

# *It Is Written*

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## *The Ascension of Jesus*

By Heath Rogers

Forty days after His resurrection, Jesus took the eleven disciples to the Mount of Olives, blessed them, and was lifted out of their sight into the clouds of the air. Two angels appeared to them and announced that Jesus would come in the same manner as they had just seen him depart (Acts 1:9-11).

The ascension of Jesus is not discussed as much as His death, burial, and resurrection. However, this amazing event should not be overlooked or reduced to a footnote in the life and ministry of Jesus. It was very important.

**1. It provided evidence that Jesus is the Messiah.** The Jews were always asking Jesus for a sign that would prove His identity. The day after Jesus fed the 5,000, the people wanted Him to feed them again. They hinted at this by asking for a sign and speaking of Moses feeding the fathers with bread from heaven (John 6:30-31). Jesus identified Himself as the bread of God who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world (v. 33). The multitude had a difficult time understanding Jesus, and He further frustrated their understanding when He said, "What then if you should see the Son of Man ascend to where He was before?" (v. 62).

Our Lord's ascension was one of many pieces of evidence that proved He was the Son of God. If He had failed to ascend back to "where He was before" He would have failed to complete His work and confirm His identity.

Jesus made several predictions about the things He would experience (Matt. 16:21). If any of these had failed to come to pass, Jesus would have been exposed as a false prophet (Deut. 18:18-22). The fact that He ascended into heaven is just as significant as the fact that he was rejected by the Jews, delivered to the Gentiles, put to death, and raised on the third day. Jesus was proven to be a true prophet of God.

**2. It enabled Jesus to serve as our High Priest.** The High Priest of Israel would enter the Holy of Holies (representing the presence of God) on behalf of the people once a year. It was there that he would make atonement for the sins of the people, but the fact that these sacrifices had to be repeated proved they did not fully remove sins.

When Jesus ascended into heaven, He entered the presence of God to serve as our High Priest, making intercession on our behalf. "For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us" (Heb. 9:24). Jesus is a better High Priest because He has entered the actual presence of God with a better sacrifice – His own blood. This gives us confidence that our prayers are being heard and answered (Heb. 4:14-16).

**3. It was necessary for Jesus to become King.** When did Jesus actually become King? In Psalm 110:1-2, the Messiah was promised to be given a place at God's right hand from which he would rule. Jesus sat down at the right hand of God when He ascended into Heaven (Mark 16:19; Acts 2:33-36). This is when Jesus began His reign as King.

The coronation of Jesus as King took place in heaven immediately after His ascension. Daniel received a vision of this wonderful event. "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” (Daniel 7:13-14).

Jesus is not going to return to earth to be made King to reign 1,000 years. He was made King when He ascended into Heaven. It was then that He was given dominion, glory, and an everlasting kingdom that will never be destroyed. Jesus is now reigning as King over His kingdom.

**Conclusion:** The ascension of Jesus is an important part of the gospel (1 Tim. 3:16). It was necessary to make Him a Prophet, Priest, and King. Because our Lord has ascended into heaven, where He is ministering to our needs and reigning as our King, we can have confidence that He will come back and receive us into His glory.

## Seed and Soil

By Jim R. Everett

The productivity of seed is directly proportionate to the fertility of soil. It matters not how good the seed is, if it is planted in bad soil; either it will not germinate or, having germinated, it will produce a sickly plant. So it is with the word of God and human hearts.

In the parable of “The Sower,” stress is laid, not on the power of the seed, but, on the kind of soil in which it is sown. Four kinds of soil are mentioned in which the seed is sown — the wayside, rocky places, soil in which thorns are abundant, and good soil (Lk. 8:1-15; Matt. 13:1-23). Each of these represents four different kinds of human hearts, while the seed is called “the word of God” (Lk. 8:11).

The deficiencies of the first three kinds of soil do not, in any way, cast reflection upon the power of the seed to produce life. The problem is in the soil and not in the seed. Neither should men speak of the word of God as powerless to convert men — the potential to produce new life and to change men is found in the word of God (see Romans 1:16; 1 Peter 1:22-25). So why doesn’t it always bring forth an abundant harvest? — because the soil, the human heart, is not receptive or it is encumbered with the cares of the world. So, let’s not blame God for our lack of productivity — the kind of soil we are has been our choice.

What are the ingredients of fertile soil? Jesus defines it thusly: “... they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience” (Lk. 8:15 ). I believe there are still human beings with good hearts that want the word of God. Is your soil Good?

## “Strong” Christians?

By Bryan Gibson

We may look at two Christians and judge one to be strong, the other struggling and weak. God’s assessment may be just the opposite, because in this case the “struggling Christian” has a poor and contrite heart, whereas the “strong” one does not. The “struggling Christian” may not be doing as much good as the “strong” one, and presently may even have a greater struggle with sin, but he knows his condition; he takes correction well; he’s always willing to repent; he humbly seeks forgiveness; and he strives diligently to get better every day. And that’s more than can be said for some “strong” Christians.

“But on this one will I look: on him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word” (Isaiah 66:2).

“I dwell in the high and holy place, with him who has a contrite and humble spirit...”. (Isaiah 57:15).

“The LORD is near to those who have a broken heart, and saves such as have a contrite spirit” (Psalms 34:18).

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:3).