

The Ascension

The Sunday after Ascension 2018

I. INTRODUCTION -

- A strange / forgotten doctrine
- A rather peculiar name: "heavenly journey"
- Most often: we share the Gospel w/o it!

A. Not mentioned at all in Mark's & Matthew's Gospel

B. Only alluded to in John's Gospel:

¹⁷ Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" (John 20)

c. Given twice in Luke Acts!

II. WHAT HAPPENED?

Luke 24

⁴⁹ And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."

⁵⁰ And he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them. ⁵¹ While he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven.

⁵² And they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, ⁵³ and were continually in the temple blessing God. (Luke 24)

Acts 1:1-11

⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

⁹ And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. ¹⁰ And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, ¹¹ and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven." ¹² Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away.

¹⁴ All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers. (Acts 1:9-14 ESV)

III. WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

A. We can proclaim the Resurrection w/o the Ascension:

- Acts 3:14-21
- Acts 4:10ff
- Acts 10:38ff
- 1 Corinthians 15:1-8

2. But the Ascension is “the rest of the story”

²² "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know-- ²³ this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men....³² This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. ³³ Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God (Acts 2)

³⁰ The God of our fathers raised Jesus, whom you killed by hanging him on a tree. ³¹ God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. (Acts 5)

⁵ Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹ Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2)

IV. IMPLICATIONS

A. Jesus is preeminent above all things in this universe

³ ... After making purification for sins, [Jesus] sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, ⁴ having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs. (Hebrews 1)

¹⁶ For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- all things were created through him and for him. ¹⁷ And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸ And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. (Colossians 1)

B. He rules over/controls all things

⁹ For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, ¹⁰ and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority. (Colossians 1)

⁹ Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians. 2)

... ²⁰ that he [God] 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 rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. ²² And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church ... (Ephesians 1)

²¹ ... Jesus Christ, ²² who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him. (1 Peter 3)

C. He rules over all things on behalf of the Father's will

¹⁹ So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise. (Jn. 5:19 ESV)

²⁷ For "God has put all things in subjection under his feet." But when it says, "all things are put in subjection," it is plain that he is excepted who put all things in subjection under him. ²⁸ When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all. (1 Corinthians 15)

⁷ "Then I said, 'Behold, I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book.'" ¹⁰ And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all..... ¹² But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, ¹³ waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. (Hebrews 10)

D. Jesus has been exalted in order to make intercession for us before the Father

²⁵ Consequently, he [Jesus] is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them. ²⁶ For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. (Hebrews 7)

E. Jesus' Ascension/ Departure is intimately connected to his "never-leaving" Presence

¹⁸ "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. (John 14)

⁵ ... for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." (Hebrews 13)

⁷ 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 go, I will send him to you. (John 16)

⁴⁹ And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high." (Luke 24)

³² This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. ³³ 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. (Acts 2)

F. His exaltation is evidence of God's on-going visitation in this present age

⁴¹ But he said to them, "How can they say that the Christ is David's son? ⁴² For David himself says in the Book of Psalms, "'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand, ⁴³ until I make your enemies your footstool.'" (Luke 20)

For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says, "'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand, ³⁵ until I make your enemies your footstool.'" (Acts 2)

³ And to which of the angels has he ever said, "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet"? (Hebrews 1)

²⁴ Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. ²⁵ For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. (1 Corinthians 15)

G. His Ascension is a promise of his Glorious Return & Judgement

⁹ And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. ¹⁰ And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, ¹¹ and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven." (Acts 1)

V. WHAT SHOULD BE OUR RESPONSE?

A. Be prepared to receive his Spirit poured out upon your life

⁴⁹ And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high." (Luke 24)

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

B. Respond in worship and praise to his exalted status

⁵² And they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, ⁵³ and were continually in the temple blessing God. (Luke 24)

¹⁴ All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers. (Acts 1:9-14 ESV)