

Resources:

Mr. John Miles. *Doctrine 2 Notes*. Pg. 13-14. FSB
S. Lewis Johnson. *The Ascension on Christ* sermon.
Charles Ryrie. *Basic Theology*. Pg. 311-312
Lewis Sperry Chafer. *Systematic Theology* Vol. 5. Pg. 261-279

Mr. John Miles wrote, "Forty days after the resurrection, Jesus ascended to Heaven and is now at the right hand of God in glory." That is the claim of the Bible, that Jesus is alive and He resides in heaven and is at work even today.

JESUS' ASCENSION INTO HEAVEN GIVES BELIEVERS A GREAT HOPE, AND HIS CURRENT MINISTRY FROM HEAVEN SECURES A BELIEVER IN THAT HOPE.

That is what we will learn, and in order to come to that conclusion, I think we should ask and answer 6 questions, so let's start with

Question #1 - Where in the Bible do we read about Jesus' ascension?

Acts 1:1-12; Luke 24:50-53; Mark 16:19

(Luke 9:51; Ephesians 4:10; 1 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 4:14; 1 Peter 3:22)

Question #2 - Did the Old Testament predict Jesus' ascension?

Yes.

Compare Psalm 68:18 with Ephesians 4:8.
Compare Psalm 110:1 with Acts 2:32-35.

Question #3 - When did Jesus' ascension take place?

According to Luke, Jesus ascended 40 days after His resurrection (Acts 1:3). This would have been 10 days before the Day of Pentecost, where the disciples would be baptized with the Holy Spirit and they began a new era of communion with God where Jesus was personally residing in each believer via the Holy Spirit (Col. 1:27).

Question #4 - Is it possible that Jesus had two phases of an ascension?

The answer to this question, I think, is yes. It is possible that Jesus had two phases of ascension. This is the stance that Chafer holds, but this is not necessarily the stance that I hold to.

The argument goes like this: Jesus entered heaven to offer His own shed blood to God as a sacrifice for sin. The question is, when did Jesus do this? When did Jesus enter heaven to offer Himself and His own shed blood as a sacrifice for sins? Chafer would argue that Jesus did that after His resurrection. In fact, on the day of His resurrection. Why does Chafer believe this?

To put it simply, when Mary Magdalene attempted to cling on to Jesus after she discovered He was standing before her in His resurrected body, Jesus refused her and said "do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father, but go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father.'"

Now later that night, Jesus appeared to the disciples. This is recorded in Luke 24:39-40. Jesus tells the disciples something different. He says, "see my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me, and see."

To Mary, He refused to let her cling to Him, but to the disciples, He let them touch Him in order to prove to them that He was not a ghost or something. In Chafer's mind, because of the change between morning and evening in Jesus' words, that would indicate that Jesus ascended to Heaven in between that time.

Now, that is interesting, and it does sound logical, but I will caution us that it is not explicitly in the text, and there could be other explanations. For example, maybe Mary didn't think she saw a ghost but fully knew it was Jesus and Jesus didn't need to prove His real flesh and bone like He needed to with the disciples. Another example could be that Mary actually did grab hold of Jesus. Maybe she was hugging Him and not letting Him go, so much so that it would appear she was thinking, "I'm so glad you're back that I want to make sure we never lose you again." At that point, Jesus would've had to explain to her, "hey, my purpose isn't to stay here in earth at this time. Eventually, you're going to have to let me go. That is the plan." And Jesus could have been saying, "look Mary, I will ascend eventually, but you'll have some more time with Me before that, and during that time, I want you to go tell the disciples all of this."

So, there are other explanations regarding the difference of John 20 and Luke 24, but I guess we are still left with the question: when did Jesus enter Heaven to enter the holy places to offer Himself before God? And to answer that question, I will honestly at this time have to say I don't know. Was it before the resurrection? Was it after the resurrection? Was it after His public ascension? I honestly do not know. And where was Jesus for 40 days if He wasn't with the disciples the whole time? I don't know. I don't know.

Question #5 - What is significant about the fact that Jesus has ascended to heaven?

I want to suggest to you 5 realities of Jesus' ascension that make it so significant. These come from Dr. Johnson and Dr. Ryrie.

Reality #1) Jesus' ascension confirms His destination.

Reality #2) Jesus' ascension affirms that a man can be in the presence of God.

Reality #3) Jesus' ascension determines the believer's position and power in Christ.

Reality #4) Jesus' ascension secures the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Reality #5) Jesus' ascension results in the bestowal of spiritual gifts.

Reality #6) Jesus' ascension inaugurated His High Priestly ministry.

Reality #7) Jesus' ascension illustrates His return.

Reality #8) Jesus' ascension marks the end of the period of Christ's humiliation and His entrance into the state of exaltation.

Question #6 - What is Jesus currently doing from heaven?

Currently from heaven, we can determine that Jesus is doing 7 major actions. I get these actions from Dr. Chafer.

Action #1) Jesus is exercising His universal authority.

Action #2) Jesus is actively head over all things to the Church.

Action #3) Jesus is bestowing gifts.

Action #4) Jesus is the believer's Intercessor.

Action #5) Jesus is the believer's Advocate.

Action #6) Jesus is building the Church.

Action #7) Jesus is preparing a place for His own in Heaven.

Action #8) Jesus is awaiting His return.

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