

Acts 1:1-11; Ephesians 1:15-23 4.18.21 (21033)

Ascension Hope

I. Acts 1:1-11. The Ascension of Christ is profoundly and practically important.

- A. The material transition from this dimension into the heavenly dimension.
 - 1. Clear, slow, physical. Resurrected Jesus taken up from you into heaven.
 - 2. Heaven is a real place. (The “heavenlies” in Eph.)
- B. The final phase in the plan of redemption for the world. Matt.28:18-20
 - 1. The major turning-point in the plan. The
 - 2. *The second person of the Trinity, the Eternal Son, has always been the project manager of redemption, all through the OT. But now he is both God and Human! And as the God/Man he is moving human history to a climax, a final end to all evil.*
- C. The stunning promise of his presence until all is finished. (Matt.28:20b)
 - 1. He will regenerate and equip them. 8
 - a) To continue his mission of proclaiming his lordship and grace to the world.
 - 2. He will return and vindicate them. The 2nd Coming. 11
 - a) The 2nd Coming is a judgment and a rescue/vindication of God’s people in Christ, the body of Christ.

D. *Is there anywhere else in the NT that helps us grasp this practically? Yes.*

II. Eph.1:15-23. Paul’s prayer deepens our understanding of Christ’s ascended authority.

A. That the eyes of our hearts may be enlightened. 17

- 1. Because there are facts that we cannot know naturally. Matt.11:25-30; 16-17
 - a) That the Father may give you ...enlighten you ...
 - b) They are there whether we know them or not, but we don’t know them until the Lord enlightens in Christ. Lk.24:45.
 - c) *We have always been taught that knowledge of facts is a natural capacity and that any information beyond our natural capacity is not real knowledge of facts. This is not true. (1Cor.2)*
- 2. Because there are ways of perceiving that go beyond empiricism.
 - a) Eyes of your heart. That you may *know*.
 - b) The ability to perceive something that cannot be seen with physical eyes. 2 Cor 4:16 ff
 - c) Heart: the entire interior life of thought, intellect, emotion, will.
 - d) *Your heart and mind have a way of perceiving that is not dependent on physical sight, but spiritual sight.*

B. So that we will deeply know three crucial things: 18b

- 1. The hope to which he has called us.
- 2. The value of his inheritance in us (the saints.)
- 3. The power of his presence in and with us.

C. All Grounded in God’s active power in Christ. The power that...

- 1. Raised him from the dead: 20a
 - a) Working (energeian); Strength (kratous); Might (isxous).
 - b) Muscle words; a sort of strength that we do not understand.
 - c) *God is pure mind and he accomplishes his will by putting his expressed will, his word, by His Spirit into our own minds and thereby granting us the ability (grace) to do what He commands.*
- 2. Seated him at his right hand in the heavenlies. 20b
 - a) Ascension = Enthronement in “the heavenlies”
 - b) Heavenlies: the source dimension. Very real and tangible, but dynamically different from this age/dimension.

3. Put all things under his feet. Total Providential Reign/Sovereignty. 21
 - a) Extending to the invisible realm. 21a. High above (huperano).
 - (1) All rule (arche), Authority (exousias), Power (dunamis), Dominion (kuristatos)
 - (2) Every name named. Name's have power in the spirit realm.
 - b) Both in this age and the next. 21b
 - (1) Transcending time as we understand it.
 - (2) *He uses time like a tool, a technology.*
4. Gave him as head of all things to the Church. 22-23
 - a) Guiding history forward. (moving to the next age)
 - (1) Head over all things: the entire created order.
 - (2) All things are under the authority of Jesus Christ, right now. (Ps 110:1; Col.1:15-20)
 - b) Filling the church with life. Fulness, all in all.
 - (1) His specific and holy people, filled with the knowledge of him.
 - (2) His presence permeates the true gathering of His people in a unique way. Relationally as well as metaphysically.

III. How can we cooperate with the Risen and Ascended Lord? *By living deeply in the Gospel!* The Spirit is revealing and enlightening us through God's Word. So, we must dwell on...

- A. The hope to which he has called us instead of the circumstances that surround us. Rom.8:22-25.
 1. He called us before we were born (1:3-6; Gal.1:15).
 2. So that we would trust his word instead of the world.
 3. *We live by faith (what he tells us) and not sight (2 Cor.5:7) invisibility dimensionally and temporally. Get used to this!!!*
 4. *The world mocks the eternal perspective, but God insists on it.*
 5. *Your future shapes you, not your past. Phil 3:13-14*
- B. The value that he sees in us instead of the shame we feel about us. (1Cor.1:26-31; 2Cor.5:17-21)
 1. Not simply our coming inheritance (1:14), *but that we are his treasured inheritance.*
 2. *In His Kingdom, we are His prized possession and the reflection of His glory.*
 3. *He loves and cherishes us in Christ as he loves and cherishes Christ Himself.*
- C. The dynamic that he is working in us instead of the weakness we see among us.
 1. 2 Cor.12:8-11. We see our weakness; he sees his strength.
 - a) 2 Cor.4:7-18 (16-18) We see present trouble; he points to the victory coming.
 - b) Broken pots shining light, seeing past this broken world.
 2. Gal.2:20. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me... We cannot live this Christian life in our own power, but we can lean into the Spirit's strength and let him live the life through us.
 - a) Rom.12:1-2. Transformation is available.

IV. Bright Destiny, Eternal Value, Transforming Dynamic. These are the gospel promises because Jesus died, was raised, has ascended, and is pouring his Spirit out on people today. What's keeping you from repenting and trusting this Person...?