

THE HEAVENLY ASCENSION

Ephesians 4:8-10

Introduction: For the Christian the life of Jesus Christ is indeed extraordinary with His virgin birth, His wonderful life of healing, teaching, preaching, then the cross upon which He died for our sins (mankind's) and then His almost unbelievable resurrection which was for OUR benefit and glorification and then the breath taking ascension up into glory and then if that wasn't enough to do for us, He is coming back and that glorious Second Coming will be just incomparable. Let's focus on the ascension event and look a bit more closely at it.

I. JESUS ASCENDED BACK TO DIRECT HIS KINGDOM

1. It is foolish, wrong and very empty to even think that Jesus ran away, that He escaped, that He fled because He failed to accomplish what He came here to do.
2. Jesus, in a sense, has gone to a place where He can better survey the battle still going on between Satan and Himself with man (us) in between.
3. Jesus has ascended back to Heaven but He is still in charge and is still directing things down here.
4. Jesus has ascended back to Heaven and is preparing for His triumphant return.

II. JESUS ASCENDED TO BECOME THE OBJECT OF OUR PRAYERS, DREAMS AND HOPES

1. Since Jesus ascended, believers (us) can now lift their hearts in prayers, their souls lifted upward. (*Philippians 3:20*)
2. The Christian's citizenship is not down here on earth, it is in heaven for the Christian has been born again and thus a member of the Family of God where Heaven is their (Family) home.
3. Everything for the Christian is there: Jesus Christ, eternal life, inheritance, crown, friends, family, heavenly pleasures all in a sinless environment.
4. All that is for the Christian, but what about one who is NOT a Christian? He/she will not be spending eternity in the same place as the Christian but in a horrible place called Hell with permanent, eternal separation from God and any chance to change things.

III. JESUS ASCENDED TO GIVE US FAITH - NOT SIGHT

1. When Jesus was here with His disciples, they didn't need faith for they could see Him, hear Him, touch Him, be in His physical presence and He in theirs, but when Jesus ascended His followers (Christians - us) have to "see" Jesus by faith.
2. If Jesus were still here in the visible flesh, where would "faith" be?
3. "Faith" sees the invisible, sees that which is yet to be - *2 Corinthians 4:18*
4. What is seen by the eyes of faith is that which the Lord and the Word of God choose to reveal.
5. It is a sad thing when someone attempts to try to make/change the spiritual into physical, such as trying to change baptism, the Lord's Supper and even Salvation into something they were not meant to be in the first place.

IV. JESUS ASCENDED TO SECURE OUR (THE BELIEVER'S) INHERITANCE

1. How do we (Christians) know that we are going to go to heaven someday?
- *Hebrews 7:25* - Because Jesus Christ is already there!
2. Christians are ensured that they will go to heaven where Jesus already is.
- *1 Thessalonians 4:13-14*
3. It is not the Christian who does the holding on to, the clinging, it is the Lord Jesus Christ.
- It is not the strength of the Christian that ensures his/her entrance into heaven, it is entirely the Lord Jesus Christ's doing and it is His strength that guarantees the Christian's eternal security.

V. JESUS ASCENDED TO INTERCEDE FOR US (BELIEVERS)

1. Jesus is the Christian's "paraclete" - attorney - defender - *1 Timothy 3:16*
2. Jesus is not in some spiritual form in heaven but His earthly physical, bodily form which the believer/Christian will have one like.
3. While on earth Jesus was tempted in all ways just as we are and have been, yet He was able to resist and not sin but we are not, however Jesus can sympathize with us for He knows how hard it is to not sin, therefore He stands at the believer's side and defends the believer before God when Satan accuses him/her.

VI. JESUS ASCENDED TO GIVE GIFTS

1. Once Jesus had ascended to Heaven, He sent the Holy Spirit to "replace" His physical presence and every believer in Jesus is indwelt with the Holy Spirit which makes Jesus as close to the believer as if Jesus were actually here in physical presence.
2. Every person has some natural ability useful to him/her and others but the Christian is given a specially chosen "gift" by the Holy Spirit which enables that Christian to serve God using that special gift/gifts which he/she was not born with or learned how to have in some physical way, school or seminar, etc.

CONCLUSION:

1. No doubt it was a wonderful thing to have been able to see Jesus, walk with Jesus, hear the voice of Jesus, see all the wonderful things He did but the Christian (believer) has something that the disciples didn't have while Jesus was with them and they didn't get until after Jesus ascended and that is the permanent presence of the Holy Spirit indwelling and sealing every believer.
2. The ascension of Jesus brought about many changes and started many new things both in Heaven and in the life of His followers.
3. Jesus is busy getting things ready for His Second Coming when He will call every believer away from this earth to the place He has been preparing for them.
4. Believer, Christian, be anxious, be watching, for Jesus can return at any moment, but until He does He is busy getting things ready for YOU.