

Finding Hope in the Ascension
Acts 1:9-11

Q. What do you confess when you say, he ascended into heaven?

A. That Christ, before the eyes of his disciples,
was taken up from the earth into heaven,

and that he is there for our benefit until he comes again to judge the living and the dead.

Heidelberg Catechism, q. 46

“And he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them.

“While he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven.

“And they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple blessing God.”

Luke 24:50-53

“So when they had come together, they asked him, ‘Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?’

“He said to them, ‘It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority.

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you,

“and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.’

“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.

“And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, and said,

“Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven?

“This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”

Acts 1:6-11

Jesus departed **bodily** from earth into heaven, where he is now present with **God the Father** at his right hand.

“If you ask me, ‘Where is Jesus?’ I’m going to tell you, ‘He’s at the right hand of the heavenly Father.’

“And if you ask me, ‘Where is the right hand of the heavenly Father?’ I’m going to say, ‘It’s where Jesus is.’”

Ligon Duncan

Q. How does Christ's Ascension to heaven benefit us?

A. First, he is our advocate in heaven in the presence of his Father.

Second, we have our own flesh in heaven as a sure pledge that Christ our head will also take us, his members, up to himself.

Third, he sends his Spirit to us on earth as a corresponding pledge.

By the Spirit's power we seek not earthly things but the things above, where Christ is, sitting at God's right hand.

Heidelberg Catechism, q. 49

What are the benefits of the Ascension?

1. Jesus sent the **Holy Spirit**.

“But I have said these things to you, that when their hour comes you may remember that I told them to you.

“I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you.

“But now I am going 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 go, I will send him to you.”

John 16:4-7

“Paraclete” – the Helper, the Comforter

“you heard from me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” (4b-5)

1. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit.
2. Jesus **reigns as King**.

“All authority in heaven and on earth has
been given to me.”

Matthew 28:18b

“The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.”

Job 1:21b

“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.”

Philippians 2:9-11

1. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit.
2. Jesus reigns as King.
3. Jesus **will return**.

“Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven?”

“This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”

Acts 1:11

“Instead of stupidly and idly gazing after one who was no longer visible,

“they should rather show their love to him by instantly obeying his farewell commands and trusting his repeated promise to return.”

J.A. Alexander

Just as the **resurrection** is the first-fruits of
our own resurrection,

the **Ascension** is the first-fruits of our own ascension to the dwelling place of God the Father and God the Son.

1. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit.
2. Jesus reigns as King.
3. Jesus will return.
4. Jesus advocates **to the Father** for us.

“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.

“For we do not have a high priest who is
unable to sympathize with our weaknesses,

“but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

“Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

Hebrews 4:14-16

When my life work is ended
And I cross the swelling tide
When the bright and glorious morning
I shall see

I shall know my Redeemer
When I reach the other side
And his smile will be the first
To welcome me

I shall know him
I shall know him
And redeemed by his side
I shall stand

I shall know him
I shall know him
By the print of the nails
In his hand

Fanny Crosby