

The Ascension of Christ: Deity, Sovereignty, Salvation with Intercession

By Craig R. Dumont, Sr.

“The Ascension of Christ, although a major event in the life of our Lord, has long been neglected by the Church. The average religious calendar does not bother to designate the day on which He ascended, and the average Christian believer is totally unaware of its great significance. Christian literature is almost devoid of works on the Ascension despite the fact that the *first* command of the Risen Christ was, “Go . . . and say, I ascend.”¹

So writes Carl Brumback back in 1955. Reading his book, **Accent on the Ascension**, in conjunction with Ascension Sunday meditations, Brumback challenged me to think more about this event when he admitted that. . .

It came as a distinct shock to me to realize that, although in my eighteen years of ministry I had preached numerous sermons on the major events in the life of Christ, I had not preached a single sermon devoted entirely to the Ascension. An even greater shock came with the realization that, out of all the sermons which I had heard from ministers of every denomination, not one dealt exclusively with the Ascension.

Sadly, this is still true more than 50 years later. I also have never preached a message exclusively about the Ascension even though Brumback was clearly correct in identifying the Ascension of Christ as one of the major events in history and for the Church. For centuries Ascension Day, the 40th day following Easter and the day that the Bible records that Jesus “was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight,” was a major feast day for the Christian Church. Ascension Day was a day of rejoicing and celebrating as reported as far back as Augustine, who wrote, “the Feast of the Ascension has been kept from time immemorial and probably was instituted by the apostles.” Perhaps the great emphasis upon celebrating was due to the fact that the Ascension of Christ also came with one of the greatest promises the Church possesses and confesses with confident faith each week as part of *all* Christian creeds: His return!²

And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as [Jesus] went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.”³

From the very first the Ascension of Christ was unequivocally connected to His return, a return that is highly anticipated even in our prayers that cry out “even so, come quickly Lord Jesus.”

But perhaps it is precisely due to the fact that the Ascension and the Return of Christ is undeniably connected that we have wandered away from recognizing and celebrating this High Christian Day with a feast. The Ascension is inseparable from Christ’s inauguration as Universal Ruler. Upon His Ascent Christ was seated and en-



throned in glory at the Father's right hand, with Psalm 2 and 110:1 serving as the paradigm of sovereign rulership and uncontested power. Theologians have called this *Christ's Session*,⁴ for His judicial and kingly rule is now on display and will continue uninterrupted until all His enemies are placed under His feet. When death, the last enemy, is defeated, Christ turns the kingdom over to the Father at the end of time.⁵

Given our current fascination with eschatological doom and gloom, with disasters and defeat now associated with the "last days" and the secret return of Christ, it may be that we have forgotten the good news. For all the grace and amazing love demonstrated by the cross, for all the wonder and awesome power displayed through the resurrection, the gospel would not be complete without the Ascension of Christ into heaven testifying to His everlasting authority to apply the benefits of His life to all who believe.

It has been speculated that for all three offices of the Redeemer—Prophet, Priest and King—"the ascension to heaven has the most decided significance."⁶ In 1910 H.B. Swete wrote that the Ascension is "a subject to be kept prominently before the Christian mind."⁷ Perhaps if Christ's Ascension is once again set "prominently before the Christian" we will take the first steps towards recapturing the victorious faith that has so transformed the world.

Grasping the significance of the Ascension is vital in our understanding of Christ's deity, His sovereignty and His salvation with intercession. In fact to comprehend the implications of the Ascension as understood by early Christians is to understand the driving force behind not simply evangelistic *effort*, but evangelistic *success*!

Ascension and Deity

First, the Ascension underscores Christ's deity. Jesus Himself testifies to His deity by referring to His Ascension. In John 3:13 He tells Nicodemus that "No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven." This is followed up in chapter 6 immediately after He talks about His Incarnation as "the bread which comes down from heaven" and reveals that the Father has sent Him into the world from heaven. When the disciples have a difficult time understanding Jesus' saying and complain about it, He pointedly asks them:

Does this offend you? What then if you should see *the Son of Man ascend where He was before*?⁸

Jesus very clearly taught that He was in heaven prior to His Incarnation, that He was with the Father and that The Father sent Him to earth. Jesus "came down from heaven" and the proof that He *came down* would be that He would *ascend back* to heaven and the Father. Again, for Christ and also for those to whom He spoke, the Ascension was the primary evidence that He was equal to God. This is why we find in John 20:17 that Jesus says to Mary Magdalene:

Do not cling to Me, for I have *not yet ascended* to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, '*I am ascending to My Father* and your Father, and to My God and your God.'

Paul tells the Philippians that Christ, "being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God," but left the splendor of heaven and descended to "come in the likeness of men." However, that was a temporary condition. He is now ascended and "God has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name." And we must not forget that it was specifically Jesus' reference to His ascension and the connotation that held for His deity that infuriated the religious leaders of the day. At Jesus' trial Caiaphas the high priest explicitly asked Him if He was the Christ, the Son of God, to which Jesus answered in the affirmative. In fact, Jesus referred directly to Daniel's heavenly in which he sees the Son of Man coming with the clouds of heaven to be seated next to God the Father. Jesus' application of this event to Himself indicated His equality with God:

It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.⁹

The Ascension of Christ was the exclamation point on all of His claims and commands because it demonstrated beyond doubt that Jesus was indeed Emmanuel, God with us. Luke gives us the first account of an actual “worship service” geared to Jesus and it takes place immediately following the Ascension. We must keep in mind that worship is reserved exclusively for and to God Himself. It is also significant to note that even though Jesus was physically leaving them, a promised event that had previously caused great sorrow, it is recorded that His going away, or His being “carried up into heaven” in actuality produced “great joy.”

Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven. And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God. Amen.¹⁰

Obviously there are many more references to and proofs of Christ’s deity. But Jesus’ emphasis upon His *ascension* rather than *resurrection* (without minimizing that aspect whatsoever) as the primary validation of His deity should not be overlooked.¹²

John alludes to both the Pre-Incarnate and Incarnate existence of the Word Who “from the beginning” had “eternal life which was with the Father” but was Incarnate or manifested in His life on earth. Christ’s Ascension is the context in which he could then write that the Son is with the Father and due to this, we can have fellowship with both; and further, this Ascended fellowship that Jesus Christ enjoys with the Father means that we may experience the same joy the disciples experienced because God the Son went to God the Father.

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life—the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us—that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. And these things we write to you that your joy may be full.¹¹

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Sovereignty and Power

Jesus’ reference to and appropriation of Daniel’s vision and language raises the issue of the ramifications of the Ascension of Christ regarding His sovereignty and power. The theological and practical developments of this historical event became the essential element in the Christians motivation and power to evangelize the world and stand in stark contrast to the paradigm of hopelessness and defeat that grips many Christians today.

The prophet Daniel attests to the importance of the Ascension when he is given a vision of the Ancient of Days being seated and the Son of Man “coming with the clouds of heaven!” Amazingly, there is no prophetic revelation here to Christ’s humiliation, death or resurrection, only with the Ascension. Further, Daniel’s vision is tracks exactly as Jesus leaves the earth and His disciples in Acts and as the Ascended Christ is described in Revelation.

I was watching in the night visions,
And behold, One like the Son of Man,

Coming with the clouds of heaven!
He came to the Ancient of Days,
And they brought Him near before Him.
Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom,
That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him.
His dominion is an everlasting dominion,
Which shall not pass away,
And His kingdom the one
Which shall not be destroyed.¹³

Daniel's vision dealt with two types of kingdoms. The first was a series of four kingdoms or powers opposed to God. The second was the kingdom of God, or of The Ancient of Days and The Son of Man, Who had ascended "with the clouds of heaven." According to the vision, the beastly kingdoms held power and "made war against the saints" and even "prevailed against them." But then the Ancient of Days, or God the Father, said to the Son of Man, "Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool."¹⁴ At this point "the court was seated" and "a judgment was made in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom."

For Daniel, the Ascension of the Son of Man "coming with the clouds of heaven" was the turning point in the affairs of men, saints and sinners alike, for upon His enthronement the prophet is given the understanding that,

Then the kingdom and dominion,
And the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven,
Shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High.
His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,
And all dominions shall serve and obey Him.¹⁵

This accent upon the Ascension is clear and the implications are both unmistakable and undeniable in terms of future certainty. Ascension means judgement *has been* passed upon the kingdoms of the world and the Son of Man *has been* given absolute power to reign and His reign shall be an everlasting one. Jesus declared this to His disciples in Matthew 28:18 where He announces that "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth." While Mark doesn't record these words of Christ, we are told concerning the same event that "after the Lord had spoken to them, *He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God.*"¹⁶ For Mark, the substantiation of Christ's claims was explicitly manifested through the Ascension. There will be no other powers to challenge Him as King David himself prophesied in Psalm 2. Upon Christ's sitting down at the right hand of God He receives, "the nations for [His] inheritance, And the ends of the earth for [His] possession."

That is the reality *now*, not in the future!

Too often we truncate our understanding and scope of redemption because we limit our thinking concerning salvation to Christ's death on the cross and place all the benefits far out in the future. An unintended result of that restrictive thinking is that our prayers are also truncated and timid, mostly concerned with personal needs, small requests and our future salvation.

As Paul reminds the Ephesians this is no empty boast or meaningless event, for the Ascension of Christ means "He fills all things!"

"When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And gave gifts to men."

(Now this, "He ascended"—what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.)¹⁷

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is a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ leading in His triumphal train the devil and hell and sin and death—the great enemies that were against man and which had held mankind in captivity for so long a time. The princes which had controlled that captivity are now being led captive themselves. The Apostle is telling us that the Lord Jesus Christ came into the world to deal with and to conquer our enemies, and having finished His campaign, and having routed them, He has returned to heaven leading all these enemies captive, and showering His gifts upon us, His acclaiming people.”¹⁸ The very fact that the Holy Spirit has come continually testifies to the reality of His Ascension into heaven. John records in the 16th chapter of his gospel that Jesus assures them of this sign and the positive results that will follow:

But now I go away to Him who sent Me, and none of you asks Me, ‘Where are You going?’ But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

Again, note the judicial aspect of Christ Ascending to the right hand of the Father, just as Daniel foresaw. The Son of Man is seated, court is in session and Satan and all opposed to God are stripped of their power. This is vital to our understanding because while it is true that there is to be a final judgement, the Word of God informs us that there *has already been a judgement* on the operations and effectiveness of the system of antichrist. The world is being redeemed from darkness and sin now. Satan’s ploys have been revealed and judged already. While as Psalm 2 states the nations may yet rage and the kings of the earth may try to set themselves against God and against His Christ, “saying, ‘Let us break Their bonds in pieces and cast away Their cords from us,’” (again employing the language of a legal restraint against their wickedness),

He who sits in the heavens shall laugh;
The Lord shall hold them in derision.
Then He shall speak to them in His wrath,
And distress them in His deep displeasure:

This is the language of victory and triumph! This is the language confirming what King Nebuchadnezzar discovered almost three thousand years ago:

For His dominion is an everlasting dominion,
And His kingdom is from generation to generation.
All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing;
He does according to His will in the army of heaven
And among the inhabitants of the earth.
No one can restrain His hand
Or say to Him, “What have You done?”¹⁹

This vivid description of what transpires immediately upon the Ascension of Christ to heaven should be constantly before us—as it is with all the Biblical writers! A proper focus on the Ascension of Christ and a clear un-



derstanding of what the Bible tells us was the immediate (as opposed to future) result should help us expand our understanding of salvation and redemption. This expansion will allow us to pray bolder prayers concerning a far more comprehensive array of issues. Too often we truncate our understanding and scope of redemption because we limit our thinking concerning salvation to Christ's death on the cross and place all the benefits far out in the future. An unintended result of that restrictive thinking is that our prayers are also truncated and timid, mostly concerned with personal needs, small requests and our future salvation.²⁰

Salvation with Intercession

Now there is no downplaying that "all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission" of sin or reconciliation with God. Nor is there any intent to move away from the cross of Christ; in fact, we glory in the message of the cross. However a closer examination of Scripture requires that we broaden our view by taking into account not only the cross, grave and resurrection, but the Ascension of Christ. Romans 5:10 declares that "For if, when we

were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life."

This is a powerful reminder of just how awesome redemption is! While we thank God that we were reconciled to God by the death of Christ, Paul tells us that "much more" is accomplished in terms of salvation "by His life," or the reality of the Resurrection and Ascension. While the cross and Resurrection was vital, no less so was Christ's Ascension for we are told that as a result "we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God." Jesus is "the forerunner" who has entered the Presence of God, and who has "become High Priest forever" and has been "made higher than the heavens" who is "set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens." It is precisely because Christ has physically entered "into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us" that He can fulfill the writers claim that He now "ever lives to make intercession for us!"²¹

And what a wonderful and profound intercession that is! Remember that the first intercession made on behalf of His people is for their life and well-being on earth as "a judgment was made in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom." Christ's message of hope and joy, that the kingdom of God is at hand; a promise so beneficial that it's embodied in the Lord's Prayer with "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," has been put in motion and the fulfillment began upon His first act of intercession upon ascending. And it gets better!

The mystery of the ages is now revealed to God's people even as the kingdom of darkness is dismantled. The intercession of Christ works so powerfully that the Church can and must confidently declare not only Christ's resurrection, but His Ascension and what God has, is and will accomplish through Him! To the Ephesians Paul writes that

to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known *by the church to the principalities and powers* in the heavenly places, according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord, *in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him.*

We're told that as we pray we keep in mind that He†"is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask

or think, according to the power that works in us.” Christ intercedes for His people and “the ruler of this world is (has been) judged.” Not *will be* judged, but is and *has been* judged! “The time came for the saints to possess the kingdom” upon Christ’s Ascension and it is up to the church to make this known to the “principalities and powers” for this was “accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Manifold means “many and various; having many different forms or elements.” The many different forms of the “wisdom of God” can be summarized by (but not limited to) the Cross, the Resurrection and the Ascension.

Properly understood, the work of Christ on behalf of His people that follows His Ascension brings great relief, peace and contentment to believers *on earth* while serving to exalt, magnify and glorify Him in heaven! This promise of earthly and existential victory and progress was the fuel of evangelism as Rodney Stark has documented:

The power of Christianity lay not in its promise of otherworldly compensations for suffering in this life, as has so often been proposed. No, the crucial change that took place in the third century was the rapidly spreading awareness of a faith that delivered potent antidotes to life’s miseries here and now! The truly revolutionary aspect of Christianity lay in moral imperatives such as “*Love one’s neighbor as oneself,*” “*Do unto others as you would have them do unto you,*” “*It is more blessed to give than to receive,*” and “*When you did it to the least of my brethren, you did it unto me.*” These were not just slogans. Members did nurse the sick, even during epidemics; they did support orphans, widows, the elderly, and the poor; they did concern themselves with the lot of slaves. In short, Christians created “a miniature welfare state in an empire which for the most part lacked social services.” It was these responses to the long-standing

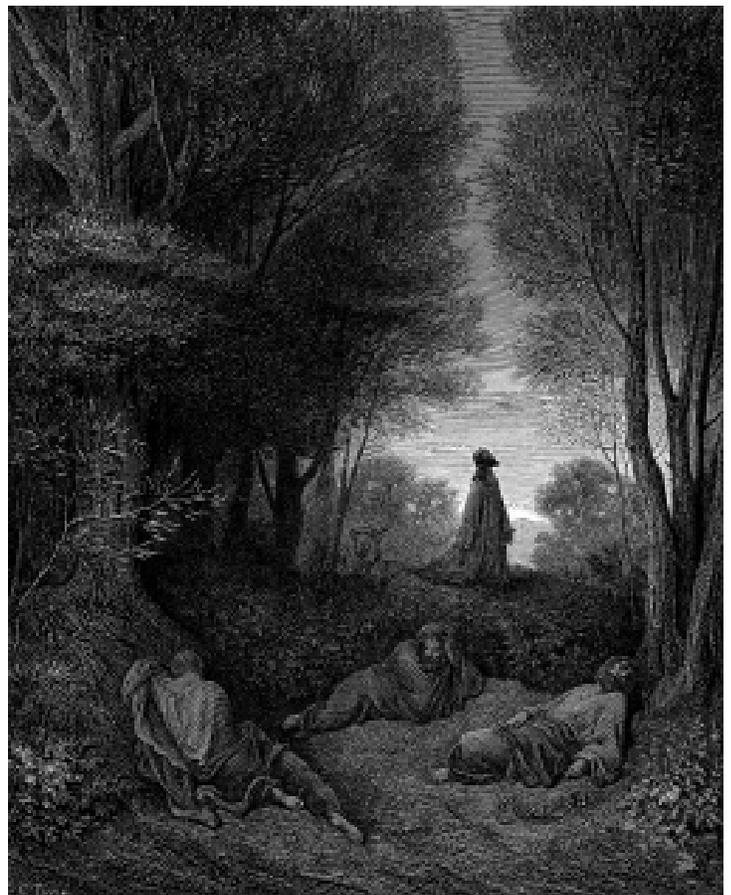


misery of life in antiquity, not the onset of worse conditions, that were the ‘material’ changes that inspired Christian growth. But these material benefits were entirely spiritual in origin. Support for this view comes from the continuing inability of pagan groups to meet this challenge.²²

The “continuing inability of pagan groups” to counter the Christian view of abundant life and progress *on earth* was due to the spiritual zeal, power and confidence that Christians possessed for a risen, ascended, reigning Lord! Not only did the pagans *not want* to help those less fortunate, but even when it seemed politically expedient to do so *they could not*, for the kingdom had been turned over to the saints and Christ’s world government was being established on earth. A Christ-directed state-within-a-state was growing and would eventually overthrow the old order. Christ, upon His ascension, had been seated at the right hand of Power His followers accepted the fact that “the government will be upon His shoulder [and] Of the increase of His government and peace There will be no end.” The “manifest wisdom of God,” rejected by the ruling powers of the day, was nonetheless being “made known by the church” to the established “principalities and powers” that they had been stripped of their ability to enslave mankind. Christ had ascended to the throne and Daniel’s prophecy had been fulfilled. The church was effective at evangelization because they believed Christ ruled on earth now and acted like it. They obeyed His commands and located His promise of the kingdom from His Ascension forward—not as a far distant and other-earthly one, and this empowered them as ruling saints in the “here and now!”

It provides tremendous satisfaction attended by “peace that passes understanding” to know that we have been personally saved through the intercession of Jesus Christ and to realize He knows us by name and called us individually. But to know that the intercession He engages in is backed by an already declared judgement and executed sentence on behalf of all of His people and His kingdom on earth should expand our faith exponentially! To keep the Ascension of Christ “prominently before the Christian” is to create Christians who live life boldly and daringly with great expectation constructed upon the reality of Christ’s unchallenged governing authority. They would not shrink from persecution and temporary setbacks because they knew that those submitted to Christ’s authority “shall inherit the earth.”

Salvation with intercession! “Reconciled to God” through Christ’s death, but granted “life more abundant” through His life, for “He ever lives to make intercession for us.” “We are more than conquerors through Him who love us.” And we see a glimpse of the benefits we receive in the fourteenth chapter of Mark. It is here that we read of Jesus at Gethsemane and He separates Himself from the disciples and prays by Himself. His instructions to them were to “sit here while I pray.” He comes and finds them sleeping and asks them if they could not even watch one hour—not if they could not even pray one hour, but watch one hour. If it depended upon the disciple’s prayers they were in trouble! However finding them asleep once more He said, “Are you still sleeping and resting? It is enough!” Jesus had prayed and it was enough. They had fallen short, but Christ had prayed. Jesus went away from His disciples and friends and prayed to the Father and it was enough. Faced with the cross and the pain, suffering and humiliation, it was enough that Christ alone prayed. In fact, not only was it enough to see Him through His most awful experience, but it was enough for those around Him as well. Concerning



Peter we know that Jesus saw his weaknesses and shortcomings and yet with great love told him that “I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail.”

This is a foreshadowing of His great work of intercession when He is away from His people, yet His intercession brings satisfaction, as Isaiah prophesied: “He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied.” Due to the reality of the Ascension and the security of our personal salvation achieved through His intercession, we have been granted the liberty to pray boldly.

Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.²³

That “word of reconciliation” or “ministry of reconciliation” also includes outrageously bold prayers for reconciliation of even the greatest sinners!

Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.²⁴

As Swete points out in *The Ascended Christ*, this is not a “small request” but one that is awesome enough to be worthy of the prayers of the Church because it is worthy of a great and awesome Redeemer who accomplishes great things!

The argument is clear: God, who is the Savior of believers, wills also the salvation of the world; the One God is the God of the whole human race, and desires the good of all He has made. In like manner the One Mediator represents all mankind; He took their common nature, and He offered Himself in that nature for all. Therefore the Church can pray for all men, and all men can partake of the common salvation through the sacrifice and mediation of Jesus Christ . . . the incarnate and ascended Lord is also the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world, and therefore can mediate not only between the finite and the Infinite, but between sinners and the All-holy. Jesus Christ is not only man, but also the Ransom for all men, and He has ascended that He may present His sacrifice. No obstacle remains in the way of those who come to God by Him . . . Now our Lord’s mediation passes into intercession in the case of all who come to God by Him. Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? . . . It is Christ Jesus that died, yea rather, that was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us . . . There can be no suspension of His intercessory work so long as the world lasts. He lives to intercede, and intercedes by the very fact of His High-priestly life. For the intercession of the Ascended Christ is not a prayer, but a life.

May God turn our thoughts back to a Biblical appreciation of Christ’s Ascension and may our meditations upon it enlarge and strengthen our faith. May we be inspired to pray outrageous and audacious prayers for our selves, our friends and fellow church members, and for all men everywhere.

(Endnotes)

¹ Carl Brumback, **Accent on the Ascension**, Gospel Publishing House, 1955. I am indebted to the author not only for his own keen observations and insights, but also for the excellent references to much earlier works that have been all but forgotten and are now out-of-print, but still available.

² **All Christians at all times in all places** have a confessional emphasis upon the Ascension of Christ and **His return** in like manner. The Nicene Creed states: “On the third day He rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; **He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory** to judge the living and the dead, and His kingdom will have no end.” The Apostles’ Creed says: “the third day He rose again from the dead; **He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come** to judge the quick and the dead.” The Athanasian Creed puts it simply: “**He ascended into heaven, sits at the right hand of God the Father almighty. From there He shall come** to judge the living and the dead.”

³ Acts 1:10-11

⁴ This act of being “seated at the right hand of Power,” or of God the Father, is called Christ’s Session. Today we utilize this terminology when we say that “congress is in session” to indicate they are officially and actively governing. The doctrine of Christ’s Session is a fundamental one and extremely important to the Christian, but has been minimized or even dismissed over the past several decades as dispensational “end-times” thinking has become wide-spread. However, at the right hand, Christ has authority over everything in the created order (Eph.1:22a; Col.2:10), including—but not limited to:

1. The nations, to bring positive volition to faith (Jn.17:2) and to “lift kings up and put kings down.”
2. The Church, of which He is the Founder and Head (Eph.1:22b; 4:15; 5:23; Col.1:18; Act.20:28).
3. Authority over the angelic realm (1Pet.3:22; Heb.1:4-13).

⁵ 1 Corinthians 15:24-28.

⁶ Erich Sauer, **The Triumph of the Crucified: A Survey of the History of Salvation in the New Testament**; Eerdmans, 1951. Sauer is a good writer who has the ability to excite the Christian imagination and his two books on redemption from an Old Testament and New Testament perspective is worth reading. His chapter on *The Ascension of the Victor* in **The Triumph of the Crucified**, is powerful and faith enhancing. However as a premillennial dispensationalist Sauer is schizophrenic, at one moment extolling the Victory of Christ and quoting Psalm 110:1 as the beginning of an eternal Session, while the next moment negating that victory by attributing conquering power to Satan and the antichrist on this world in history. For Sauer, contrary to what he clearly lays out (and believes) to be Christ’s exaltation with power in one chapter, it seems that he really expects that all the benefits of Christ’s Ascension accrue to us in some other dispensation and outside of history. Indeed, he writes that even though Christ is now “on His Father’s throne,” His kingdom is “purely spiritual, invisible, concerned with the course of salvation” only. In other words, don’t get too excited about the kingdom of God here on earth and its outworking because Christ is limited to salvation—and even then He needs the cooperation of men. Only in the far off future will Christ’s Ascension prove “nationally universal from the point of view of both world history and salvation’s history” for “the throne of God and of the Lamb belongs properly to the new world” that has not yet come. Only then will “the kingship of the Son, under the kingship of the Father” become “universal, eternal, super-historical.” A much more direct and certainly more consistently Biblical interpretation is to take the “Triumph of the Crucified” and Ascended Lord literally at His word. He reigns now and forevermore!

⁷ H.B. Swete, **The Ascended Christ**; Macmillan and Co., 1910

⁸ John 6:61-62

⁹ Matthew 26:64

¹⁰ Luke 24:51-53

¹¹ 1 John 1:1-4

¹² The emphasis upon ascension as a proof of Jesus’ deity is found in the great Messianic psalm of David, Psalm 68, which Paul quotes in Ephesians 4. In his commentary on Ephesians, D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones writes: “[I]t is equally clear that the teaching of the Apostle here [Ephesians 4], as indeed in all his writings, is that the Lord Jesus Christ is Jehovah, the JAH of whom David writes . . . You cannot say of the Father that He received gifts for men. You cannot say of the Father that He ascended, because He is always in heaven and always has been there, and always will be there. There is only one of whom we can say that He ascended up on high—the Lord Jesus Christ. So we deduce this great truth which is at the very heart and center of the Christian message. Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God. He is not a created being. He is co-equal, co-eternal with the Father, equal with Him might and majesty.

¹³ Daniel 7:13-14. Compare this with Acts 1:9-11 & Revelation 5.

¹⁴ Psalm 110:1. This is the single most quoted or referred to verse in the New Testament and yet receives relatively little attention.

¹⁵ Daniel 7:27

¹⁶ Mark 16:19

¹⁷ Ephesians 4:8-10

¹⁸ D Martyn Lloyd-Jones; **Christian Unity: An Exposition of Ephesians 4:1—16**.

¹⁹ Daniel 4:34-35

²⁰ P. Andrew Sandlin has often made this very point, most recently very clearly in an unpublished presentation entitle **The Kerygma of the Kingdom** given at Eidenberg Theological Seminary. “[The Apostle’s] message was the extension of God’s earthly reign, to which the Gospel of Jesus makes an indispensable contribution. But if you heard many Western Christians only in the last few generations, you might get the idea that the Bible is chiefly about saving a few souls from the earth and getting them to Heaven when they die. If this is the main message of the Bible, God wasted a lot of ink, because the Bible addresses many more topics than

soteriology, and it depicts some of those topics as no less significant than getting sinners to trust Jesus so they can get to Heaven. But since our era is increasingly man-centered, men want a God whose principal concern is their own salvation and not His own glory. He will not oblige them. The underlying theme of all that we read in the Bible is the glory of God as it comes to the fore in His Kingdom in human history. Doxology, not soteriology, comes first.”

²¹ Some of the most vivid imagery concerning the Ascension of Christ is found in the book of Hebrews, where His Ascension and Session is presupposed even as His work is described. The quotes above come from chapters four through nine of Hebrews.

²² Rodney Startk, **Cities of God: The real story of how Christianity became an urban movement and conquered Rome**; HarperSanFrancisco, 2006

²³ 2 Corinthians 18-19

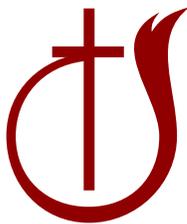
²⁴ 1 Timothy 2:1-6

Pastor Craig Dumont and his wife, Kathy, invite you to enter into the worship of God with the entire congregation of Okemos Christian Center this Sunday morning.

Okemos Christian Center is a place where you can enter into the presence of God with singing, thanksgiving and vibrant praise. It is a place where you can hear the Word of God proclaimed, participate in the exaltation of Christ, join other believers at the Lord's Table and receive prayer for any circumstance or healing you may need each and every week. And the "worship service" doesn't stop there, but continues in a time of food & fellowship in the tradition of the Agape Love Feasts so prevalent in the early church. Stay for a time of eating, strengthening existing friendships and creating new ones after every service.

Join us beginning at 9:45 am for Bible classes for all ages and 10:45 am for Worship.

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