

## **“The Ascension of Christ”**

### **Mark 16:19 – Acts 1:1-11**

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In John 16:28, Jesus told His disciples, ***“I came forth from the Father and have come into the world. Again, I leave the world and go to the Father.”***

- First, there was Christ’s descent to the earth – God the Son became man through Mary’s womb – *His incarnation.*
- Second, there was Christ’s sacrificial death and supernatural resurrection from the grave – *His propitiation.*
- Third, there was Christ’s return to the Father as the Victorious King – *His ascension.*
- Without His resurrection, Jesus’ death would have been of no value to us. Without His ascension, Jesus’ resurrection would have been questionable, and our salvation would be in doubt.

However, 30 years after Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection, the ascension of Christ became one of the central tenets of the doctrine of salvation. In 1 Timothy 3:16, the Apostle Paul wrote:

- ***“Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up in glory.”***
- Notice Paul broke that confession down into six statements.
  - Manifested in the flesh through Jesus Christ –
  - Justified by the Holy Spirit of God –
  - Seen of Angels –
  - Preached unto the Gentiles –
  - Believed on in the world –
  - Received up into glory –
- Later, the Apostle’s added these specific points to a genuine confession of faith:
  - Conceived by the Holy Ghost –
  - Born of the virgin, Mary –
  - Suffered under Pontius Pilate –
  - Was crucified, dead, and buried –
  - He descended into hell –
  - The third day He rose again from the dead –
  - He sits on the right hand of God the Father –
  - From thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead –
- The Apostle’s Creed codified the life and ministry of Jesus, from His eternal relationship with God the Father, to His 33 years of ministry on the earth as our Savior, and His return to His position of glory with God the Father.

## **1. The Preparation for His Ascension – Acts 1:1-8 – Vs. 4 – “And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father.”**

Jesus delayed His ascension for 40 days:

- To convince the disciples that He was resurrected from the grave.
- To continue to teach the disciples about the Kingdom of God, for some of them still hoped Jesus would establish His kingdom on earth on that day.
- To correct their misconceptions about the Kingdom of God and how they were to be His witnesses to the world.
- The Greek word for witness is “*Martooos*,” or “*Martyr*.”
- Just as Jesus gave His life AS the gospel, His witnesses must be willing to give their lives TO the gospel and FOR the gospel, even if we suffer martyrdom for our faith in Him.

## **2. The Demonstration of His Ascension – Acts 1:9-10 – Vs. 9 – “While they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.”**

Two statements we must understand in order to comprehend the eternal value of His ascension:

- “**He was taken up**” – while they were talking with Jesus, He just ascended into heaven, and they watched Him as long as they could see Him.
- “**A cloud received Him**” – this was the Shekinah glory of God come to escort God the Son back to His throne in glory.

Two men who saw the resurrected and ascended Lord:

- The Prophet Isaiah – “**saw the Lord, sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up!**” – Isaiah 6:1ff.
- Jesus was “sitting” because He had finished His work upon the cross. When he heard them ask who would tell the world what Jesus had done, Isaiah said, “**Here am I, send me!**”
- The Deacon Stephen, while being stoned to death – “**looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God!**” – Acts 7:55-56
- Jesus was “standing” because He had given His commission to the disciples to be His witnesses, and He wanted to see what the religious leaders were doing to Stephen, His first martyr.

Two angels told the disciples that Jesus would return to the earth in like manner.

- Acts 1:11- “**This same Jesus...shall so come in like manner as you have seen Him go into heaven!**”
- 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 – “**The Lord Himself shall descend with a shout, with the voice of God!**”

The ascension of Jesus Christ was essential to the first confession of faith.

- Acts 2:36 – “**God has made this same Jesus...both Lord and Christ!**”
  - “**Christ**” – confirmed Jesus as the Messiah: The Savior sent from God, yet rejected by the Jews.
  - “**Lord**” – confirmed Jesus as the Sovereign over all, in all, and through all, even the evil events of our day.

## **3. The Conclusion of the Ascension – Acts 1:8 – Vs. 8 – “You shall receive Power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you.”**

The ascension of the Lord Jesus was the conclusion of His earthly ministry. But as He ascended into the heavens, He passed the torch of evangelism to His followers. This led to the following:

- **The Father sending the Holy Spirit** – to empower the followers of Jesus Christ to be His witnesses in the world; to call the lost to salvation through their proclamation of the gospel with their lives and lips. (1 Peter 4:10-11, 1 Corinthians 12:4-6, 1 Corinthians 12:7-11, and Romans 12:4-8)
- **Jesus Christ becoming the Head of the Church** – those who were **“called out and assembled”** by the Holy Spirit, through the preaching of the gospel. (Ephesians 1:20ff)
- **Jesus Christ becoming our High Priest** – who is at the right hand of the Father, always interceding for us and reminding Satan that we belong to Him. (Hebrews 4:11-16, Romans 8:34)
- **Jesus Christ building our new room, which will be attached to the Father’s House** – soon Jesus will call His Bride to **“come forth!”** We will attend the Marriage ceremony, the Marriage Supper and then escorted to our room in the Kingdom of Heaven, where we will gaze upon God’s glory for eternity. (John 14:1-4)

Our concept of Christ is crucial to our comprehension of our eternal salvation.

- We must **“kneel at the cross,”** for that was where our sin debt was paid, and our love debt was made, but we must not remain there.
- We must **“shout at the tomb,”** for that was where our fear of death and judgment was removed, and our surrender to His Lordship began, but again, we must not remain there and hold such good news to ourselves.
- We must **“fix our eyes upon the ascended Jesus,”** for regardless of what is happening in the world, we have our assignment, and we have His promise, and He must be glorified in us and through us until we are glorified by Him! Amen and Amen!

Regardless of what is happening in the world, whether Christians are being applauded or persecuted, respected or disregarded, honored or despised, loved or hated, as those who have been set free from the burden of our sins, we each have our assignments and we have His promise!

- Jesus must be glorified in us and through us until that day we are glorified by Him!
- Therefore, it is imperative that we: **“Lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”**
- For the next time our Lord rises from His seat it will be to call us to come home, and those whom He called, and justified, will immediately be glorified and join with Him at the Father’s House.



## ONE SOLITARY LIFE

He was born in an obscure village - the child of a peasant woman

He worked in a carpenter shop until he was thirty

He never wrote a book - He never held an office

He never went to college - He never visited a big city

He never travelled more than 200 miles from His place of birth

He did none of the things usually associated with greatness

He had no credentials but Himself - He was only thirty three

Twenty centuries have come and gone

And today Jesus is still the central figure of the human race

All the armies that have ever marched

All the navies that have ever sailed

All the parliaments that have ever sat

All the kings that ever reigned put together

Have not affected the life of mankind on earth

As powerfully as that one Solitary Life...



**Dr. James Allen Francis, Pastor  
1864-1928**