

Ascension 2022 (5.22.22) #22041

Acts 1:1-11; Ephesians 1:15-23

Christ's Ascension

I. **John 20:16-18.** Mary Magdalene is so overcome with relief that she thinks the Lord's presence with her is the most important thing (understandably). She grasps him in some way that indicates this emphasis in her mind. He tells her to let go?

- A. Because the thing the Lord is doing is not simply about Mary and her feelings for the Lord. It is about his ascension to the right hand of the Father.
- B. Because the goal of Christ's Resurrection was His Ascension.

II. **Acts 1:1-11. Lk.24:44-53. The Ascension of Christ—All authority. 4 things:**

- 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 permanent session of Christ at the right hand of the Father. Acts 2:33
 - 1. This means that Jesus Christ is completely in charge of the world.
 - 2. *The second person of the Trinity, the Eternal Son, has always been the project manager of redemption, all through the OT.*
 - 3. *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 beginning of the final phase in the redemption of the world. Matt.28:18-20
 - 1. The major turning-point in the plan. Sin and death have been defeated, God's own Life, the Holy Spirit, is about to be poured out into forgiven humans, beginning an entirely new work which will culminate in a New Creation (Rev.21-22)
- D. The guarantee of his presence until all is accomplished. (Matt.28:20b).
 - 1. He will regenerate and equip them by His Spirit. 8 (Rom.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.
 - 3. He will resurrect the universe, and his people with it. 11 Rev.20-21
 - a) His return is the point.
 - b) The resurrection/ascension of Christ is the guarantee of the end result of redemption—God, in human form, permanently and materially enthroned at the center of his resurrected creation.

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

III. 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)*

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

1. The hope to which he has called us.
2. The value he places on us, his inheritance
3. The power of his presence in and with us.
4. *More on these at the end of this message.*

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

1. Raised him from the dead: 20a

- a) Working; Strength; Might.
- b) Muscle words; a sort of strength that we do not understand.

2. Seated him at his right hand in the heavenlies. 20b Acts 2:33

- a) Ascension = Enthronement in "the heavenlies"
- b) Heavenlies = Heaven, the source dimension.
(1) The invisible realm is primary (2 Cor.4:16-5:10)

3. Put all things under his feet. Total Providential Reign/Sovereignty. 21-22

- a) Transcending all dimensions. 21a. High above.
 - (1) All rule (arche), Authority, Power, Dominion
 - (2) Every name named.
- b) Transcending time. Both in this age and the next. 21b
 - (1) Transcending time as we understand it.
 - (2) *He uses time like a tool, a technology.*
- c) *When His will is not done, it is only because He allows His will not to be done at the moment for a greater purpose.*

4. Gave him as head of all things to the Church. 22-23 (Matt.28:18-20)

- 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, now. (Ps 110:1; Col.1:15-20)
 - (3) He is the: head, source and guide for the universe now and forever.
- 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.

IV. Eph.1:18-19. 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. So that we would know that we are secure in eternal life.
 4. *We live by faith (what he tells us) and not sight (2 Cor.5:7) invisibility dimensionally and temporally.*
 5. *The world mocks the eternal perspective, but God insists on it.*
 6. *Your future rather than your past now shapes you Destiny is more important than history. Phil 3:13-14*
- B. The value that he sees in us instead of the shame we feel about ourselves. 2Cor.5:17-21; (1Cor.1:26-31;)
1. Not simply our coming inheritance (1:14), *but that we are his treasured inheritance.*
 2. "The point here is that Paul wants his readers to know how deeply God values and cherishes them. They are God's incredibly valuable and glorious inheritance. As an earthly king values treasuries full of silver and gold, God values his people as his wealth and honor." (Clinton Arnold, *Exegetical Commentary on the NT, Ephesians* (Zondervan, 2010) p.108).
 3. *In His Kingdom, we are His prized possession and the reflection of His glory.*
 - a) *He has removed our shame, the sense of failure to be what we should. Guilt = what we have done. Shame = who we are.*
 4. *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.

V. 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...?