

JESUS' ASCENSION AND PRESENT MINISTRY

Acts 1:9-11

Introduction: One of the most amazing and encouraging events in the life of Jesus was His ascension back into the heavens after He had finished what He came to earth to do and that was make a way for mankind and God, the Father, to be reconciled. Contrary to what some may think, Jesus' ministry didn't end when He ascended back into the heavens. His earthly ministry was finished, yes, but He ascended back into the heavens to start a new ministry for those who would benefit from His first ministry. Jesus remains busy to this very day. Just what is Jesus doing right now?

I. THE ASCENSION OF JESUS CHRIST

1. His ascension marked the end of His earthly ministry.
 - His birth in Bethlehem.
 - His life of teaching and miracles.
 - His sufferings and death.
2. His ascension marked His return to all His previous glory which was hidden in His earthly life.
3. It signified the completion of His work on earth (salvation for mankind).
4. It signified the beginning of a new work in heaven at God's right hand.
 - Lord of all the universe.
 - Awaiting final triumph at His second coming (seated at God right hand).
 - ***Matthew 22:44; Mark 12:36; Romans 8:34; Ephesians 1:20***
 - Occupies a Heavenly Throne while awaiting the Earthly Throne of David.
5. The earth awaits His return when His Throne will be set up on earth. ***Matthew 25:31***)

II. THE PRESENT WORK OF JESUS CHRIST IN HEAVEN

1. He is at God the Father's right hand and is:
 - The last Adam and head of the new creation.
 - The Head of the Body of Christ.
 - The Great Shepherd of His Sheep.
 - The True Vine of the branches.
 - The Chief Cornerstone of His Church.
 - The believer's High Priest.
 - The Bridegroom of the Bride, the Church.
2. He serves as High Priest of His Believers.
 - He is the believer's "go-between" him/her and God, the Father.

- He has entered Heaven to minister on behalf of believers on earth.
 - **Hebrews 8:1-2**
 - Serves as Priest, not King.
 - Will serve as King when He returns to earth.
3. As High Priest He Bestows Spiritual Gifts.
- A gift of divine enablement through the Holy Spirit in order to accomplish certain divine purposes.
 - Unlimited gifts and no two believers have the same gifts.
 - To each believer some gift is given and the blessing and power attached to that gift is dependent upon that believer's yielding to Jesus Christ.
 - **1 Corinthians 12:11, 18**
 - Jesus' work on earth will be continued by His believers using the gifts He has given.
4. As High Priest, Jesus Makes Intercession for His Own.
- **John 17:9**
 - He began before leaving earth for He is for those who believe in Him.
 - He will continue to do so as long as there are believers in the world.
 - He intercedes for the weak, the helpless, the immature and knows the power of the evil one very well.
 - His intercession is unending. The human High Priests died, but not Jesus. **Hebrews 7:25**
5. As High Priest, Jesus Appears for His Own Before God.
- Sin would separate believers from God again if not for Jesus' intercession.
 - Sins of believers cause loss of fellowship with God, that joy, peace and power.
 - All is restored by God's grace on the sole ground of the believer confessing his/her sin.
 - **1 John 1:9**
 - Satan accuses the believer of sin night and day and Jesus Christ appears before God, the Father continually on the believer's behalf.
 - Sin seems insignificant to us but God cannot treat it lightly. What Jesus is doing for us is to continually keep us justified in the eyes of God.

CONCLUSION:

1. Contrary to what it may seem like, what Jesus is doing doesn't make it easy or O.K. for us to sin. We are NOT to SIN! **1 John 2:1**
2. No believer can sin carelessly knowing what Jesus goes through as High Priest and Advocate over each sin the believer commits.
3. What Jesus does for us in Heaven as High Priest and Advocate assures us believers of eternal security. **Romans 8:34**