

The Ascension of Christ and its Implications

The Apostles Creed, after speaking of His incarnation and then his death -- says

*On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.*

Baptist Catechism #30 and #31 are Christ's humiliation and exaltation.

"The significance of the ascension is often overlooked in the modern church. We have special celebrations and holidays to commemorate the birth (Christmas), the death (Good Friday), and resurrection (Easter) of Christ. Most churches, however, make little or no mention of the Ascension. However, the Ascension is a redemptive event of profound importance. It marks the moment of Christ's highest point of exaltation prior to His return. It is in the Ascension that Christ entered into His glory." (RC Sproul)

I. The Ascension Itself

A. The Account in Luke 24:44-53

1. Tarry in Jerusalem – v. 49
2. He blessed them and was parted from them v. 50-51
3. They worshipped Him v. 52-53

B. The Account in Acts 1:8-11

1. The great commission is linked to the ascension of Christ.
2. A cloud received him out of their sight.
3. It was a Bodily Ascension – He ascends as a man.

II. The Doctrine of the Ascension

A. The Heidelberg Catechism has 4 questions devoted to the Ascension.

Q. #46-- deals with the fact Christ did ascend to Heaven.

In much the same way as our Baptist Catechism does in Q. 31
But the Heidelberg goes on to ask 3 more questions.

Q # 47-- But isn't Christ with us until the end of the world as he promised us?

A. Christ is truly human and truly God.

In his human nature Christ is not now on earth.
But in his divinity, majesty, grace and Spirit
He is not absent from us for a moment.

**Q # 48 – If his humanity is not present wherever his divinity is,
Then aren't the two natures of Christ separated from each other?**

- A. Certainly not. Since divinity is not limited and is present everywhere, It is evident that Christ's divinity is surely beyond the bounds of the humanity he has taken on, but at the same time his divinity is in and remains personally united to his humanity.

Q # 49 – How does Christ's ascension to heaven benefit us?

- A. **First**, he pleads our cause in heaven in the presence of his Father.
Second, we have our own flesh in heaven – a guarantee that Christ our head will take us, his members, to himself in heaven.
Third, he sends his Spirit to us on earth as a further guarantee.
By the Spirit's power we make the goal of our lives, not earthly things, but the things above where Christ is, sitting at God's right hand.

B. A Scriptural Confession/early Hymn -- 1 Timothy 3:16

C. Implications of the Ascension for the Church -- Eph. 4:8-13

1. All ministerial gifts are the fruit of Christ's going up to Heaven.
2. Heaven is a place.
3. He is our prophet, priest and king.

"**As King** having by His death, resurrection and ascension achieved and displayed His triumph over His enemies, He now holds in His hands the reigns of the universe and rules all things in the interest of the church.

As prophet, He through His Spirit leads His own in all truth.

As priest, He on the basis of His accomplished atonement not only intercedes but actually lives forever to make intercession for those who draw near to God through Him."
(William Hendricksen)

D. The Testimony from the Book of Hebrews

1. Hebrews 4:14 –Seeing then that we have a great High Priest *who has passed through the heavens*, **Jesus** the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* confession.
2. Hebrews 6:19-20

III. Four Applications that Flow from Christ's Ascension

1. This is a great encouragement as we go through this life, and as we come to the end of our life.
2. This assures us He is currently ruling and reigning as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.
 - 1) He has a permanent place in heaven.
 - 2) His work of redemption is complete.
 - 3) He is seated in the place of highest honor in the entire universe.
3. This is a great blessing and includes a great mystery.
4. This teaches us to hold this present world with a loose grip.