



The Ascension of the Son of Man

Acts 1:3-14

An Inevitable Departure

- Prophetically announced 1000 years before the Savior's birth
 - Psalm 110:1 - "The LORD said to my Lord, Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool."

An Inevitable Departure

- Jesus told them it would happen
 - John 6:62 - “What then if you should see the Son of Man ascend where He was before?”
 - John 16:28 - “I came forth from the Father and have come into the world. Again, I leave the world and go to the Father.”
 - John 20:17 - “Jesus said to her, Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.’”

An Inevitable Departure

- Nevertheless, the apostles were alternately saddened and bewildered
 - Acts 1:10 - “And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel”

An Inevitable Departure

- Men need guidance
 - Psalm 37:23 - “The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD, And He delights in his way.”
 - Prov. 16:9 - “A man's heart plans his way, But the LORD directs his steps.”
 - Deut. 29:29 - “The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.”
 - Jer. 10:23 - “O LORD, I know the way of man is not in himself; It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps.”

An Inevitable Departure

- There are least four reasons why Jesus had to go to Heaven while His apostles stayed in this world.
- If Jesus had not gone away, the Holy Spirit would not have come
 - John 16:7 - “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 depart, I will send Him to you.”
 - They had been walking by sight; now they would walk by faith

An Inevitable Departure

- Jesus went to Heaven to make intercession
 - Heb. 1:3 - “who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high”
 - Heb. 7:25 - “Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.”
 - 1John 2:1 - “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.”

An Inevitable Departure

- Jesus went to heaven to be glorified
 - Heb. 10:12 - “But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God”
 - Heb. 12:2 - “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”

An Inevitable Departure

- Jesus went to Heaven so that He could return for His people one day.
 - John 14:3 - “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.”
 - Acts 1:9-11 - “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”

An Inevitable Departure

- 1Thes. 4:16-18 - “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.”
- 1Cor. 15:51-52 - “Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-- 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.”

A Challenging Task

- Acts 1:8 - “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.”
- Mark 16:15 - “And He said to them, Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.”
- Matt. 28:19 - “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”

A Challenging Task

- But they will not be alone
 - Matt. 28:20ff - “and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age”
 - Acts 1:5, 8 - “for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now... 8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you...”
 - John 14:16-18 - “And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever-- 17 the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. 18 I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.”

A Challenging Task

- Neither are we alone
 - 2Cor. 3:2-3 - “You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men; 3 clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart.”
 - Eph. 2:10 - “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”

A Comforting Promise

- Acts 1:11 - “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.”
- Matt. 24:30 - “Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.”
- John 14:3 - “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.”
- 1Thes. 1:10 - “and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.”

A Comforting Promise

- 1Thes. 4:16 - “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.”
- 2Thes. 1:10 - “when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed.”
- Rev. 1:7 - “Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.”

A Comforting Promise

- No matter what today holds, or what tomorrow brings, rest in the knowledge that Jesus is coming.
- And while you wait for Him, get busy with His work; take others with you

A Powerful Declaration

- Of all of the great works of Jesus Christ in this world, the ascension is second only to the resurrection with regard to the foundation of our faith.
- The resurrection made Him Savior; the ascension made Him Lord and King
 - Eph. 1:19-23
 - Acts 2:36 - “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

A Powerful Declaration

- The resurrection empowered Him to give us eternal life; the ascension empowered Him to give us all spiritual blessings
 - Eph. 4:7-11

A Powerful Declaration

- The resurrection demonstrated the manner of our resurrection; the ascension demonstrated the manner of Christ's return.
 - Acts 1:11 - "This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven."

A Powerful Declaration

- The verb theaomai is used 24 times in the New Testament, and never is it used in a figurative sense.
- They literally saw Christ ascend; we will literally see Him return
- This eliminates the spurious notion of a representative “coming” which answers “realized eschatology”
- It will not be an invisible “rapture-coming,” answering dispensationalism
- Answers the proposition that our eternal destiny will be on a “glorified earth.”

A Powerful Declaration

- Jesus entered heaven as a forerunner
 - 1Cor. 15:20- “But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.”
- Earth is not heaven
 - Matt. 6:19-20 - “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.”

A Powerful Declaration

- The ascension of Christ underscores the fact that Christians are charged with the responsibility of implementing His will on earth, as He reigns from heaven.
- The Savior's parting words:
 - Matt. 28:18-20
 - Mark 16:15-16