

Message Seven

Knowing the Ascension

Scripture Reading: Acts 2:36; Heb. 2:9; 4:14-15; 7:26; 12:2; Eph. 1:19-23; 2:6

I. The Man-Savior's ascension is His inauguration into His heavenly office through the process of creation, incarnation, human living, crucifixion, and resurrection as God and man, as the Creator and the creature, and as the Redeemer, the Savior, and the life-giving Spirit, to execute God's administration and to carry out God's New Testament economy.

II. We need to see the objective aspect of the Lord's ascension:

- A. The Lord's ascension caused Him to be crowned with glory and honor—Heb. 2:9:
 - 1. Glory is the splendor related to Jesus' person; honor is the preciousness related to Jesus' worth—1 Pet. 2:7.
 - 2. Christ is glorious in state and honorable in rank; He is above all kings and rulers; this is His honor.
- B. The Lord's ascension caused Him to be enthroned for God's administration; Hebrews 12:2 says that Christ is now seated on the right hand of the throne of God:
 - 1. The fact that God in Christ is sitting on the throne means that God administers the entire universe from within Christ and through Christ, just as the light shines from within the lamp and through the lamp—Rev. 22:1, 3; cf. 21:23.
 - 2. Christ is now on the throne to administer the entire universe; He is the unique Administrator, the King of kings and the Lord of lords; He is the Ruler of the kings of the earth—1:5; 17:14; 19:16.
 - 3. His administering is related to the universe, but His carrying out of God's New Testament economy is to propagate Himself for His reproduction to build up the church, His Body, which will issue in the New Jerusalem—cf. Acts 5:31.
- C. "Let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you have crucified" (2:36); in this verse the word *made* can be understood to mean "inaugurated"; in His ascension God inaugurated Christ into His heavenly ministry:
 - 1. The Man-Savior, in His ascension, has been made the Lord to possess all; He is now the Lord to possess the whole universe, God's chosen people, and all positive things, matters, and persons.
 - 2. The Man-Savior, in His ascension, was made the Christ as God's Anointed (Heb. 1:9) to carry out God's commission.
- D. We are now one with Christ in His resurrection and ascension (Eph. 2:6); as a result, we have life and power in resurrection and also authority in ascension; when we contact our Lord, we need to have a realization of what He is, a realization of His status, position, and office.

III. We need to see the subjective aspect of the Lord's ascension—cf. Ps. 91:1; S. S. 4:7-8; 6:10:

- A. Christ in His all-transcending ascension transcended Hades (where the dead people are being held), the earth (where the fallen people are moving against God), the air (where Satan and his power of darkness are acting against God), and all the heavens (where Satan can go—Eph. 1:20-21; 4:8-10; Heb. 7:26; Job 1:6-12a; 2:1-6).
- B. In His ascension Christ passed through the heavens (Heb. 4:14) so that now He is not only in heaven (9:24) but is also higher than the heavens (7:26), far above all the heavens (Eph. 4:10).
- C. Ephesians 1:19-23 reveals that there is a transmission from the ascended Christ to us; verse 22 says that God gave Christ “to be Head over all things to the church”; the phrase *to the church* indicates a transmission from the ascended Christ to the church, His Body:
 - 1. God gave the ascended Christ a great gift—the headship over all things; what God gave Christ to be is to the church; it is transmitted to the church, and the church shares it.
 - 2. Verses 20 through 22 show that God caused His power to operate in Christ in four steps: first, raising Him from the dead; second, seating Him at His right hand in the heavenlies; third, subjecting all things under His feet; and fourth, giving Him to be Head over all things to the church.
- D. In His ascension Christ was made the Head of the church, His Body, to express God in His fullness—Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:23; 3:19:
 - 1. The Head and the Body are one and form a universal man; with this divine matter there is neither the element of space nor the element of time; the Body is one with the Head in the divine life and in the divine Spirit.
 - 2. According to the divine viewpoint, we are one with the ascended Christ, and His ascension is also ours (2:6); here in this ascension we express Him in His fullness; since the transcending Christ is the embodiment of the Triune God (Col. 2:9), His transcending transmission includes all the rich dispensing of the Triune God to make us the fullness of Christ for His expression (Eph. 1:22-23; 3:19, 8).
- E. In His ascension Christ was also made the High Priest in the heavens to bear us in the presence of God and to care for all our needs; in His ascension He was inaugurated into His priestly office—Heb. 2:17-18; 4:14-15; Psa. 110:1-4; Heb. 5:6; 7:26:
 - 1. On the one hand, Christ is the High Priest interceding in the heavens for the churches (vv. 25-26; Rom. 8:34); on the other hand, He is the High Priest moving in the churches to care for them; in Revelation 1:13 Christ is depicted as the High Priest, as shown by His garment, a garment reaching to the feet, that is, a priestly robe (Exo. 28:33-35).
 - 2. In Revelation 8 Christ is revealed as the Priest offering the incense at the golden altar: “Another Angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer, and much incense was given to Him to offer with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne” (v. 3).

IV. We need to see that we are in the Lord’s ascension—Eph. 2:6:

- A. The entire age of grace is the time of the Lord’s ascension—1:20.

- B. Christ is not only in ascension but also in us—Col. 1:27.
- C. Christ is still moving in His ascension; He is living, dwelling, staying, ministering, serving, working, and acting in His ascension:
 - 1. He is in His ascension within us; this is why Paul tells us that we are seated together with Christ in His ascension—Eph. 2:6.
 - 2. Within our being, there is an extraordinary person—the ascended Christ—Col. 1:27; Eph. 2:6.
 - 3. The Lord today is in our spirit in His ascension—2 Tim. 4:22a.
 - 4. In this ascension the Triune God moves in us, and this move becomes our history.
 - 5. Christ is the embodiment of the Triune God, and we are parts of this embodiment in His ascension—Rom. 8:10; 2 Cor. 13:5; Gal. 2:20; 4:19; Col. 2:9.
 - 6. Whenever we are gathered together into His name, Christ is there with all His members in ascension, and this is God’s move within man—Matt. 18:20; Col. 3:1, 3-4; Eph. 1:20; 2:6.