

Doctrine of the Ascension and Seating of Christ

1. Definition and Concept

1.1 The bodily transfer of our Lord from the earthly to the heavenly sphere of existence.

1.1.1 The ascension is then that doctrine of Christology pertaining to the glorification of Jesus in hypostatic union being seated at the right of the Father in the place of honor.

1.1.2 Both the Ascension and seating of our Lord were accomplished in resurrection body.

1.1.3 This Ascension of our Lord forms the climax of Jesus' strategic victory in the angelic conflict.

1.2 The primary account of the Ascension appears in Acts 1:9-11 and Luk 24:51:

Acts 1:9 After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

Acts 1:10 They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them.

Acts 1:11 "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? 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."

Luk 24:51 "And it came to pass, while He blessed them, He was parted from them and carried up into heaven."

1.3 The tertiary reference in Mar 16:19 is rendered questionable by inferior textual evidence. Mar 16:9-20 not in the better manuscripts.

1.3.1 However, the Ascension is assumed as the foundation for numerous statements in the New Testament.

Examples:

Col 3:1 Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.

Col 3:2 Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.

Rom 8:34 Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died--more than that, who was raised to life--is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.

Heb 8:1 The point of what we are saying is this: We do have such a high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven,

1.4 In fact, there is hardly a New Testament writer who does not give testimony, direct or indirect, to the truth of the ascension.

2. According to Luke, the event took place approximately 40 days after the resurrection.

Acts 1:3 After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.

3. Luke also tells us it took place near Bethany on the Mount of Olives disappearing into a cloud.

Luk 24:50 When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them.

Luk 24:51 While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven.

Acts 1:12 Then they returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day's walk from the city.

Acts 1:9 After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

3.1 Whether the cloud was that of the Shekinah glory or a natural cloud of vapor, the record does not make clear.

4. The Ascension was anticipated in the Old Testament.

Psa 68:18 When you ascended on high, you led captives in your train; you received gifts for men, even for the rebellious--that you, O LORD God, might dwell there. Eph 4:8 is a related verse.

Eph 4:8 This is why it says: "When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men."

Psa 110:1 The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet."

5. The Ascension was prophesied by our Lord.

Joh 6:58 This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your forefathers ate manna and died, but he who feeds on this bread will live forever..."

Joh 6:61 Aware that his disciples were grumbling about this, Jesus said to them, "Does this offend you?"

Joh 6:62 What if you see the Son of Man ascend to where he was before!

Joh 20:17 Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet returned to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"

6. Objection has been raised concerning the Ascension by those who approach the record from a purely naturalistic viewpoint.

6.1 They assert that such violation of the law of gravity is unthinkable.

6.2 However, for those who accept the possibility of supernatural intervention in the world, the Ascension is not a problem.

6.3 Given an omnipotent God, both resurrection and Ascension are easily conceivable.

7. Some view the Ascension as being merely a symbolical representation of Christ's entrance into divine glory.

8. This is an attempt to retain the spiritual value of the Ascension account without sacrificing the concept of the natural world as a closed system not susceptible to supernatural intrusion.

9. The significance of the Ascension is manifold.

9.1 For Christ Himself the Ascension meant exaltation to a position of glory as the victorious Lord, the Head of the Church.

Eph 1:20 which such power He exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms,

Eph 1:21 far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.

Eph 1:22 And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church,

Eph 1:23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

Phi 2:9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,

9.2 The Ascension also made possible the coming of the Holy Spirit to indwell the believer as our Helper, to convince of sin and to teach us the Word of God.

Joh 16:7 But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.

Joh 16:8 When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment:

Joh 16:13 But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.

Joh 14:26 But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

Acts 2:33 Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear.

9.3 The Ascension signifies our identification with Christ; Our Lord is seated with the Father in the heavenlies and we are identified with our Savior in the heavens.

Eph 2:6 And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus,

Col 3:1 Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.

Col 3:2 Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.

Col 3:3 For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.

9.4 The ascension initiated Christ's high priestly advocacy before the Father on the believer's behalf, a truth which is given major treatment in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

Heb 4:14 Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess.

Heb 4:15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are--yet was without sin.

Heb 4:16 Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Heb 6:20 Jesus, who went before us, has entered into the third heaven on our behalf. He has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.

Heb 7:22 Because of this oath, Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant.

Heb 7:23 Now there have been many of those priests, since death prevented them from continuing in office;

Heb 7:24 but because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood.

Heb 7:25 Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.

Heb 8:1 The point of what we are saying is this: We do have such a high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven,

Heb 9:24 For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence.

9.5 Christ will return to the earth in the same manner in which he ascended.

Acts 1:11 "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? 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."

10. The resurrection body of Jesus was capable of horizontal and vertical travel and He went through walls passing also through two heavens to the Third Heaven.

11. The Ascension establishes the authority of our Lord to intercede for us.

Rom 8:34 Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died--more than that, who was raised to life-- sits at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.

12. The power and perfection of His total being and work is portrayed in the ascension.

Heb 1:3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.

13. The Ascension is related to the Angelic Conflict says Heb 1:13 and 14.

Heb 1:13 To which of the angels did God ever say, "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet"?

Heb 1:14 Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?

14. His Ascension is related to our Lord's unique sacrifice for sin.

Heb 10:12 But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God.

15. The Ascension is related to our need to keep ourselves occupied with Christ.

Heb 12:2 Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who instead of the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

16. The ascension is related to the strategic victory of Jesus the Christ, His celebrityship and the giving of gifts to Church Age believers.

1Pe 3:22 who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand--with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.

Eph 4:7 But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it.

Eph 4:8 This is why it says: "When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men."

Eph 4:9 (What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions?)

Eph 4:10 He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.)

Eph 4:11 It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers,

Acts 2:33 Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear.

17. The Ascension made possible our receiving the Indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

1Co 6:19 Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own;

1Co 6:20 you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

Joh 7:37 On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink.

Joh 7:38 Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him."

Joh 7:39 By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.

18. The Ascension verifies the efficacy of Christ on the cross.

Heb 9:23 It was necessary, then, for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these sacrifices, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.

Heb 9:24 For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence.

19. The Ascension begins the ultimate defeat and the process of the capitulation of Satan in the Angelic Conflict.

20. The Ascension is related to the *Doctrine of the Resurrection*.