

Jesus' Ascension: Why We Rejoice, Pt 2

Luke 24:50-53, Acts 1-11

Review from last week: The disciples' response to Jesus' final parting from them as He ascended into heaven was not grief and sorrow, *but great joy*.

Luke leaves his readers to ponder the thought, "Why did the disciples have great joy when Jesus ascended?" He wants us to ask ourselves, "Is my life filled with great joy because Jesus is ascended? Am I continually blessing God because Jesus ascended on high?"

Christ's ascension should cause us to rejoice and worship Him.

There are at least three reasons that Christ's ascension should cause us to rejoice and worship Him:

- It signifies the completion of His earthly ministry.
- It signifies the commencement of His heavenly ministry.
- It signifies the commencement of our ministry as His earthly representatives.

Christ's ascension should cause us to rejoice and worship Him because it signifies the completion of His earthly ministry.

Christ left the earth because He had accomplished the work that the Father had sent Him to do-- to save His people from their sins. John 17:4; John 16:28; Matthew 1:21

Our rebellion from God separated us from Him. Through Adam's sin, the entire human race was plunged into sin and its penalty, death. Rom. 5:12 No amount of good works or penance can take away our sins and reconcile us to the holy God. We need a Savior. We cannot save ourselves. The mission of Jesus was "to seek and to save that which was lost." Luke 19:10

Luke 1:26-38 tells us that Christ was conceived through the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit coming upon her, so that Jesus is uniquely the Son of God, God in human flesh. By His holy life, lived in dependence upon the Father, Jesus showed us how we should live. By His sacrificial death on the cross, He paid the penalty for our sins. His bodily resurrection from the dead is proof that God accepted His sacrifice and that God's full approval is upon Jesus. Thus, now the risen Christ commissions His disciples to proclaim repentance for forgiveness of sins in His name to all the nations, beginning in Jerusalem. Luke 24:47

So, His ascension marked the end of His early ministry. It was a sign that His work in the body, as the physical image of God, was complete.

Now, with His ascension, not only did His earthly ministry end, but His heavenly ministry began, first with resumption of His glorification.

Somewhere between His announcement in John 16 and His ascension, the disciples understood why He needed to go away. There are several reasons for His departure, but one of the main reasons was that He was ascending to heaven to be coronated King of kings and Lord of lords. This was the resumption of the glory He shared with the Father before His incarnation.

Jesus' ascension was different from the ascension of Enoch and Elijah, because Christ came down to earth and then would ascend later back to heaven. John 3:31

He voluntarily descended from heaven, leaving the splendor of heaven, and laying aside the glory He shared with His Father, His ascension would be different. It would be special. In His descension, he was humiliated in doing the work that the Father asked Him to do, but, because He accomplished this work, the Father would reward Him.

Now, when you and I use the word "ascend," we mean nothing more than "going up." Scripture, starting in the OT defines "ascend" as going up to a specific place to perform a specific task. Jesus was ascending to be

enthroned as the King of kings and the Lord of lords. He would be seated at the right hand of the Father in the place of cosmic authority.

To sit at the right hand of God means as the King of kings and Lord of lords Jesus has been given all authority, power, and dominion over heaven and earth. It is a place of honor and proximity meaning that He has equal status and power with the Father.

Psalm 110

The Ascension of Jesus marked the fulfillment of Psalm 110.

Psalm 110 is one of the kingship or royal psalms. It is one of the most frequently quoted OT passages in the entire New Testament. David was the author of this psalm, a fact that is crucial to its interpretation within the New Testament.

V. 1 – This is an oracle of Yahweh (I AM WHO I AM; the LORD). He speaks to Adonai-the sovereign One, the Master, the King. David says that Adonai is his Lord. *David expresses submission to the King who is to sit at God's right hand.* The authority of this king is derived from Yahweh who promises to extend His rule by putting all of His enemies under his feet (cf. **Ps. 2:8–9**). The “footstool” metaphor indicates *absolute control*.

Vs. 2-3 – The authority of the Messianic king will be extended to the point that all His enemies will be forced to acknowledge His rule. Verse 3 indicates that the king's people will voluntarily consecrate themselves to serve him in battle.

V. 4 – Yahweh has “sworn” indicates the existence of a solemn oath. This oath refers to the covenantal promises he has made to David (cf. 2 Sam. 7:13). He declares, “You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.” Melchizedek was a priest king over the city of Salem (cf. Gen. 14:18). Like him, the Davidic king was a priestly-king (cf. 2 Sam. 6:14, 17–18; 1 Kgs. 8:14, 55, 62–64). The perfect union of priesthood and kingship is ultimately found only in Jesus (cf. Heb. 5:1–10; 7:1–28).

Vs. 5-7 - The final verses of **Psalm 110** declare the coming victory of the Messianic king. Four points should be emphasized: (1) Yahweh himself exalts the King and places Him at His right hand, He nominates and empowers him as the coregent; (2) the enthroned is adjudged to be of heavenly birth; (3) He is declared to be a priest (after the order of Melchizedek); (4) through him and his presence, Yahweh, the world judge and war hero, overcomes all enemies. The authors of the New Testament recognized only one figure who fulfilled all that this psalm portrayed, namely Jesus of Nazareth. This psalm would become central to their proclamation of his exaltation.

The fulfillment of the Ascension is clear to Paul and Peter. Phil. 2:9-11; Eph. 1:20b-22a; 1 Peter 3:22.

While the promise is that all of Christ's enemies are now His footstool, there is a sense that all things are not subject to Him yet (1 Cor. 15:27-28; Psalm 110:1; Heb. 10:13.) His kingdom is both present and yet future. Your salvation is now, but not yet. Presently His enemies are not all yet subject to Him. But when He comes again in power and glory, He will conquer every foe and reign forever and ever.

There is on last Old Testament prophesy concerning ascension, found in Daniel 7:13-14. If an angel had not been present, Daniel would not have known what to do with this vision. He would be paralyzed in fear.

So, Christ's ascension both ended his earthly ministry and began His heavenly ministry, beginning with His coronation as King of kings and Lord of lords. This resumed the glory He shared with His Father before His incarnation.