

WE ARE SECURE IN CHRIST

Hebrews 6:19-20: *19 We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain. 20 Jesus has entered there on our behalf as a forerunner, because he has become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.*

1. What is the hope that the author of Hebrews is writing about?
2. How does he describe this hope, and why is this significant?
3. Where do you see the implications of the ascension in this text?
4. What does it mean for Jesus to be our forerunner and high priest?
5. How does this text produce hope in you?

JESUS WILL COME AGAIN

Acts 1:11: *They said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up into heaven? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come in the same way that you have seen him going into heaven."*

1. How does knowing that Jesus will come back affect the way we live today?
2. According to the text, how will Jesus return?



360 DISCUSSION 04.23.17

THE ASCENSION OF JESUS

ACTS 1:1-11



Michael Bird calls the ascension of Jesus the poor cousin in the work of Christ, and I think he is right. The ascension of Jesus has often been left out of the Easter season.

The ascension of Jesus is often viewed as nothing more than an exclamation point in the work of Christ. It is generally lumped together with the resurrection and given very little attention.

But this is not how the Biblical writers viewed the ascension. The ascension was a powerful historical event in the life of the church as Jesus ascended in bodily form to the Father. In fact, time and time again the NT writers reflect on the meaning and implications of the ascension of Jesus in their writings.

For the NT writers, the ascension was not just a theological concept to study, but reality that shaped the way that they lived life everyday.

Luke records at the end of his gospel the response that the ascension provoked in the lives of the disciples. He wrote,

Luke 24:50-53: *50 Then he led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them. 51 And while he was blessing them, he left them and was carried up into heaven. 52 After worshiping him, they returned to Jerusalem with great joy. 53 And they were continually in the temple praising God.*

Worship and joy characterized the disciples after the resurrection.

Briefly spend a couple of moments sharing with one another what you know about the ascension of Jesus?

WHAT IS IT? | ACTS 1:9-11

The ascension of Jesus is the bodily ascent of Jesus into the presence of his Father.

ACTS 1:9-11: *After he had said this, he was taken up as they were watching, and a cloud took him out of their sight. 10 While he was going, they were gazing into heaven, and suddenly two men in white clothes stood by them. 11 They said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up into heaven? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come in the same way that you have seen him going into heaven.”*

1. What might be significant about Jesus ascending in front of the disciples?
2. Where else does a cloud play a significant role in the Scriptures?
 - a. What does the cloud often represent in the Scriptures?
3. What is the significance of the cloud in the ascension of Jesus?

WHAT DOES IT MEAN? | EPHESIANS 1:20-23

Ephesians 1:20-23: *20 He exercised this power in Christ by raising him from the dead and seating him at his right hand in the heavens—21 far above every ruler and authority, power and dominion, and every title given, not only in this age but also in the one to come. 22 And he subjected everything under his feet, and appointed him as head over everything for the church, 23 which is his body, the fullness of the one who fills all things in every way.*

1. What is significant about the right hand of God in the heavens?
2. How is Jesus ruling and reigning right now?
3. How does the rule and reign of Jesus bring joy to those who follow him?
4. What is the connection that Paul draws between the authority of Jesus and the Church?

WHAT ARE ITS BENEFITS? | ACTS 1:4-8

There are several benefits in light of the ascension of Jesus: (1) The Holy Spirit is sent; (2) The Spirit-empowered mission of Jesus continues through the church; (3) Jesus is interceding for us; (4) We are secure in Christ; (5) Jesus will come again.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IS SENT AND THE MISSION CONTINUES

Acts 1:4-8: *4 While he was with them, he commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for the Father’s promise. “Which,” he said, “you have heard me speak about; 5 for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit in a few days.” 6 So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, are you restoring the kingdom to Israel at this time?” 7 He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”*

1. What is significant about the coming of the Holy Spirit?
2. How does the coming of the Spirit relate to the ascension of Jesus?
3. Verse 8 is important to understanding gospel mission. How does the Holy Spirit empower us for missional living?
4. How does this influence the way you interact with others in your workplace?

JESUS IS INTERCEDING FOR US

Hebrews 4:14-16: *14 Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens—Jesus the Son of God—let us hold fast to our confession. 15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in every way as we are, yet without sin. 16 Therefore, let us approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in time of need.*

Hebrews 7:25: *Therefore, he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, since he always lives to intercede for them.*

Hebrews 9:24: *For Christ did not enter a sanctuary made with hands (only a model of the true one) but into heaven itself, so that he might now appear in the presence of God for us.*

1. What is Jesus currently doing on our behalf? What does this mean?
2. How do these Scriptures bring comfort and encouragement to you?