

## Sermon Notes

# WORSHIP SERVICE - 2.23.2025

## PART 3 - ENTHRONED

### I. INTRODUCTION

- One of the most important and central doctrines of the Christian faith, and sadly, an often overlooked doctrine, is the Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- As we examine our text today in Acts 1, may we be reminded of how Christ's ascension was part of God's redemptive plan and may we be encouraged to live with purpose and expectation in light of his present reign and promised return.
- Main Point: Believers are called to live expectantly and actively as witnesses of the exalted Christ, knowing his ascension is a promise of his return and the assurance of our hope in him.

#### ACTS 1:6-11

So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" **7** He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. **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."

### II. LOOK UP: CHRIST IS REIGNING

- Christ's ascension, detailed in these short verses, is the singular event upon which all of the narrative that follows in Acts is understood.
- His ascension marks a significant change in redemptive history.
- It is, as Patrick Schreiner notes in his commentary, "The moment of spatial and theo-political realignment in Acts."
- The ascension places Jesus in his rightful position of rule to restore Israel through the Spirit.

#### 1. OT PROMISES FULFILLED IN THE ASCENSION

- The ascension is not an isolated event but the fulfillment of key OT promises concerning the Messiah, the Davidic King, and the Son of Man.
- The enthronement of the Messiah
- Psalm 110:1 The Lord says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool."
- Psalm 110 is about the Messianic King, the Lord's anointed.

- Peter cites this verse in his Pentecost sermon in Acts 2.
- “Sit at my right hand...” -- this is the place of divine favor and honor.
- Messiah will rule alongside Yahweh who promises to extend his rule by putting all of his enemies under his feet.
- Jesus ascends to the right hand of the Father; the place of supreme authority.
- Hebrews 1:3 He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.
  
- The Son of Man receiving the Kingdom
  - Daniel 7:13-14 “I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. 14 And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.
  - Jesus identifies himself as the “Son of Man.” (Matthew 26:64)
  
- The priestly role of the Messiah
  - Zechariah 6:12-13 And say to him, ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts, “Behold, the man whose name is the Branch: for he shall branch out from his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord. 13 It is he who shall build the temple of the Lord and shall bear royal honor, and shall sit and rule on his throne. And there shall be a priest on his throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.”’
  - Messiah would not just be King, but would also be High Priest in the heavenly temple.
  - His kingship and priesthood are combined.
  - Hebrews 4:14 Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.
  - Hebrews 8:1 Now the point in what we are saying is this: we have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven.
  
- The promise of the Spirit
  - Joel 2:28a “And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh;
  - The inauguration of the New Covenant would be marked by the pouring out of God’s Spirit.
  - Jesus told his disciples that he must “go away”, he must ascend for the Spirit to 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 go, I will send him to you.
  - The ascension paved the way for the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost, fulfilling God’s promise of the New Covenant.
  
- The ascension is pivotal to the plan of God as Jesus is enthroned in heaven and that it is the catalytic event that marks the beginning of the end.
- The era of the New Covenant is inaugurated with Christ being seated at the right hand of the Father.
- The ascension is proof that Christ’s work has been accepted by the Father and he is now presently reigning from his seat of authority over all creation.

## 2. THE ASCENSION

- 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.
  - Now the apostles behold this powerful moment of cosmic significance.
  - They are eyewitnesses not only to the resurrected Christ but his enthronement.
  - In these three verses the emphasis is largely on two things: the exaltation of Jesus and the fact that the apostles witness the ascension.
- It happened “as they were looking on...” this is important because Jesus’s ascension was not spiritual but physical.
  - It was physical and visible. It is a matter of a public and historical truth.
  - Luke intentionally piles on these phrases to show that the apostles were eyewitnesses to this event.
  - V9 “as they were looking on...”
  - “A cloud took him out of their sight.”
  - V10 “And while they were gazing...”
  - V11 “why do you stand looking into heaven?”
  - V12 “as you saw him go into heaven.”
  - The apostles did not need to be eyewitnesses of the moment Jesus rose from the dead.
  - But for this event they had to see it with their eyes.
  - Jesus was going away. He would not be with them physically any longer.
  - The reason this happened before their very eyes was so that they would understand that this time his departure was final.
  - There were not to wait around for his next post-resurrection appearance.
  - They were to wait for the promised power—the Holy Spirit.
  - He would only come after Jesus was gone.
- Notice the language, “he was lifted up”. It’s in the passive voice, which emphasizes that the one doing the action of lifting Jesus up is God the Father.
  - “A cloud took him out of their sight.”
  - This is not some insignificant detail. It has a deep biblical meaning.
  - The cloud represented God’s presence in the OT.
  - The Prophets and the Psalmist used language, such as, the Lord “riding on a cloud (Is 19:1)” and “he makes the cloud his chariot (Ps 104:3).”
  - The Transfiguration scene in Matthew 17.
  - Jesus ascends on the clouds of glory to the presence of God.
  - 4 X we see the phrase “into heaven.”
- The ascension demonstrates the reality of Christ’s present lordship.
  - He is presently reigning from his place of authority and rule.
  - He is physically absent from the Church, yet he is actively and unconditionally ruling over his church from his place at the right hand of the Father.
  - Ephesians 1:19b -23 ...according to the working of his great might 20 that he 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, 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.
  - So, look up church! Christ is presently reigning.
  - He reigns over all things, over all of the affairs of the world, over his church, over every challenge you face—every fear, every trial, over every difficulty of life!

### III. LOOK AROUND : CHRIST IS REDEEMING

- 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?”
- The apostles were fixated and frozen in absolute astonishment.
- Jesus vanishes from their sight and two men show up standing next to them.
- The mention of "white robes" immediately informs us that these were angelic messengers.
- They ask a probing question to the stargazing apostles.
- “Why do you stand looking into heaven?”
- It was entirely appropriate to be blown away by what they had just witnessed, but this wasn't where their focus should be at the moment.
  
- The angelic messengers don't rebuke their amazement but rather redirect their focus.
- They had been commissioned to go to the ends of the earth but they were stargazing.
- Earth was to be their preoccupation, not the heavens.
- They were not to gaze up at the sky but go to the ends of the earth.
- The ascension now makes the sending of the Spirit possible. It's time to get to work!
- The angels affirm Jesus's ascension, he was indeed taken up into heaven. But their question also calls them apostles to action—they must be about Christ's mission to seek and save the lost.
- The mission is to go and make disciples of all nations.
- The mission is to take the good news that Christ rose from the dead, is seated in the place of all authority, and he is a gracious Savior and Redeemer.
- The mission is to preach repentance and the forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ.
  
- We too must not be so heavenly minded that we are no earthly good.
- We too must not stargaze as we also have been commissioned by Christ as his Spirit-empowered witnesses to take the gospel.
- We should not allow ourselves to be distracted by end-times obsession, speculation about prophecy and its fulfillment, or anything else that keeps us from our core mission.
- Between the ascension and the Lord's return, there is a period of time, of unknown duration, which is to be filled with the worldwide proclamation of the gospel through Christ's Spirit-empowered witness.
- So, look around church, Christ is presently redeeming.
- Take the gospel to family, friends, co-workers, your community and wherever the Lord sends you.

### IV. LOOK FORWARD: CHRIST IS RETURNING

- This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”
- The message of the two angelic messengers reminds us that there is still another act to be completed.
- The ascension is the beginning of the end.
- It's interesting that what the Lord wanted them to know most, and he sends his messengers to tell them, is that He is coming back!
- In the absence of his physical presence, they are to live with the expectation that Christ will return to consummate his kingdom.
- They are to trust that their King will come again.

- “Will come in the same way...”
- In what way is the comparison being drawn between his ascension and return?
- We need to look at what Scripture teaches about his return.

#### 1. His return will be visible.

- In his ascension, he was visible to the apostles, but it was personal and private.
- At his return, he will be publicly visible to all, every eye will see him.
- Revelation 1:7 Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even so. Amen.
- His return will not be localized as was his ascension it will be as recorded in Luke’s gospel:
- Luke 17:23-24 For as the lightning flashes and lights up the sky from one side to the other, so will the Son of Man be in his day
- He ascended physically, he will return physically.
- 2. His return will be glorious
- He was taken up in a cloud which hid him from the sight of the apostles.
- At his return, the cloud will be his chariot.
- Luke 21:27 And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.
- And though he went up alone, he will not be returning alone.
- His coming will be accompanied by myriads of angels and a multitude of his redeemed.
- He will come with the armies of heaven (Rev 19:14).
- The promise of Christ’s return is central to the Christian faith.
- This promise fueled the mission of the apostles and the church.
- It is called our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ (Titus 2:13).
- The apostles lived with an expectation and urgency of Christ’s return.
- Paul wrote, “salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believe.” (Rom. 13:11)
- James wrote, “the coming of the Lord is at hand.” (James 5:8)
- Peter wrote, “the end of all things is at hand.” (1Peter 4:7)
- That same urgency should shape our daily lives and priorities.
- The expectancy of his return incentivizes holiness and purity. (1John 3:2-3)
- His return will be unexpected; the timing is unknown to us.
- We must live in a constant state of readiness for his return.
- So, Look forward church, Christ is returning soon.

#### CONCLUSION

- After the ascension, the disciples no longer feared persecution or death.
- When the Spirit came upon them, they boldly proclaimed the gospel and testified of the risen and exalted Christ.
- Peter at Pentecost, powerfully proclaims they are witnesses of his resurrection and his exaltation (Acts 2:32-33)
- Stephen caught a glimpse of his enthroned Savior prior to his martyrdom.
- Acts 7:55 But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.
- This gave him courage to stand firm and hold fast to his confession of faith.
- Christ’s ascension was the beginning of his reign and the prelude to his return.

- It emboldened the apostles and all of the believers to live courageously.
- Do you proclaim Christ with boldness knowing that he presently reigns?
- Do you live with readiness and urgency in expectation of his return?
- May we see our enthroned and exalted Christ through the eye of faith, may we be captivated by the promise of his return,
- Look up, Christ is presently reigning—we have nothing to fear.
- Look around, Christ is presently redeeming—boldly take the good news to others.
- Look forward, Christ is returning soon!—He who promised is faithful, he will do it. Trust in him!
- He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming soon.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus! (Rev 22:20).

## **APPLICATION AND REFLECTION**

In light of today's message....

- What did I learn about the gospel?
- How can I apply what I learned about the gospel to my life?
- With whom can I share the gospel this week?