

CHRIST IN ASCENSION AND IN GOD'S ADMINISTRATION

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The Lord Jesus surely had a fruitful life during the thirty-three and a half years He was on earth. Most of what He accomplished, however, was in a three-year period. He spent thirty years in preparation. Then He came forth to minister. What is preached and taught among Christians today largely concerns this earthly ministry.

When I was a young, seeking Christian, I was taught that Christ has finished His work. John 19:30 was cited as proof of this. The Lord's word, spoken when He was on the cross, was "It is finished!" After His death He rested in the tomb for three days. Then He was resurrected and ascended to the heavens, not to work but to sit there. To sit, they explained to me, meant that the work was finished. He is there now, waiting until God puts His enemies under His feet (Acts 2:34-35). Is this the true picture? Has Christ finished His ministry? We have to say both yes and no. Yes, His earthly ministry is finished. But His heavenly ministry still continues.

The person of Christ has two aspects, as does His ministry. While He was on earth, He was the man Jesus. Since His ascension into heaven, however, He is the glorified Christ. His earthly ministry lasted for only a limited time, thirty-three and a half years at most. His heavenly ministry, in contrast, is eternal; it will never end.

The Offices of the Ascended Christ

When Christ ascended, He was inaugurated into a number of great offices, including the Christ, Lord, Ruler, Savior, High Priest, Minister, Firstborn of the dead, Ruler of the kings of the earth, and Head over all things.

The Christ

Not until His ascension was Christ officially inaugurated as the Christ. On the day of Pentecost Peter said, "God has made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you have crucified" (v. 36). This verse used to bother me. Was He not Christ before His ascension? Yes, even in eternity He was Christ, but in eternity He was not anointed. It was at His baptism that He was anointed. However, He was not officially inaugurated as the Christ until His ascension. Christ has been not only chosen, appointed, and anointed by God but also inaugurated by God into His office. He has passed through the manger, the river Jordan, and the cross, and He is now enthroned in the heavens as the Christ.

Everywhere in Christianity the cross can be seen. There are crosses of wood, gold, stone, and steel. Catholics often make the sign of the cross. They have a dead Christ. Their knowledge of Him is limited to the manger and the cross. Where is the symbol