

Up, Up, and Away

Acts 1:9-11

INTRODUCTION

- A. One scholar explains away the ascension by saying that Jesus walked up a mountain into some clouds.
- B. Such an “explanation” hardly does justice to the biblical record.
 - 1. Scripture affirms:
 - a. That Jesus was received up into heaven.
 - b. That the apostles watched Jesus ascend into heaven.
 - c. That angels told the apostles Jesus would return to this earth the same way he was taken from it.
 - 2. Tonight, we need to examine this biblical subject.

WHAT DOES THE ASCENSION MEAN TO CHRIST?

- A. He was exalted to the right hand of God.
 - 1. The Scriptures affirm this:
 - a. Acts 2:32-33.
 - b. Acts 7:56.
 - 2. When Jesus was crucified, it appeared as though all was lost.
 - a. Jesus had promised so much, but everything had now been seemingly lost.
 - b. Jesus, the hope of so many, had been killed by lawless hands.
 - 3. Yet, God gave Jesus victory.
 - a. He raised him from the dead.
 - b. He also gave him a place of honor—a place at his right hand.
- B. He is exalted as Lord.
 - 1. The Scriptures affirm this.
 - a. Acts 2:36.
 - b. Phil. 2:9-11.
 - 2. This title means “owner” or “master.”
 - a. Jesus owns us; he is our master.
 - b. Therefore, we need to live in accordance with his standards.
- C. He is exalted as Head of the church (Eph. 1:20-22).
 - 1. No man is head of the church.
 - 2. No man has the right to change the church.
- D. He is exalted as High Priest (Heb. 8:1).
 - 1. The high priest would make sacrifices for the people (Lev. 9:7).
 - 2. Jesus made sacrifice for us, his people (Heb. 7:27).
- E. He is exalted as our Savior (Acts 5:31).
 - 1. The very foundation of Christianity affirms that man cannot save himself.
 - 2. As Jesus was exalted at God’s right hand, God gave Jesus the power to give the forgiveness of sins.

WHAT DOES THE ASCENSION MEAN TO THE SALVATION PROCESS?

- A. We have a High Priest who has made Atonement (Heb. 1:3).
 - 1. Jesus made purification for our sins.
 - a. Our sins were ugly and horrible.
 - b. Jesus purified those sins
 - 2. After Jesus purified those sins, he sat down at God’s right hand.

- B. We now have a Mediator (1 Tim. 2:5).
 - 1. Of course, a mediator goes between two parties.
 - 2. Jesus goes between man and God and makes fellowship possible.
- C. We now have an Intercessor (Rom. 8:34).
 - 1. Intercession means to appeal--Jesus appeals for us before God's throne.
 - 2. Jesus continues to make intercession for us (Heb. 7:25).
- D. We now have an Advocate (1 Jn. 2:1).
 - 1. The idea of an "advocate" is one who helps or one who pleads the case of another, e.g., a children's advocate would argue one behalf of children.
 - 2. Jesus pleads our case before God's throne.

WHAT DID THE ASCENSION MEAN TO THE EARLY CHURCH?

- A. It was the end of the resurrection appearances.
 - 1. For forty days following his resurrection, Jesus lived with and spoke to his apostles.
 - 2. Yet, after his resurrection, he chiefly spoke to them through the Holy Spirit.
 - 3. On occasion, Jesus did appear to individuals after his ascension, yet each time he did so to individuals who had the miraculous measure of the Spirit (e.g., Paul, Ananias, Stephen).
 - 4. Jesus today doesn't speak to individuals today except through his Word.
 - a. If people do claim to see Jesus, they had better back up their word with miracles.
 - b. If people do claim to see Jesus, he had better not say something that isn't in Scripture (Gal. 1:6-9).
- B. It let them know where Jesus had gone.
 - 1. Had Jesus simply disappeared from the early church, they would have had every reason to be terrified.
 - 2. But, since the apostles watched Jesus ascend into heaven, they knew where he had gone.
- C. It made possible the coming of the Holy Spirit.
 - 1. The Scriptures teach this.
 - a. Jn. 16:7.
 - b. Acts 2:33.
 - 2. The coming of the Holy Spirit allowed:
 - a. The word of the apostles to be confirmed (Mk. 16:20).
 - b. The New Testament to be written (Jn. 16:13).

WHAT DOES THE ASCENSION MEAN TO US?

- A. We need to recognize Jesus as King, Christ, and Head of the church.
- B. The Christian life is affected and impacted (Col. 3:1-2).
 - 1. Since our Lord has been seated at God's right hand, we need to fill our lives with thoughts coming from above (Phil. 4:8).
 - 2. Our actions are greatly affected by what we think (Prov. 23:7).
- C. There is eternal life and hope.