

## The Meaning of the Ascension of Jesus

From a sermon by Steve Lloyd, "Jesus Ascended and Exalted"

Acts 2.33–36

Don Ruhl • Savage Street, Grants Pass, Oregon • February 23, In the year of our Lord, 2014

Song Leader and Song Suggestions: Larry Amberg – Anything exalting Jesus

### Prelude:

#### **I. The wonders never seemed to cease during the ministry of Christ.**

A. Can you imagine seeing a miracle?

1. I am not talking about what people call miracles today, but
2. something like walking on water.

B. On top of all the miracles Jesus worked before their eyes,

1. they also witnessed the Roman crucifixion of Jesus and
2. the events surrounding His death, including
  - a) the three-hour long darkness,
  - b) the earthquake, and
  - c) Jesus praying for His executioners.

#### **II. Soaring to the heights of exhilaration, exultation, and excitement,**

A. they then plummeted to the depths of

B. disappointment, discouragement, and depression over His death.

1. Then they saw the resurrected Christ!
2. What would that be like?
  - a) You watch someone brutalized to death.
  - b) You witnessed and participated in His burial.
    - (1) Then three days later you see Him again!
    - (2) How do we relate to their thoughts?

#### **III. He spent the next five weeks or so with you.**

A. As if all that you had witnessed was not enough,

B. you then witness something that

1. changes you and
2. changes the ordering of the heavens and the Earth forever.

#### **IV. The Bible emphasizes something about Jesus that we neglect.**

A. We speak of His death and resurrection, and

B. of those two, we speak more of His death, but

1. something else happened that we just do not talk about very much, yet,
2. you might be surprised by how much the Bible addresses this event.

#### **Persuasion:**

##### **I. Acts 2.33–36 – Peter’s Pentecostal Pronouncement**

A. The apostles spoke different languages among a mixed-language multitude.

1. People hearing an apostle speak a language they did not know,
2. thought that apostle was drunk.
  - a) Peter cleared that up quickly,
  - b) showing from the Scriptures that they all spoke by the Spirit of God.

B. Then, in verse 22, Peter reminded the Jews of God’s approval of Jesus, and

1. in verse 23, the apostle reminded them of how they crucified Jesus.
2. Peter logically moved into the resurrection of Jesus in verses 24–32.

C. With thoughts of His miraculous ministry, and

1. their miserable murder of Him, and
2. of His recent resurrection,
  - a) in their minds,
  - b) Peter then announced the ascension and coronation of Jesus,

33 “Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear. 34 For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself:

‘The Lord said to my Lord,  
“Sit at My right hand,  
35 Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.”’

36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2.33–36).

- c) That was just too much for them.
- d) They killed the One whom God approved,
  - (1) who had then ascended into heaven to sit at God’s right hand.
  - (2) They saw that Jesus is the Lord of Psalm 110.1.

D. How would you have reacted to Peter’s sermon?

37 Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” (Acts 2.37).

- 1. Peter knew they were ready to hear words of healing and forgiveness,

38 Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.” 40 And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, “Be saved from this perverse generation” (Acts 2.38–40).

- 2. They jumped on that opportunity,

41 Then those who *gladly* received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them (Acts 2.41).

## II. Apostolic Ascension Accreditation

A. When Peter spoke of the ascension and coronation of Jesus,

- 1. the apostle did not reveal second-hand information, but

2. he gave his eye-witness account.

B. Mark 16 shows the apostles present when Jesus ascended into heaven,

19 So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God (Mark 16.19).

C. Luke 24 shows that the apostles witnessed this never-to-be-repeated event,

50 And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. 51 Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven (Luke 24.50–51).

D. Luke recorded more of this exhilarating event in Acts 1, and

1. he recorded the words of angels who appeared to the apostles,

2. who connected the ascension with something else,

9 Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. 10 And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, 11 who also said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven” (Acts 1.9–11).

a) Jesus left, but

b) He would return as He had left on the clouds of heaven.

### III. Ascension Prophetic Pronouncements

A. The ascension of Jesus was not an unexpected event.

B. He spoke of it frequently during His ministry,

51 Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem... (Luke 9.51).

33 Then Jesus said to them, “I shall be with you a little while longer, and then I go to Him who sent Me” (John 7.33).

14 Jesus answered and said to them, “Even if I bear witness of Myself, My witness is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from and where I am going” (John 8.14).

3 Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God... (John 13.3).

28 “I came forth from the Father and have come into the world. Again, I leave the world and go to the Father” (John 16.28).

11 “Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are” (John 17.11).

13 “But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves” (John 17.13).

17 Jesus said to her, “Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, ‘I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God’” (John 20.17).

C. The Hebrew Scriptures spoke of this heaven-changing, world-changing event,

7 Lift up your heads, O you gates!  
And be lifted up, you everlasting doors!  
And the King of glory shall come in.

8 Who is this King of glory?  
The Lord strong and mighty,  
The Lord mighty in battle.

9 Lift up your heads, O you gates!  
Lift up, you everlasting doors!  
And the King of glory shall come in.

10 Who is this King of glory?  
The Lord of hosts,  
He is the King of glory.  
Selah  
(Psa 24.7–10)

1 The Lord said to my Lord,  
“Sit at My right hand,  
Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.”

(Psa 110.1)

D. Daniel 7 shows an amazing sight.

1. All the passages we have seen showed the ascension from the Earth, but
2. Daniel saw in a prophetic vision the ascension from heaven's viewpoint,

13 "I was watching in the night visions,  
And behold, One like the Son of Man,  
Coming [not going] with the clouds of heaven!  
He came to the Ancient of Days [not to the Earth],  
And they brought Him near before Him.  
14 Then 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 the one  
Which shall not be destroyed.  
(Dan 7.13–14)

- a) Whether Daniel knew that this One like the Son of Man
- b) would live on the Earth,
  - (1) where men would torture Him to death, and then
  - (2) raise Himself from the dead,
    - (a) I do not know, but
    - (b) Daniel saw the ascension and the coronation of Jesus Christ.
3. Contrary to the way Earth treated Him,
  - a) notice that last line of verse 13,
  - b) someone, I would guess angels,
    - (1) brought Jesus near before the Ancient of Days, God, and
    - (2) that was when Jesus sat at the right hand of God.

E. Isn't that something?

1. Men watched Jesus ascend into heaven.

2. Heaven watched Jesus coming to heaven, and
  - a) angels took Him to the Father,
  - b) where Jesus then sat down as King, and now
    - (1) He has dominion, glory, and a kingdom,
    - (2) enabling anyone to serve Him, and
      - (a) His dominion shall not pass away,
      - (b) nor shall anyone destroy His kingdom.

#### **IV. Ascension for His Exaltation and His Coronation**

- A. It is not just that Jesus ascended into heaven, but
  1. that He ascended into heaven for a reason.
  2. We shall ascend at the resurrection, but
    - a) it will not be the same as it was for Him.
    - b) He ascended and then the Father exalted Jesus.
- B. Listen to the New Testament.
  1. After showing the humility of Jesus,
    - a) that He would leave heaven,
    - b) become a servant,
    - c) become a man, and
      - (1) submit to death, but
      - (2) not any death rather the death of the cross,
    - d) Paul then stated what God did for Jesus,

9 Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name (Phi 2.9).

2. Peter even connected our baptism with the coronation/exaltation of Jesus,

21 There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward

God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, 22 who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him (1Pe 3.21–22).

3. John shows us a great sight in the Book of Revelation,

5 She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne (Rev 12.5).

### **Exhortation:**

#### **I. God exalted Jesus to the throne of heaven!**

A. That is what we mean, or should mean, when we confess Jesus is Lord.

B. Therefore, He has the authority and qualification to save us.

C. He sits at the right hand of God to make intercession for us.

D. Also, regardless of what we see happening in the world,

1. our Lord Jesus reigns from heaven, because
2. the Father subjected everything to Jesus,

20 [God] raised [Jesus] from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. 22 And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, 23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all (Eph 1.20–23).

E. Moreover, Revelation 3 shows

1. that as wonderful as all of this is,
2. Jesus has now made an amazing promise to us,

21 “To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne” (Rev 3.21).

#### **II. When He returns,**

- A. He will send forth His angels,
- B. who will retrieve us when the Lord raises us from the dead, and
  - 1. the dead will rise into the air,
  - 2. then those who are alive will meet the resurrected ones in the air, and
    - a) all of us together shall join the Lord, and
    - b) He will take us to heaven.

### **III. The words of healing and forgiveness**

- A. that Peter spoke to the Jews,
- B. I now say to you,

38 “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2.38).