

Foundations of the Faith 103
Systematic Theology
Christology Pt. 26
“The Results of Christ’s Resurrection”

I. What Are the Results of Christ’s Resurrection?

1. **His Pardon** - I can be forgiven and free from sin’s penalty.
 - I Cor. 15:17 - “And if Christ be not raised...ye are still in your sins”
 - I John 1:9 & Eph. 1:7

2. **His Power** - I can be free from the power of sin, through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit.
 - Eph. 1:19-20

3. **His Presence** - Matt. 28:19-20

4. **His Peace** - John 14:27; Rom. 5:1; I Cor. 1:3

5. **His Purpose** - I Cor. 15:19 - If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

6. **His Promise** - Of Heaven, John 14:1-3.

7. **His Pattern** - “His resurrection body a prototype of ours...”

8. **His Punishment** - Acts 17:31 & Rev. 20:11-15.

Note: “The resurrection of Jesus Christ is a prerequisite to all His subsequent ministries.”

II. The Ascension of Christ

1. Statements about the Ascension

- **In the Old Testament.** Two references foretell the ascension of Messiah (Ps. 68:18, quoted in Eph. 4:8 and Ps. 110:1 quoted in Acts 2:34).

- In the sayings of Christ. Our Lord spoke of going to His Father (John 7:33; 14:12; 28; 16:5, 10, 28) and specifically of the Ascension (6:62; 20:17).

- **In the writings of the New Testament.** The debated ending of Mark records the Ascension (16:19); Luke 9:51; 24:51); but the principal description is in Acts 1:6-11. Other New Testament passages refer to it (Eph. 4:10; 1 Tim. 3:16; Heb. 4:14; 1 Peter 3:220, and others which tell of the present exaltation of Christ presuppose it (e.g., Col. 3:1).

2. Description of the Ascension

- **The place.** It occurred “toward Bethany” (Luke, 24:50), that is on the Bethany side of Mount of Olives (Acts 1:12).
- **The procedure.** Christ actually traveled up as if supported by the cloud (v. 9). The ascent was not a sudden disappearance but a gradual, though not long, movement upward.
- **The promise.** As the disciples watched, two angels appeared and promised that He who had just been taken from them would return again “in the same way.”

3. Problems Raised with Regard to the Ascension

- **It was contrary to the laws of nature.** Yes it was, but Christ’s resurrection body was not necessarily subject to the laws of nature.
- **Did He ascend to heaven before the public ascension?** Some think that John 20:17 indicates one or more ascensions before the one detailed in Acts 1. However, the verb “I ascend” is most likely a futuristic present referring to the coming public ascension of Acts 1 and referring to it with certainty. It is as if the Lord were saying to Mary, “Stop clinging to Me: There is no need for this, as I am not yet at the point of permanent ascension. You will still have the opportunity to see Me. However, there is no question but that I certainly will ascend to My Father” (see Leon Morris, *The Gospel of John* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971, pp. 840-1).

4. Significance of the Ascension

- The Ascension marked the end of the period of Christ’s humiliation and His entrance into the state of exaltation. Even the forty days between His resurrection and His ascension involved some limitation as, for example, with respect to showing His glory. Notice that His post-resurrection, pre-ascension appearances did not startle the disciples as far as the appearance of His resurrection body was concerned. But the post-ascension appearance of Christ to John described in Revelation 1 must have shown His glory much more vividly.

Paul Enns, “*The Moody Handbook of Theology*.”

- **It ended the earthly ministry of Christ.** It marked the end of the period of self-limitation during the days of His sojourn on earth.
- **It ended the period of His humiliation.** His glory was no longer veiled following the ascension (John 17:5; Acts 9:3, 5). Christ is now exalted and enthroned in heaven.
- **It marks the first entrance into heaven and the beginning of a new work in heaven** (Heb. 4:14-16; 6:20). A representative of the human race in a resurrected, glorified body is in the Christian’s intercessor.

- **It made the descent of the Holy Spirit possible** (John 16:7). It was necessary for Christ to ascend to heaven in order that He could send the Holy Spirit.

III. The Exaltation of Christ

The Scriptures likewise speak of Christ's exaltation. Luke mentions it several times. Paul teaches it (Rom. 8:34; Eph. 1:20; Col. 3:1); the writer to the Hebrews mentions it (10:12); and Jesus himself intimates it (Matt. 22:41-45; Rev. 3:21; cf. Ps. 110:1).

1. Things Embraced in the Exaltation of Christ

A number of things are embraced in the exaltation of Christ. Christ was "crowned with glory and honor" (Heb. 2:9). This glory appears in his present "body of His glory" (Phil. 3:21). John saw him in this body on the Isle of Patmos (Rev. 1:12-18).

2. Results of the Ascension and Exaltation of Christ

The results of his ascension and exaltation may be treated together. He is now not merely in heaven, but is spiritually present everywhere. He fills all (Eph. 4:10). Thus he is an ideal object of worship for all mankind (1 Cor. 1:2). He has "led captive a host of captives" (Eph. 4:8). This may mean that the Old Testament believers are no longer in Hades, but have been transferred to heaven. Clearly, the New Testament believer goes directly into the immediate presence of Christ when he dies (2 Cor. 5:6-8; Phil. 1:23). He has entered upon his priestly ministry in heaven (Heb. 4:14; 5:5-10; 6:20; 7:21; 8:1-6; 9:24). He has bestowed spiritual gifts upon his own (Eph. 4:8-11). These are both personal gifts to individuals (1 Cor. 12:4-11) and gifts to his church (Eph. 4:8-13). He has poured out his Spirit upon his people (John 14:16; 16:7; Acts 2:33), is giving repentance and faith to men (Acts 5:31; 11:18; Rom. 12:3; 2 Tim. 2:25; 2 Pet. 1:1), and is baptizing believers into the church (John 1:33; 1 Cor. 12:13). These are the results of his ascension and exaltation. It is evident that we cannot stop with the death of Christ, important as that is, if we are to have a complete redemption; the physical resurrection, ascension, and exaltation of Christ must also be historical facts.