

WHAT EVERY CHRISTIAN SHOULD KNOW

LESSON 10

GOD THE SON: HIS ASCENSION AND CURRENT MINISTRY

The creeds are man's understanding and expression of God's Word. When Jesus asked Peter, "who do people say that I am? And, Peter answered, "you are the Christ." We hear one of the creeds expressed.

Of the Apostles creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian Creed, one of the recurring expressions is that of the ascension. Although we remember His death and resurrection on a greater and more scheduled level, when it comes to the ascension it doesn't always fit in that discussion... it's often an after-thought.

And, now that Christ has ascended into Heaven, what role does he play now? If Jesus said, "But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you." John 16:7 It sounds like He has given over everything related to us to the Holy Spirit. Most might think of the ascension as nothing more than a storybook ending to a remarkable life. Is it really an important aspect of faith for us?

There are two important questions to deal with today.

1. After the resurrection, what happened to Jesus?
2. What is the work of Christ now?

Let's take a few minutes and look at what Scripture says about these two questions:

- [Luke 24:50-52](#) "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 left them and was taken up into heaven. Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy."
- [Acts 1:9](#) "After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight."

- [John 3:13](#) “No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man.”
- [John 16:10](#) “I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer.”
- [John 16:28](#) “I came from the Father and entered the world; now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father.”
- [Ephesians 4:10](#) “He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.”
- [1 Timothy 3:16](#) “He appeared in a body, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory.”
- [Hebrews 4:14](#) “We have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God.”
- [Hebrews 7:24-26](#) “Because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them. Such a high priest meets our need—one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens.”
- [1 Peter 3:21-22](#) “Jesus Christ has gone into heaven and is at God’s right hand—with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.”

1. What happened to Jesus after the resurrection... He ascended into Heaven!

First, we know that Jesus didn’t immediately disappear into heaven. The grave could not hold him and after being buried and resurrected He spent 40 days among us before He departed. Heaven was waiting for Him but He was in no hurry to end His time on earth. 40 days in Scripture is a significant duration of time. For 40 days He met with those He had been serving with. For 40 days he walked with those who had seen him before the crucifixion. For 40 days He proved that He was not some phantom or ghost but, He was real flesh and blood.

He did not rush to heaven because he wanted to give the commands to, “feed my sheep” to “go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I

have commanded you. And surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age.” While Jesus is speaking to his disciples in Bethany He is taken up into heaven before their eyes. In the resurrection there were no eyewitnesses. In the ascension Jesus was taken up before them all. This was not a figment of their imagination or a dream or vision. Unlike the resurrection, which no one saw as it was happening, the disciples actually saw Jesus ascend into heaven. Both Luke and Acts say that Jesus was “taken up” into heaven. The word in the original language carries with it the idea of being lifted straight up into the air.

There’s a country song called, The Lamb, The Lion, The King –

VERSE 1

Like a lamb led to the slaughter
Jesus never opened His mouth
From the trial to the crucifixion
To the grave He was laid out
After three days in the garden tomb
I can hear the angels sing
As the Lamb came forth, as a Lion
And the Lion became the King

CHORUS

You won't find Him again at the whipping post
Standing there so meek
And He won't be nailed to a rugged cross
Through His hands and through His feet
No, there'll never be another Calvary
Cause He don't have to prove one thing
The day the Lamb became a Lion
And the Lion became a King

VERSE 2

You know Jesus left His splendor
To live on earth as man
By most He was rejected
Because He came forth as the Lamb
Oh, but the day is soon approaching
When every eye shall see
The Lamb, the Lion of Judah,
Has been crowned , church, the King of Kings

CHORUS

The day the Lamb became a Lion
And the Lion became a King
Now He's the King of Kings

Jesus returned home victorious... His triumphant ascension brought an end His days here on earth. An end of suffering, an end of sorrow, now a crown for a king not one of thorns, now rejoicing instead of insults, now surrounded by angels singing praise and worship, no more crowds mocking and calling for his death... the day the Lamb became a King.

2. What is the work of Christ now?

It would be good to consider a few of the clearly stated truths from Scripture, the known aspects of the work of Christ today.

- a. His work is without limitation: Because Jesus has returned to heaven and has shed his human frame, He is now free from any limits that men and women physically experience. He has returned home and He is without limitations. There is no place He can't be. When He walked the earth He allowed the limits of a human frame. If He was in Jerusalem, He was not at the same time in Bethany. He chose to limit His glory and limit His power... but now He's with us always, even to the very end of the age" ([Matthew 28:20](#)). He will never leave us nor forsake us. There is nothing that will separate us from the love of Christ. When we walk through hard times, he's there. When we fail, He's there. When we experience His power and provision, He's there. Jesus is always there, He will always be there because He has ascended into Heaven, He is without limitation.
- b. He sits at the right hand of the Father: When Kings ruled the world and the wanted to honor someone they would offer them a seat at their right hand. Aside from the king there was no higher place of honor. Jesus has ascended into heaven to be at the right hand of the father... permanently. His place in heaven was waiting for him. The triumphant seat at the right hand of the Father.
- c. When Jesus said it is finished and He put the exclamation point on the finished work of redemption in His ascension, it means that his work of redemption is now complete. The work that Christ did on earth was completed. It was the

same work of the Father ([John 4:34](#); [9:4](#); [17:4](#)). Just before he died, Christ shouted out, “It is finished” ([John 19:30](#)), which literally means “paid in full.” The work was done; the debt was paid. I can never be charged with the guilt of my sins because Jesus paid it all. The ascension signifies that the Father has accepted the work of his Son. Since God has accepted Christ, nothing more can be added to what he did when he died on the cross and rose from the dead. [Hebrews 10:11](#) reminds us that there were no chairs in the tabernacle because the priests were not allowed to sit down. They stood to perform their work because their work was never done. Every day the priest would kill another animal—signifying that the price of sin had not yet been paid. But when Christ returned to heaven, he sat down because he had offered himself as the one sacrifice for sin forever. Thank God, Jesus is seated in heaven.

- d. It means he is now in the place of supreme and highest honor in the universe. God has exalted him and given him a name that is above every name ([Philippians 2:9-11](#)). At the name of Jesus every knee will bow and every tongue will one day confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. Consider what this means:
- e. But now at last, our Lord receives what he deserves—glory, laud and honor. [Philippians 2:5-7](#) tells us that Christ “emptied himself” of the outward trappings of deity in order to take on the form of a man. He humbled himself by leaving the palaces of heaven to be born in a stable in Bethlehem. He veiled his glory and lived a life of humiliation. All of us feel it was unfair for the King of Kings to be treated so rudely by those he came to save. Do you recall that as he hung on the cross, onlookers jeered as his life ebbed away? They laughed at his pain and cried, “If you are the Son of God, save yourself” ([Mark 15:29-30](#)). The ascension means that Jesus has been vindicated in all that he came to do and his days of humiliation are over forever.
- f. Because he is now in heaven, Jesus is the one who still mediates for us before the Father. The word intercede means to speak for another. Think about that for a moment. Jesus Christ is in Heaven speaking up for you... speaking on your behalf. Maybe you’ve never been happy with the way you’ve responded

when you had to speak extemporaneously or, think on your feet. But, in Heaven before God, you have Jesus interceding for you! When I feel burdened and discouraged what a tremendous encouragement. When I've lost in a test or temptation Jesus prays for me. Jesus takes our weak and inarticulate expressions and prays for me in Heaven before the Father. What a gift! His grace just continues. He intercedes for us with the Father. The word "intercede" means to speak up on behalf of someone else. Christ is now in heaven praying for us. What a marvelous thought this is—and what a balm for troubled souls. When I am down in the dumps, Jesus prays for me. When I falter under the load, Jesus prays for me. When my faith gives way, Jesus prays for me. When I fight a losing battle against temptation, Jesus prays for me.

[Hebrews 7:24-25](#)

In conclusion [Hebrews 4:14-16](#) calls Christ a great high priest who has gone before us into the presence of the father in heaven. Because he went through what we go through and has experienced life as we are experiencing life He is complete in his comprehension of life on earth. And because He is in heaven we have our great high priest who has gone before us ... we don't wonder who will be our ally. We have Christ, seated next to the Father in Heaven, one who understands our situation perfectly functioning as our advocate. What a blessed encouragement!