

“Christ’s Ascension”

Luke 24:36-53

Pastor John Miller

I. Introduction

- A. The theme of Luke’s gospel is found in Luke 19:10: “for the Son of Man is come to seek and save that which is lost.”
 - 1. It started with Christ’s incarnation
 - 2. Then His crucifixion
 - 3. Then His resurrection
 - 4. Now, Luke ends with Christ’s ascension and exaltation
 - a) It’s an essential doctrine
 - b) “Without the ascension of Jesus, the gospel possesses no present power. When Jesus sat down at the right hand of God, He inaugurated a new age of hope founded upon His completed ministry.” – Albert Mohler Jr.
 - c) Jesus ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God

II. Jesus Appears to His Disciples (Luke 24:36-43)

III. Jesus Explains the Scriptures (Luke 24:44-49)

- A. Jesus withdrew from the sphere of the seen and physical to the sphere of the unseen and spiritual
- B. Jesus then assumed universal power
- C. Jesus at His ascension entered into His glory
 - 1. (John 17)
- D. The implications
 - 1. The ascension marked the completion of the work of salvation. After the cross and the resurrection, there was nothing further to be done to provide any aspect of salvation. Jesus’s words from the cross, “It is finished” (John 19:30), signified that He had accomplished the work the Father had given Him to do.
 - 2. The ascension marked the end of Jesus’ limitations. During His incarnation, He had “emptied Himself, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross” (Philippians 2:7-8). At the ascension, He returned to the glory He had had with the Father before the world was created (John 17:5). Jesus had left heaven as spirit, but returned as the God-Man, whom He will remain forever.
 - 3. Third, as noted earlier, the ascension marked Christ’s exaltation and coronation

4. Fourth, the ascension signaled the sending of the Holy Spirit, who until then “was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified” (John 7:39). “It is to your advantage that I go away,” Jesus had told the disciples, “for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you” (John 16:7).
5. Fifth, the ascension marked the start of Jesus’ preparing the believers’ heavenly home (John 14:1-3)
6. Sixth, the ascension marked the passing of the work of evangelism to His followers. Christ’s work is both finished and unfinished (Acts 1:1). His work of providing redemption is completed, and nothing can be added to it (John 17:4, 19:30, Heb. 9:12). But His work of proclamation is not finished. The rest of the New Testament describes the continuation of that work by the early church, and it will not be completed until He returns.
7. Seventh, the ascension signaled the Lord’s sovereign headship over the church (Eph. 1:20-23; Col. 1:18)
8. Eighth, the ascension marked Christ’s triumph over Satan. As the apostle John wrote, “The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil” (1 John 3:8; Gen. 3:15; Heb. 2:14)
9. Ninth, the ascension signaled the Lord’s giving work of the ministry gifted to men. When he ascended, Jesus sent the Spirit, who not only gave spiritual gifts to individual believers (1 Cor. 12:4-11), but also gifted men to the church (Eph. 4:11-13).
10. Tenth, the ascension marked the beginning of the merciful and faithful (Heb. 2:17) and sympathetic (Heb. 4:15) high priest’s work of intercession for His people (Heb. 7:25)
11. Finally, the ascension guarantees and secures Christ’s second coming (Acts 1:11)
12. All Christians should celebrate all that Jesus accomplished for them, which culminated in the ascension. “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,” wrote Paul, “that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich” (2 Cor. 8:9)