairo*, Aorist tense, passive voice) **before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.**" (Acts 1:9)
- Here we have three elements.
- **First element is that the disciples observe him rising. He doesn't just disappear, but first begins to rise, as we have already noted. The second element mentions that a cloud hides him from sight.**
- **The third element is a pair of angels who announce,** "This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."
- **How does Jesus ascend into heaven? Into a cloud. Then how will he return? In a cloud.**
- As Jesus relates the end-time events in the Olivet Discourse, he says, **"At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory"** (Luke 21:27).
- Now bear with me, as I explore this a bit further, since **in the Luke 21:27 passage Jesus is alluding to the prophecy in Daniel 7:13-14 where the Son of Man receives great power and glory.**

- **Daniel 7:13-14 reads "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed." (Daniel 7:13-14)**
- **Daniel's vision uses the phrase, "coming with the clouds of heaven." We may ask Coming where? Coming from where? It seems I believe. that the Son of Man is here coming with the clouds of heaven on his way into the presence of the Father, and that Jesus' ascension into the cloud was a visible sign that He was assuming His throne, from whence He will come to judge the quick and the dead, and to rule as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.**
- **It seems that Jesus is, at the moment of his ascension from the disciples, going directly into the presence of the Father's throne room in immediate fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy!**
- **Jesus Entry into the Heavenly Throne room -- in a (the Shekinah) Cloud at his Ascension (Luke 24:51 and Acts 1:9-11 with Daniel 7:13-14) describes Jesus' Exaltation**

- **When Jesus ascended from the earth into heaven, he ascended directly into the presence of the Almighty Father and enjoyed the reinstatement of his former glory (John 17:5), of which he had voluntarily "emptied himself" (Philippians 2:7).**
- **As the Son of Man he now appears before the Ancient of Days to receive an unshakable Kingdom (Daniel 7:13-14).**
- **From man's viewpoint the ascension is the phenomenon of a man rising into the sky.**
- **From the angel's viewpoint, the ascension is the Son of Man returning home to great power and glory.**

- **The ascension was a natural sequence of His resurrection** and the details given to us concerning it are in harmony with this general truth.
- **The ascension was (a) gradual, (b) visible, (c) bodily, and (d) Christ was received with clouds.**
- **This is of great significance because when Christ returns to the earth to establish His kingdom, His second advent has all of these same characteristics, namely, gradual, visible, bodily, and with clouds.**

- Although the ascension was the bodily separation of our Lord from His followers our Lord's departure inaugurated a time of even greater intimacy through the ministry of the Holy Spirit; because even though Jesus is absent physically from the earth, He is still spiritually present with His church.
- **The ascension allows Jesus to be present in heaven and also to be present anywhere and everywhere with His followers all the time, at the same time through His Spirit**
- Without the ascension Jesus would be in one location on the earth, but not spiritually present everywhere. Since Jesus ascended to heaven He is **"wherever two or three are gathered in My name, there I am in your midst"** ([Matt. 18:20](#)).
- It is in connection with the Ascension and our Lord's life in heaven that we understand the force of the passage in [Matt. 28:20](#) that states **"Lo, I am with you always even to the end of the age."**

- This is a three-part drama.
- **Jesus ascending from earth to heaven** (Luke 24:51 and Acts 1:9-11).
- **Jesus entering the heavenly throne room as the exalted Son of God and receiving all authority,** where **"from now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of God"** (Luke 22:69)
- **Jesus returning in a cloud at his Second Coming "with power and great glory"** (Luke 21:27).
- **The first two movements of this drama had to occur for the third, for which we look and long , to occur.**

HOW THE ASCENSION IS CONFIRMED IN THE EPISTLES AS FACT

**OTHER NEW TESTAMENT ALLUSIONS
TO THE ASCENSION**

- The historic record of the ascension in [Acts 1](#), is constantly confirmed by numerous subsequent statements in the New Testament Scriptures in which Christ is seen in heaven subsequent to His ascension.
- ([Acts 2:33-36](#); [3:21](#); [7:55-56](#); [9:3-6](#); [22:6-8](#); [26:13-15](#); [Rom 8:34](#); [Eph 1:20-22](#); [4:8-10](#); [Phil 2:6-11](#); [3:20](#); [1 Thess 1:10](#); [4:16](#);
- [1 Tim 3:16](#); [Heb 1:3](#), [13](#); [2:7](#); [4:14](#); [6:20](#); [7:26](#); [8:1](#); [9:24](#); [10:12-13](#); [12:2](#); [1 John 2:1](#); [Rev 1:7](#), [13-18](#); [5:5-12](#); [6:9-17](#); [7:9-17](#); [14:1-5](#); [19:11-16](#)).
- **Acceptance of this fact must be carefully noticed, for it is impossible to question that this is the belief of all the New Testament writers because they clearly base their teaching on the fact and historic reality of the Ascension.**
- Let us briefly review these Scriptures.

- Peter's message in Acts 2:32-36 given ten days after the ascension states
- This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye 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 ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

- Romans:
- In Romans 8:34 the apostle states four facts connected with Christ Jesus:.... His death; His resurrection; **His session at God's right hand; and His intercession.** The last two are clearly the result of the ascension.
- **He is even now sitting at the right hand of God, where He is praying for us, as a result of his ascension.**
- **Who *is* he that condemneth? *It is* Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.**

- Ephesians:
- Whereas Romans lays stress on the Resurrection, Ephesians has as part of its special aim an emphasis on the Ascension.
- In Ephesians 1:19-23 God's work wrought in Christ is shown to have gone much farther than the Resurrection.
- This beautiful text points out that the ascended Christ, fills all the believers, in every situation of life, and speaks of the preeminence of our Lord in our lives.
- And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

- This idea concerning Christ is followed in Ephesians 2:4-7 by the association of believers with Christ "in the heavenly places," thus.....
- But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,
- Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)
- And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:
- That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in *his* kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

- **We read in Ephesians: 4:8, Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.**
- **Here Paul uses Psalm 68:18 to beautifully illustrate the association of the giving of gifts to the believer with the triumphant ascension of Christ, by explaining that it is Christ's exaltation to the right hand of His Father that makes possible for Him to give gifts to men.**
- **Without His ascension, we would have no gifts. Without His ascension we would have no body. Without His ascension, we would have nothing.**
- **He had to ascend and go back to the Father so that the Spirit could come and give gifts to the body.**
- **It cost God everything for us to be diverse. It cost God everything for us to have our gifts.**

- Paul's point in [Ephesians 4:8-10](#) is to explain that Jesus' paying the infinite price of coming to earth and suffering death on our behalf qualified Him to be exalted above all the heavens (that is, to the throne of God), in order that He might rightfully have the authority to give gifts to His saints.
- By that victory He gained the right to rule His church and to give gifts to His church, that He might fill all things.
- "The central thought in verses 8–10 is that the Giver of the gifts is the ascended Christ. There were no such gifts before He went back to heaven.

- **Although He (Jesus) departed, it was not that He might remove to a distance from us, but, as Paul says, "that He might fill all things."**
- **By His ascension to heaven, the glory of His divinity has been only more illustriously displayed; and, though no longer present with us in the flesh, our souls receive spiritual nourishment from (Him the Head).**

- **Philippians:**
- In **Philippians 2:6-11** the exaltation of Christ is shown to follow His deep humiliation. He who humbled Himself is exalted to the place of supreme authority.
- Paul apparently loved to speak about the ascension and present ministry of Christ.
- After telling us that Christ became obedient unto the death of a cross (i.e he was lifted up on the cross) as predicted in John 3:14, Paul said, "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him."
- Now there is a play on words here. The word "exalted" means "to lift up," the same word used for lifted up in John 3:14, where we read, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness even so must the Son of Man be lifted up."
- "Wherefore God has highly lifted Him up," is a pun-a play on the idea that Jesus was put or lifted up on the cross; though we may think that as being disgraceful and shameful and awful, God saw it as glory."

- **"He gave Him a name which is above every name."**
Now we learn that the purpose of the ascension and the exaltation of Christ, is to cause us to fall at His feet-not to sit at the cross and have pity on a dead savior.
- **He rose form the dead! He has been exalted by our God!**
- **"That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth."**
- **The Lord was exalted at the right hand of God that every one of us would bow the knee and proclaim Him as Lord to the glory of God the Father.**
- **Now that He is ascended, and exalted what is the proper response of the believer? It is worship! This means, bowing in His presence, and confessing that He is Lord to the glory of God the Father.**

- In Philippians 3:20 Christians are taught that their citizenship is in heaven, "whence also we wait for the Saviour."
- i.e we are waiting for the ascended Christ to return from heaven.

- In [Colossians 3:1](#), it is as if Paul cannot stop referring to this truth, and that He wants us to keep thinking about where Jesus is.
- **If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. "Set your affection on things above"-**
- In the Greek grammar, if in this verse basically says, "If and it is so." We could use the word, "since" in English.
- Setting our affection on Him who is exalted at the right hand of God means that we set our mind on Him, and that we are concentrating and focusing on Him who is our Lord, our master, our life, and our all in all.

- **Thessalonians:**
- Although the emphasis is placed on the second advent of Christ in 1Thessalonians, in **1:10 there** is an assumption of the fact of the Ascension, as **Christians are said to be waiting for God's Son from heaven.** Also in 4:16, He is expected **to "descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God."**
- Both these texts indicate that Jesus must have indeed ascended
- **Timothy:**
- The only allusion to the Ascension in the Pastoral Epistles is found in the closing statement of what seems to be an early Christian song in **1 Timothy 3:16.** He who was "manifested in the flesh **was.....received up into glory.**"
- 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 Gentiles, believed on in the world, **received up into glory.** 1Timothy 3:16

- **Hebrews.**
- **In Hebrews there is more recorded about the Ascension and its consequences than in any other part of the New Testament.**
- **The facts of the Ascension and Session are first of all stated (1:3) with all that this implies of definite position and authority (1:4-13).**
- **Christians are regarded as contemplating Jesus as the Divine Man in heaven (2:9), who is "crowned with glory and honor."**
- **Jesus Christ is described as "a great High Priest, who hath passed through the heavens" (4:14), as a Forerunner who is entered within the veil for us, and as a High Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek (6:20).**

- **As such He "abideth for ever," and "ever liveth to make intercession" (7:24,25).**
- **The chief point of the epistle itself is said to be "such a high priest, who sat down on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens" (8:1), and His position there implies that He has obtained eternal redemption for His people and is appearing before God on their behalf (9:12,24).**
- **This session at God's right hand is also said to be with a view to His return to earth when His enemies will have become His footstool (10:12,13), and one of the last exhortations bids believers to look unto Jesus as the Author and Perfecter of faith who has "sat down at the right hand of the throne of God" (12:2).**

- **The only reference to the Ascension in the Petrine Epistles is in 1 Peter 3:22, where Christ's exaltation after His sufferings is set forth as the pattern and guarantee of Christian glorification after endurance of persecution.**
- **He is here described as one "Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him."**
- **In the Johannine Writings.**
- **1. Epistles:**
- Nothing is recorded of the actual Ascension, but 1 John 2:1 says that "we have an **Advocate with the Father.**" The word "Advocate" is the same as "Comforter" in John 14:16, where it is used of the Holy Spirit. **Christ is the Comforter "in relation to the Father," and the Holy Spirit is the Comforter dwelling in the soul.**
- **2. Apocalypse:**
- **All the references in the Apocalypse either teach or imply that the living Christ is in heaven, and is active in His church and as coming again (Revelation 1:7,13; 5:5-13; 6:9-17; 14:1-5).**

- It is important to remember that the New Testament was written by men who were thoroughly convinced that Jesus was at the right hand of the Father, and that through the ministry of the Holy Spirit they were in union with the ascended Lord and were, by His commission and through His ascended authority and power, left here to continue the work which He began.
- In relation to the ascension, the Lord had said, “I am with you for only a short time, and then I go to the one who sent me.” Jesus said, “Because I live you shall live also.” But in the total context of the New Testament, this refers not only to the resurrection but to His continued life as the ascended and seated Lord of the church and the universe.
- The Christ of the Gospels is the Christ of the past, the eternal past and the historic past, “but the full New Testament picture of Christ is that of a living Christ, the Christ of heaven, the Christ of experience, the Christ of the present and the future” i.e THE ASCENDED CHRIST.



RESPONSE TO THE ASCENSION

- **THE ASCENSION DEMANDS A RESPONSE**
- Because of the importance of the ascension, it demands a response from us to the person and work of Christ.
- In John 6:62), when the Jews failed to assimilate the truth of Christ as the Bread of Life, and the source of our spiritual nourishment and life through feeding on Him by faith and study, the Lord challenged His audience (and challenges us) with these words: **“What then if you should behold the Son of Man ascending where He was before?”**

- Let us observe the four ways the disciples reacted to the ascension as recorded in Luke 24:52-53
- The ascension had a profound impact on the disciples.
- Up to the moment that Jesus ascended to heaven, the disciples seemed to be puzzled, trying to figure it all out.
- In Luke's account of the resurrection in Luke 24:50-53, we read
- When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. While he was blessing them, he parted from them and was taken up into heaven. Then they **worshiped him** and returned to Jerusalem with **great joy**. And they stayed continually at the temple, **praising God**.

- **But after the ascension, we read in Luke 24:52-53**
- **"Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God."**
- **After the ascension, the disciples**
- **1- WORSHIPED Him.**
- **2 traveled back to Jerusalem with great JOY**
- **3 OBEYED by maintaining a regular presence in the temple**
- **4 PRAISING God.**

- **WORSHIP**
- "Worshiped" in our passage is the Greek verb *proskuneo*.
- This word designates "to express in attitude or gesture of one's complete dependence on or submission to a higher authority figure, (fall down and worship, do obeisance to, prostrate oneself before, do reverence to, welcome respectfully."

- **JOY.**
- **The disciples responded with "great joy!" Rather than sadness at his departing, they are overcome with exhilaration.**
- **This reaction of the disciples to Jesus' ascension may catch us off guard. Jesus had just "left them." And yet they were happy and filled with joy.**
- **Why this reaction? After all, when Jesus told them at the end of John 13 that He would soon leave them, they were deeply disturbed.**
- **But then , He encouraged them by teaching them about the ministry of the Holy Spirit (John 14–17). He comforted them by promising them that "You are not losing Me, but I am going to be with you in a different way through My Spirit."**
- **The ascension of Jesus produced joy because the disciples realized that all the promises regarding the Spirit's ministry to them were about to be fulfilled.**
- **The disciples exhibited joy because Jesus victorious resurrection and His ascension, had convinced them of who He was. Their doubts and fears were gone.**
- **In His resurrection, they had hope in victory over death. In His ascension they realized that He would return as promised in John 14.**
- **For these reasons, Jesus' departure gave the disciples joy.**

- **PRAISE.** The third reaction of the disciples to the ascension was praise (c.f the Greek verb *eulogeo*).i.e to "to speak well of, to , extol."
- **OBEDIENCE.**
- Finally, the disciples responded by remaining in Jerusalem, during the day in the temple courts as ordered by Jesus in Acts 1:4 **And, being assembled together with *them*, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, *saith he*, ye have heard of me.**
- Their obedient waiting was rewarded with the power and presence of the Spirit, about a week later, when the Holy Spirit was poured out at Pentecost.

- **Joy, hope, praise and obedience are the consistent responses of the disciples to Christ's resurrection and ascension.**
- In light of these two great events, we see the disciples transformed and mobilized to follow Jesus fully.
- We can also go forward with hope and joy because the King of the universe promises that He will never leave or forsake us.
- If we want to experience greater transformation and the joy of following Jesus mission, we should build our confidence on the finished and sufficient work of Jesus Christ, in the knowledge that the resurrection and ascension testify to the completion and perfection of His work.....BECAUSE.....

- **Every real Christian is a living proof of an ascended Lord!**
- **We are saved by an ascended Lord (Hebrews 7:25);**
- **We are kept, moment by moment, by an ascended Lord (Jude 24);**
- **We live in constant fellowship with an ascended Lord (1 John 1:3);**
- **We are represented before the Father by our Great Advocate, and ascended Lord (1 John 2:1); and the fact that our ascended Lord is with the Father is the guarantee of our life (John 14:19-20).**
- **The truth and the reality of the Lord's ascension are thus certainly very important**