

THE DOCTRINE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

Part XI: The Characteristics And Significance Of Christ's Ascension

I. Introduction

- A. Between the Lord's resurrection and His present heavenly ministry stands an often overlooked event, the ascension of Christ to heaven in Acts 1:9-11. Is this event significant, and, if so, WHY and HOW?!
- B. We examine the Scriptures on the event to answer these questions as follows:

II. The Characteristics And Significance Of Christ's Ascension

- A. The Characteristics of Christ's Ascension, Acts 1:9-11.
 1. Four Greek words used in this text describe the characteristics of Christ's ascension to heaven:
 - a. He was "taken up" (*eperthe*), meaning "lifted up," from the Mount of Olives, Acts 1:9, 12. Christ's movement was directly upwards, Walvoord, Jesus Christ Our Lord, p. 222.
 - b. He was "received up" (*hupelambano*), literally meaning "took under him," by a cloud which hid Him from the disciples' view beneath, Ibid. (Acts 1:9 NIV) Jesus thus was gathered from beneath by a cloud in the air where He had risen so that the cloud supported Him on His journey, Ibid.
 - c. He "went" (*poreuomenou*), a word used to speak of a journey, v. 10. The disciples were able to view this journey as it was gradual enough for them to view its progress, Ibid.
 - d. Verse 11 describes His being "received up" (*analemphtheis*), Acts 1:11, as is the "resultant action" of "the preceding event" of Christ's being lifted up, v. 9. Thus, the cloud gathered below Him, Ibid.
 2. Thus, Jesus **actually** gradually, visibly, bodily arose from the Mount of Olives and was collected in the air from beneath by a cloud that continued its journey, taking Him to the Father's presence, Ibid., 223.
- B. The Significance Of Christ's Ascension.
 1. This event fulfills the Old Testament prediction of Daniel 7:13-14. There Messiah, the "Son of man," came with the clouds of heaven up to the Ancient of Days, the Father to be enthroned as King.
 2. As such, we draw the following parallels of the significance of the ascension of Christ:
 - a. The ascension proves the validity of Christ's many claims to be the Messiah by His use of the term "Son of Man" in referring to Himself during His earthly ministry, cf. Mtt. 10:23; 11:19; 12:8 et al.
 - b. The **actual** ascension event shows that there will come an **actual** Millennial Kingdom: since the ascension in Dan. 7:13 is followed by the kingdom in Dan. 7:14, we are not amillennial (denying a **literal** thousand year reign) but premillennial in theology, asserting the **literal** Millennium!
 - c. The angel announced that Christ would come again as He went up, Acts 1:11b. As such, we believe in the **actual** visible, bodily, gradual descent of Christ to earth in the Second Coming, and thus counter with Liberal Theology that denies such an **actual** historic event! See Mtt. 24:29-31.
 - d. Thus, our Savior ended His period of limiting the expression of His divine attributes as He now sits enthroned at the right hand of the Father, cf. Acts 7:56 with Psalm 110:1-2.
 - e. Thus, our Savior is exalted in heaven, Eph. 1:20-23.
 - f. Thus, as our forerunner, He has entered heaven to pave the way for us, Heb. 6:20.
 - g. Thus, Christ has a real priestly ministry in our behalf as our Intercessor, Heb. 4:14-16.
 - h. Thus, Christ is preparing a real place for the believer, Jn. 14:2-3.
 - i. Thus, Jesus Christ is head over the Church of Christ, Colossians 1:18.

Lesson: (1) As for what actually happened, Christ bodily ascended straight upwards from the Mount of Olives at a rate discernible to the human eye until a cloud from heaven met Him in the air and gathered under Him, supporting Him and hiding Him from view beneath while it continued taking Jesus on up to heaven. (2) When He arrived in heaven, Jesus was enthroned at the Father's right hand, awaiting the final introduction of His earthly Kingdom, Dan. 7:14. (3) The ascension thus (a) proves He is the Son of Man, the Messiah of Dan. 7:13, (b) shows the way He will return to the Mt. of Olives (Zech. 14:4), (c) proving there to be a literal Millennium and Second Coming, and that (d) He is exalted as Our Intercessor, Head of the Church, Forerunner into heaven and Preparer of our real heavenly home. The ascension thus validates all of our Lord's present and future works!