



## Introduction

Good morning church! Welcome to one of our few remaining courses on the glorious gospel. Last week, we discussed the burial of Christ and His resurrection. This week, we're going to focus on Jesus' ascension and subsequent exaltation.

## The Scriptures' Testimony

When we turn to the new testament, we find various descriptions of Jesus' ascension. The first place you'd think to look would be gospels, but surprisingly, only Luke 24:51 mentions Jesus' ascension: "While he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven." Luke's second book, Acts, goes into a little more detail when he says, "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" (Acts 1:9). Given how important Jesus' ascension proves to be, it's surprising to find such little written accounts of Jesus' actual ascension. But there are other New Testament passages to consider besides the gospels. Hebrews 4:14 says, "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." The Greek related to "pass through" means "to carry, bear, or bring up." So it seems as though Jesus was brought up or carried up into heaven. Ephesians 4:8-10 says, "Therefore it says,

"When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men." (In saying, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth? He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.)"

Here, the Greek translates as "to pass through, to walk or journey to a place." And finally we have 1 Timothy 3:16 which says, "Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness: He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory."

Now this isn't all the new testament has to say about Jesus' ascension. But it is the clear testimony of Scripture that Jesus ascended and was taken up into heaven. But that poses some questions. Why did Jesus have to go? Why didn't he stay here?

## Jesus was to be exalted by His heavenly Father

John 17:5 Jesus prayed, "And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed." A few verses later Jesus also said in John 17:24, "Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, *to see my glory that you have given me* because you loved me before the foundation of the world



## Jesus perfectly obeyed his Father's will

Jesus states this plainly again in John 17:4-5: "I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed."

## The nature of Jesus' obedience

To answer our previous question, let's turn to Philippians 2:5-11,

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The answer is clear and simple: Jesus was obedience to the point of death—even death on a cross.

Other scriptures testify to the nature of Jesus' total obedience as well. Hebrews 1:3-5 says of Jesus,

"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, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs."

## Jesus is exalted as...

First, Jesus is exalted as the *only* savior. Acts 4:10-12 where Peter says,

"let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by him this man is standing before you well. This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

Second, Jesus is exalted as the only mediator. In Latin we have the word *mediare* which means "to be in the middle" and the Greek word *mesitēs* which means "to bring about agreement." Jesus' ascension to the Father's right hand means that Jesus "stands in the middle" between God and man



Job 9:32-33, “For he is not a man, as I am, that I might answer him, that we should come to trial together. There is no arbiter between us, who might lay his hand on us both.”

1 Timothy 2:5, “For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.”

Third and finally, Jesus is exalted as the only advocate. While this is similar to being a mediator, there is a difference. The Latin for advocate is *advocatus* which means “to call someone, called to plead another’s case.” The Greek word *paráklētos* means “someone summoned or called to another’s side to help or plead another’s case before a judge.”

Jesus’ intercession is *passive*. Williams Ames wrote, “His kingly priesthood is the pleading of our cause, not by suffering and humble supplication on bended knee, as it were, but by gloriously bringing to mind the things which he did and suffered

First, what are the implications of Jesus’ advocacy?

First, *it reassures us when we do sin*. 1 John 2:1 says, “My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”

Second, it means there is no one left to condemn us. Romans 8:33-34 says, “Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.”

Third, *it will never end because Jesus will never die again*. Hebrews 7:23-25 says, “The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office, but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever. Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.”

The second and final question is, what specifically does Jesus intercede for?

First, *Jesus prays for the future glorification of his people*.

Second, *he intercedes for the unity of his people*.

Third, *he intercedes for the sanctification of his people*.

Fourth, *he advocates for our protection and perseverance*.

And finally, *Jesus intercedes for our joy*.

## Discussion Questions

1. The Father has exalted Jesus above every other name—why? How would you explain this to your children?
2. How does our culture view Jesus’ claim of being the *only* savior? How would you defend this truth in our pluralistic culture?



- 
3. What other mediators can you find in other religions? Why don't we pray to past saints?
  4. In your own words, what does it mean that Jesus is our advocate? What's the difference between a mediator and an advocate?

What does Jesus intercede for? John 17:11-24

- i. The future glorification of his people
- ii. The unity of his people
- iii. The sanctification of his people
- iv. The protection of his people
- v. The perseverance of his people
- vi. The joy of his people

5. He is exalted as our advocate



- a. Definition – Latin *advocatus* (*toward, to call*) someone called to plead another's case. Greek *paráklētos* which means “someone summoned or called to another's side to help or to plead another's case before a judge or king
  - b. The nature of his intercession—active or passive?
    - i. William Ames – His kingly priesthood is the pleading of our cause, not by suffering and humble supplication on bended knee, as it were, but by gloriously bringing to mind the things which he did and suffered.
  - c. The power of his intercession
    - i. Into the holy of holies – Heb 9:24
  - d. The implication of his advocacy
    - i. Do not sin – 1 John 2:1-2
    - ii. Reassurance when we do sin
    - iii. No one is left to condemn us – Romans 8:33-34
    - iv. It is eternal because Jesus never dies – Heb 7:23-25
  - e. What does Jesus intercede for? John 17:11-24
    - i. The future glorification of his people
    - ii. The unity of his people
    - iii. The sanctification of his people
    - iv. The protection of his people
    - v. The perseverance of his people
    - vi. The joy of his people
6. He is exalted as the only mediator
- a. Definition – Latin *mediare* – *to be in the middle*, and Greek *mesítēs* – *to bring about agreement*
  - b. A need since the fall of man – Job 9:29-33
  - c. God has met our need in Christ – 1 Timothy 2:5
  - d. Jesus is uniquely qualified – Heb 4:15-16

## Outline

7. Jesus always intended on going back to the Father – John 16:28
8. Scriptures and Greek words
  - a. Luke 24:51 – “to carry, bear, or bring up”
  - b. Heb 4:14 – “to or pass through, to walk or journey through a place”
  - c. Eph 4:20 – “To ascend, climb up, or rise”



- d. 1 Tim 3:16 – “To take or receive up”
- 9. He was exalted—Why?
  - a. Isaiah 52:13-14 – OT fulfilment
  - b. Phil 2:6-11 – Because of his obedience unto death
  - c. Heb 1:3 – Because he made purifications for sins
  - d. Rev 3:21 – Because Jesus conquered
- 10. He is exalted as the only savior
  - a. John 14:6; Acts 4:12; 1 Corinthians 3:11
- 11. He is exalted as the only mediator
  - a. Definition – Latin *mediare* – *to be in the middle*, and Greek *mesítēs* – *to bring about agreement*
  - b. A need since the fall of man – Job 9:29-33
  - c. God has met our need in Christ – 1 Timothy 2:5
  - d. Jesus is uniquely qualified – Heb 4:15-16
- 12. He is exalted as our advocate
  - a. Definition – Latin *advocatus* (*toward, to call*) someone called to plead another's case. Greek *paráklētos* which means “someone summoned or called to another's side to help or to plead another's case before a judge or king
  - b. The nature of his intercession—active or passive?
    - i. William Ames – His kingly priesthood is the pleading of our cause, not by suffering and humble supplication on bended knee, as it were, but by gloriously bringing to mind the things which he did and suffered.
  - c. The power of his intercession
    - i. Into the holy of holies – Heb 9:24
  - d. The implication of his advocacy
    - i. Do not sin – 1 John 2:1-2
    - ii. Reassurance when we do sin
    - iii. No one is left to condemn us – Romans 8:33-34
    - iv. It is eternal because Jesus never dies – Heb 7:23-25
  - e. What does Jesus intercede for? John 17:11-24
    - i. The future glorification of his people
    - ii. The unity of his people
    - iii. The sanctification of his people
    - iv. The protection of his people
    - v. The perseverance of his people
    - vi. The joy of his people