

ASCENSION DAY 2020

INTRODUCTION

Today we celebrate Jesus ascension. 40 days after Passover and 10 days before Pentecost.

The ascension was prophesied by the Psalmist in Psalm 68:18 and the Apostle Paul repeats it's words in **Ephesians 4:8-10** (NLT) That is why the Scriptures say, "When he ascended to the heights, he led a crowd of captives and gave gifts to his people." 9 Notice that it says "he ascended." This clearly means that Christ also descended to our lowly world. 10 And the same one who descended is the one who ascended higher than all the heavens, so that he might fill the entire universe with himself.

Jesus also spoke of it several times. Here's one example from **John 14:28** You have heard how I said to you, I go away, and come again to you. If you loved me, you would rejoice, because I said, I go to the Father: for my Father is greater than I.

Let's spend a few moments tonight pondering the significance of Jesus ascension for you and I.

MESSAGE

Acts 1:9-11 (NKJV) Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. 10 And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, 11 who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven."

JESUS PAID IN FULL ON THE CROSS BUT HE CONTINUES WORKING ON OUR BEHALF

When Jesus cried out on the cross, "It is finished", He was speaking about His redemptive sacrifice of paying for our sins which was complete. But He didn't stop working for us after that.

In Acts 1:1-2 we read, "In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus **began** to do and teach, until the day when he was taken up..."

Jesus **began**... that means he was not done with doing and teaching just because He ascended.

Someone described Jesus ongoing work like this, "Acts" is all about the "Acts of the risen Lord Jesus," which He works from heaven, through his people, by the Holy Spirit, for the accomplishment of God's purposes."

WHEN JESUS WENT UP, GOD SENT HIS HOLY SPIRIT DOWN

After his resurrection Jesus told his followers, **Luke 24:49** "I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high".

This was fulfilled as the Holy Spirit was poured out at Pentecost, and Peter confirmed it in his sermon that day: **Acts 2:33** as Peter preached he said, "Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, **He has poured out** this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing". This was fulfilling God's promise in **Joel 2:28**, "I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh,".

Jesus prayed that we would receive the Holy Spirit in **John 14:16** (NKJV) And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever.

The Holy Spirit empowers us to continue the work that He began.

Acts 1:8 (NKJV) But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Jesus said that it was to our advantage the He go.

John 16:7 (NKJV) Nevertheless 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 depart, I will send Him to you.

If Jesus didn't Ascend, we would have never received the Wonderful Helper, the Powerful Holy Spirit and we would not be effective witnesses.

WHEN JESUS ASCENDED, HE TOOK HIS RIGHTFUL PLACE AS THE SON OF GOD AND THE RESURRECTED KING OF GLORY

Jesus said that just as He had come from the Father, He would also return to the Father.

In power, the Holy Spirit raised Jesus from the dead seated Him at the right hand of the Father in glory from where He leads the church.

Ephesians 1:19-23 and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power 20 which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. 22 And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, 23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

WE NOW HAVE A MEDIATOR, AN INTERCESSOR AND AN ADVOCATE IN HEAVEN

He is our Mediator

1 Timothy 2:5 (NKJV) For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus,

Jesus is the mediator between God and man. His death and resurrection secure our forgiveness, justification, and reconciliation with God. He is our mercy seat through His precious blood. He mediates for us from heaven.

He is our Intercessor

Romans 8:34 (NKJV) Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.

Our ascended Lord Jesus is now in the heavenly throne room, interceding for his people as our true high priest.

He is our Advocate

1 John 2:1 (NKJV) My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

Why do we need an advocate? Because of our enemy the devil who is know as the "accuser of the brethren". When he comes in with his accusations against us before the Father, Jesus our Great Advocate is there for us and He counters those accusations with proof that He has already paid for all our sins!

Because Jesus ascended, we now have a Mediator, High Intercessor and Advocate in the heavenly Throne room.

HIS ASCENSION MEANS THAT HE IS COMING BACK FOR US

John 14 1-3 (NKJV) "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. 2 In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also

In **Acts 1:11** two angels explain to the disciples, "This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 (NKJV) For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

Jesus is coming back for those who love Him, He's busy preparing a special place for us and He is going to come back again in the same way that He left, to receive us to Himself.

HIS ASCENSION MEANS THAT HE IS COMING BACK TO REIGN IN GLORY

Jesus will come back one day and reign forever:

Revelation 11:15 (NKJV) Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!" Jesus's heavenly reign will one day be fully realized on earth.

This is the very thing we ask for when we pray, "Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven".

CONCLUSION - WHAT DOES THIS ALL MEAN FOR OUR LIVES?

The ascension completed Jesus mission on earth and signified His enthronement as Heavenly King.

- We are now at an advantage because we have the Helper, the Promised Holy Spirit. Now we can witness in boldness and in power.
- Jesus is the Head of the church and is our High Priest.
 - We have a heavenly Mediator, Intercessor and Advocate who is representing us in the very throne room of God.
 - Know that Jesus is not indifferent to our struggles. He has endured great suffering and is thus the most merciful and sympathetic counselor and mediator.
 - We can take our cares to our ascended Lord who hears our prayers and can respond with all of heaven's authority.
 - He is very much involved in our lives on a day to day basis.
 - Therefore we can and must live boldly, confidently, as faith-filled servants of the exalted King of Heaven.
- We have a hope in a glorious future.
 - Jesus has gone to prepare a mansion for us! He is going to come and fetch us, His bride and we will be with Him forever.

- We have a King that will one day come back reign in Glory and when He does so, we will be with Him.
 - He will come to rule and reign as Almighty Judge and King over all the nations of the earth.