

The Crystallization

The Person and Work of Christ in His Heavenly Ministry

Just as the earthly ministry of Christ was based on the person and work of Christ in His incarnation, the heavenly ministry of Christ is based on the person and work of Christ in His ascension. Through incarnation God became a man, Jesus, and through ascension this man, Jesus, having become divine in His humanity, entered into the glory of the eternal Godhead. In ascension the status of His person was further enhanced, and based upon His newly attained status, His work was further expanded.

The heavenly ministry of Christ begins with the person of Christ in His ascension. In His ascension the humanity of Jesus was not put off; rather, it was uplifted even higher. The perfect humanity of Jesus in His incarnation was designated as divine in His resurrection and ascension—there is now a man in the glory. According to the Gospel of Luke, the ultimate goal of Christ's unshakable resolve to be taken up in ascension as a man was for the fulfillment of God's purpose. When He was taken up as a man, the worship rendered by the disciples confirmed His deity, and they were filled with great joy as they began to understand what He had accomplished in His ministry on earth and what, as the ascended One, He would carry out in His heavenly ministry. The Gospel of Luke describes how the disciples followed the Lord in His earthly ministry; the book of Acts records the activities of the apostles and the believers as they cooperated with the ascended Jesus in His heavenly ministry. Central to the significance of the ascension of Jesus is that in His ascension He is still a man. The Christ who is in the heavens still has humanity; He continues to possess the human nature with all its human virtues.

When Christ ascended, He was inaugurated into a number of great offices, which serve as the basis for His further work. These offices include the Christ, Lord, Ruler, Savior, High Priest, Minister, Firstborn of the dead, Ruler of the kings of the earth, and Head over all things to the church. Christ 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 these offices. This very One was also appointed Lord. When He was on the earth, He was Lord, but in His ascension He was inaugurated into His lordship. There is not only God as Lord but a man as Lord on the throne today. He has taken office as the origin and the Originator, the Ruler, the Author, the Leader, the Captain, the Pioneer, and the Forerunner. He is far above all. He is the first. All things and all power are in His hands. Although He was our Savior in His earthly ministry, He was not officially the Savior until His ascension. We were saved by One in glory—the One seated on the throne in the third heaven. He is also a great High Priest who appears before God on our behalf, praying for us that we would be saved and brought fully into God's eternal purpose. He is the enthroned Servant, ministering to us from the heavens.

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In His resurrection He is the Firstborn of the dead, the Ruler of the kings of the earth, being far above every earthly ruler, and when He rose from the dead, God subjected all things under His feet and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church. All these statuses are necessary for the execution of Christ's administrative rule in His heavenly ministry. In His earthly ministry Christ accomplished redemption. Now in His heavenly ministry with His newly attained statuses, Christ is raising up God's building. Redemption is for God's building. The center of this building is the church. Its ultimate consummation is the New Jerusalem. Today the church is an organic house; moreover, this house will consummate in an organic city. The work of redemption was finished in the Gospels. In Acts the building work of the church began, a work that continues today.

The Gospel of Matthew reveals in a hidden way that Christ is building the church as the reality of the kingdom of the heavens on earth through His heavenly ministry, which brings the divine will in heaven to earth and extends the divine authority in heaven throughout the earth. Even in its presentation of Christ's earthly ministry, the Gospel of Matthew intrinsically, mysteriously,

focuses on the producing and building of the church as the kingdom of the heavens through the heavenly ministry of Christ. The heavenly ministry of Christ for the building of the church is central but hidden within the Gospel of Matthew. It is in the background of many key passages. It is prefigured in the genealogy in Matthew 1. It is the enlivening process that produces the heavenly nature and outward expression of the kingdom of the heavens as described in chapters 5 through 7. It is the impetus behind the fulfillment of the mysterious parables related to the church in chapter 13. It is the means by which the way into the kingdom of the heavens is opened in chapter 16, and it is the focus of Christ's commission in chapter 28. Throughout Matthew the progressive revelation of the kingdom of the heavens is not only emphasized but also associated with the heavenly ministry of Christ. From the beginning of Matthew to its conclusion, the building of the church as the kingdom of the heavens through the heavenly ministry of Christ is the doctrinal emphasis.

The heavenly ministry of Christ is also central to the Epistles in the New Testament, especially Ephesians, which reveals the present ministry of the ascended Christ from a unique perspective, unveiling our union with the ascended Christ and our participation in His heavenly ministry. According to this Epistle, the consummate goal of God's eternal economy is to head up all things in Christ through the church, His mystical Body. God ultimately intends to bring all things in the universe into order under the headship of Christ through His Body as the means of His divine administration. However, before the universe can be headed up through the Body of Christ, we, as members of His Body, must be headed up in Christ.


The key revelation in Ephesians is that Christ in His ascension brings us into a mutual participation in His attainments: the heading up of the members of the Body is accomplished by the ascended Christ's transmission of God's surpassingly great power toward us who believe. This involves nothing less than God in Christ as the Spirit being enjoyed as life and grace. The essential work of Christ in His heavenly ministry is the transmission of the power of the divine life as grace into our tripartite being. It is the basic responsibility of every believer to coordinate with the heavenly ministry of Christ for the building up of the Body by partaking of the riches of God's grace in order to grow in the divine life and to participate in a stewardship of grace to

minister these riches to others in order to cause the growth of the Body.

As members of the Body, we can participate in the power that God caused to operate in the resurrected and ascended Christ. By partaking of the power of resurrection, we will conquer the spiritual death resulting from our offenses and sins, overcome the law of sin and of death as well as the might and fear of death, and experience the God of resurrection who is able to deliver us from every death situation and usher us into the realm of resurrection by imparting Himself as resurrection life into our tripartite being. By enjoying the power of ascension, we can be seated together with the ascended Christ in the heavenlies, transcending all authorities human and angelic, earthly and heavenly, including Satan as the ruler of the authority of the air and the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenlies. By experiencing the power of subjection, we will be under the power and authority of God in Christ alone and will not be brought under the power or authority of anything or anyone; moreover, we will share in the Lord's subjection of all things to Himself unto the transfiguration of our body and experience the God of peace crushing Satan under our feet corporately. And by participating in the power of headship, we will cooperate with Christ, the universal Head, in executing the divine economy to head up all things, and we will rule with Him over the

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Ephesians reveals that our participation in the heavenly ministry of the ascended Christ is based upon our organic union with Him as the life-giving Spirit. The locus of this union is our mingled spirit, our human spirit regenerated by and mingled with the divine Spirit. By walking according to the mingled spirit, we may live in a vital union with the ascended Christ and coordinate with His heavenly ministry to build up His Body as His corporate expression and representation for the fulfillment of the divine economy to head up all things in Christ. Ultimately, in order for us to enjoy the transmission of the ascended Christ and participate in His heavenly ministry to build up His Body, we need to live in an organic union with the ascended Christ by remaining in our mingled spirit. We need to advance in our understanding and appreciation of Christ's heavenly ministry and in our experience of it through the transmission of His attainments in ascension to the church as His Body. 

by the Editors