The Glory and Victory of the Ascension – Luke 24:50-53

3/17/24 – River Ridge Spring Grove

Creed – "he ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty"

Luke 24:50-53 - [50] And he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them. [51] While he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven. [52] And they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, [53] and were continually in the temple blessing God.

- **We tend to trivialize things that are sacred** - We make things ordinary that are extraordinary. In our modern culture where all we have to do is flip a switch if we get bored, our senses have become desensitized to the glory and splendor of God and the world around us. We scientifically explain everything away to the point of it losing its mysterious awe.
    - **We trivialize the body** - We know how the heart works...we describe the valves and the muscular tissue around it and the brain that sends signals for the muscle to pump – we name each part – and take for granted that it is God that causes our hearts to beat within our chests with no batteries.
    - **We trivialize flight** - We describe birds, and flight. We now know how to mimic their flight patterns. We name them, we chart their migration patterns...and we have lost the awe of the fact that God created this creature to fly on its own without assistance through the air. We walk up the street, hear birds chirping, and think nothing of it.
    - **We Trivialize Doctrine** - We also do this with doctrine. We see certain doctrines as more significant, more important than others. We compartmentalize, we systematize...and often we fail to ascribe the glory and worth to God for the doctrines and creeds that we receive by faith.
    - ***I think that the ascension is like that. Out of all the statements we've been reciting in the Apostle's Creed, we are in danger of glancing over, or trivializing the ascension to simply be*** **"that event when Jesus went back to heaven." There is much more to it than that!**
        - **When was the last time you thanked God for the crucifixion, the resurrection, AND the ascension?**
        - **When was the last time you heard a sermon or sermon series preached on the ascension?**
        - **We celebrate Good Friday, we celebrate Resurrection Easter, but do you celebrate 40 days after Easter when the ascension happened?**
        - **Church history elevates the ascension** - Augustine, Aquinas, Calvin, Luther, Zwingli all speak of the ascension not just as "that time when Jesus went back to Heaven"...but along with the crucifixion and the resurrection, ***a means of our salvation.***
        - **My aim this morning is to cause you to fall in love with the ascension!**

    - **The significance of the ascension – Let's just start by quickly summarizing some of the key reasons why not only the death, and resurrection, but also the ascension is a *means* for our salvation:** The ascension means that Jesus is still alive and interceding for us as our High Priest (Heb. 7:25). That He is preparing a place for us to be with Him forever (John 14:2-3). That Jesus is seated at the right hand of God and enshrined in the glory that He had before the foundation of the world (John 17:5). That all rulers, authorities, powers, and dominions, and every name that is to be named are all under His feet (1 Pet. 3:22; Psa. 110:1; Eph. 1:20-23). That as He went up in the cloud we too will one day meet Him in the clouds (1 Thess. 4:17-18). If it wasn't for the ascension Jesus would not have sent His Holy Spirit who regenerates and makes us alive (Titus 3:5) is our downpayment (Eph. 1:14), our Helper and Comforter (John 15:26), the power that we need to be His witnesses (Acts 1:8) and the giver of spiritual gifts for the building up of the body of Christ (Eph. 4:8-10).

This morning I want to consider the significance of the Ascension and Reign of Jesus by looking at two things...

Slide 1: 1. The Ascension of Jesus Proves that Jesus has Victory Over All Things

- The ascension is the enthronement of the King "in seed form". It is the proof that what was once out of control is now under the control and authority of Jesus.
- This world is out of control world and broken, its fallen, and Jesus Christ has reconciled all things that have been broken. Things in heaven, things on the earth. He does this through His death, His resurrection, AND HIS ASCENSION.
- **Adam's Seat and Rule**: In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. Heavenly things, and earthly things. But Satan, one of his angels, rebelled and took a third of the angels with him. And the heavenly things were turned upside down so that angels were now at enmity with God...no longer under His authority.

  God also created another creature, Adam. And God gave Adam control over all the earth and creatures. They were all placed "under his dominion" or "under his feet". The words "Under his feet" are significant in Scripture, they're a picture of *dominion* and *conquest*. God said to Adam, "be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over...every living thing that moves on the earth." (Gen. 1:28). The commission of Adam was to lead and tend the earth, to lead and love His wife, Eve was to be his helper, in submission to him as her head, she was to be the mother of all people, and they were together to spread the glory of God across the face of the earth through their progeny - One people, all in unity, and all of them under the Lord.
  - Slide 2 - **Psalm 8:6** – "[6] You have ***given him dominion*** over the works of your hands; you have ***put all things under his feet***".

- **Satan's seat/rule**: However, Satan...now cast out of heaven, having turned things in heaven upside down, now sets his sight on the creature Adam. Because he hates God's creatures, and hates anywhere there is an expression of God's glory – His image. In the form of a serpent (very significant that he chose the shape of an animal that Adam was to rule over), Satan came and usurped authority through the temptation and sin of Eve, the one who was to be in submission to Adam. But the bigger failure, is that Adam, the leader of the family, was there with her. Instead of stopping her, he ate with her...and the structure was flipped upside down. Now the things in the heavens, and the things on the earth are all upside down. FALLEN WORLD. Not only things in heaven, but now things on the earth were upside down and out of control, because Satan was now in control – the bible describes him as the "god of the earth" (2 Cor. 4:4) and the "prince of the power of the air" (Eph. 2:2). Because of Adam and Eve's failure, God cursed them, but He also made a plan to save them.
  - **Adam's curse**: The earth that Adam was to tend now had ***authority over him*** in the ***grave*** – "to dust you will return." Whenever you go through a cemetery and see bodies buried, you are literally seeing the curse as the earth is now ruling over Adam. Adam no longer rules over the earth, death and the grave/the earth now rule over Adam. Also the earth that he was to tend and care for is now painful, unenjoyable, and strenuous work.
  - **Eve's curse**: Eve now has pain in childbirth, the very thing that was meant to bring her great joy. That's what sin does by the way, it causes pain where God means to bring joy and purpose. And she no longer desires to be the loving helper that God called her to be...rather, she seeks to usurp authority over Adam.
    - **Genesis 3:16** – "***your desire shall be contrary to your husband".*** The word "contrary" speaks of Eve's sinful desire for her husband's position of authority.
    - **Marriage is turned upside down**: Adam, who was called to be a sacrificial, loving, protector of Eve failed to respond, and now instead of leading his wife through sacrificial love, Genesis 3:16 says, "He shall rule over you" to Eve. Adam's tendency is now to rule over Eve with force, rather than sacrificial love and protection while Eve's tendency is to seek to usurp the authority of Adam.

- **World at War –** The world that was to be one people under God is now split into different nations. And there is war and strife between the peoples and nations of the world where there was formerly meant to be unity and peace.
- **Slide** 3
  - **Original Order** - God → Adam → Eve → Creature (serpent) → Earth (all things under the feet of humanity – Adam's rule)
  - **Fallen Order** – God → Satan → Earth fallen and in conflict (grave rules, disunity) → Eve/Adam (conflict of leadership and lack of love)
- **The fallout**: Middles East war as Jews and Gentiles are still fighting. Marriages and families are broken because the husband is failing to love and lead his wife and the wife seeks to be the husbands authority. Children are disrespectful to parents, employees to employers and employers to employees...and Satan has control of the sons of Adam in a very real way.

- **Christ (Second Adam) Seat/Rule**: However, God made a plan:
  - **Slide 4: Ephesians 1:10** - **"a plan for the fullness of time, to unite [sum up] all things in Him, things in heaven and things on earth."** From the seed of Eve would come one who would "bruise the head" of Satan. He would crush him "under HIS feet", and then put "all things under His feet". The ascension is the victory and conquest of the Messiah, Jesus, the King in "seed form"...He has begun His reign from Heaven and will one day return and create a new heavens and new earth and all things will be new.
  - **Psalm 110:1** - One of the most important prophecies, and most quoted in the NT is Psalm 110:1. David is prophesying about the Messiah, the seed of Eve, the King to come. He describes Him in this way, "The Lord says to my Lord: 'Sit at my right hand, until I make ***your enemies your footstool***.'" Jesus, the seated Messiah, is now ruling and reigning and all God's enemies are His footstool.
  - **1 Corinthians 15** – Paul describes Jesus as the Second Adam, the one who would put right everything that was fallen in Adam. Verses 25-27 say, "For he must reign until ***he has put all his enemies under his feet***. [26] The last enemy to be destroyed is death. [27] For "God has put all things in subjection under his feet."
  - **Hebrews 2:8-9** – The writer of Hebrews also picks up on this. In Hebrews 2 he quotes Psalm 8:6 – "You have ***given him dominion*** over the works of your hands; you have ***put all things under his feet"....*** He then goes on to give commentary on this Psalm, "Now in putting everything in subjection to him, he left nothing outside his control. At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him. [9] **But we see him** who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor..."
  - Slide 5: The Father → Second Adam (Christ) → Adam → Eve → Creature → Earth
  - **What's the point** – the ascension of Jesus is the culminating event where God enthrones Jesus as King and all things under His feet...where Adam failed, the Second Adam reigns. All things, things in heaven and things on the earth are now put back in their proper order under the feet of the Second Adam, Jesus. This is why for Christians we now no longer have to suffer the fallout of marital strife. God has put that order back in order in Christ. We no longer have Jew Gentile tension, because God in His body, in the body of Jesus, the church – Jews and Gentiles alike no longer at enmity, but together worshipping the King in unity. Satan no longer rules over us, we have power over Him in Jesus. Work relationships, family relationships, all relationships are put back into their proper order of authority and submission and unity and love – in Jesus. This is why you can go into any Christ worshipping/exalting church and meet someone you never knew and IMMEDIATELY you are brothers and sisters. You have a common King!

Slide 6 2. The Ascension of Jesus Proves that *We* Have Victory Over All Things

Now, I want to show you with the rest of our time together how through ***the structure of the book of Ephesians***, Paul sets forth only the crucifixion, and resurrection, but also ***the ascension as the theological backdrop for this plan of God*** that we've been talking about, to reconcile all things, things in heaven, things on the earth, as we are now in union with Christ.

- First, let's look at what I think is the thesis statement for the entire book of Ephesians
    - Slide 7: **Ephesians 1:10 – "as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth."**
    - Everything that was turned upside down, is not turned right side up in the book of Ephesians IN CHRIST.
- **Ephesians 1:1-14 – our benefits in union, not with Adam, but with Christ**
- **Ephesians 1:15 Paul begins to pray:** Paul is the king of run-on-sentences. I like Paul, because if anyone says, "Brian you talk too much", I can say, "look at Paul!" He prays for God to give wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, and that their hearts would be enlightened to know three things: 1) the hope to which God has called them. 2) the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints. 3) the immeasurable greatness of His power. Then Paul takes the third thing he wants them to know and goes off. Now this is not a trivial tangent...Paul wants them to know God's power and His great might in their lives...so he points to the resurrection and ascension of Christ:
- **Slide 8** – "and what is the ***immeasurable greatness of his power*** toward us who believe, according to ***the working of his great might*** [20] that he worked ***in Christ*** when he ***raised him from the dead*** and ***seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places***, [21] far above all ***rule*** and ***authority*** and ***power*** and ***dominion***, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. [22] And he ***put all things under his feet*** and gave him as ***head*** over all things to the ***church***, [23] which is ***his body***, the fullness of him who fills all in all." – Ephesians 1:19-23
    - **Do you see how "All things, things in heaven, things on earth, are now reconciled through the "raising and seating" of Christ over all things.**
        - **The sons of disobedience – reconciled to God** – In Ephesians 2:1-10 Paul shows that we who were formerly under the power of Satan and by nature children of wrath are made alive to God. And God "***raised us up with Him and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus***" (2:6-7). The same words used of Christ being raised and seated are now used of us raised and seated. Christ ascended...and you in Him have ascended as well! All that was formerly suppressing and holding you down is now under your feet!
            - **The ascension of Jesus is not a small thing**...it is the victorious reign of Christ in seed form...and it is our victorious reign with Christ in seed form.
        - **Rule, authority, power, and dominion under His feet**– this is shorthand in Ephesians for spiritual wicked authorities. Ephesians 3:10 and 6:10-18 – we see that we now have authority over Satan who once had authority over us!
        - **Jesus is called the "head" over the "church"** – In Ephesians 2:11-4 – the tension of Jews and Gentiles are reconciled through the cross and the church – one body, one Lord...Jesus as the head over it... the mission of mankind now rebooted under the Lordship of Christ as we once again are to spread the glory of God across the earth – through the gospel.
        - **Authority and Submission – order – is reestablished** – In Ephesians 5:21 – we see that submission is reinstated, authority reestablished. Adam is the Head once again over Eve...but now with the loving picture of Christ who died for the church. Eve is now in submission to Adam, but with the picture of the church's submission to Christ. The word "submission" (Eph. 5:21) is the same word used in 1:22 – "he put all things under (ὑποτάσσω)". Relationships are now put in their proper order. Christ as the "head" (κεφαλή) is the same word used of husbands as the "head" over their wives (Eph. 5:23). Marriage is now put in its proper order with the backdrop of Jesus seated, ruling, and reigning over the church. In 6:1-4 – authority in father/son relationships are restored. In 6:5-9 – authority in employee/employer relationships are restored.

In 6:10-18 – Satan is put back under the feet of Adam as we now no longer have him ruling over us.

- **Everything that God wants to do in bringing all things, things in heaven and things on the earth, back into their proper order begins, in seed form, in the crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension/seat of Christ**.

- **Application**
  - **The Ascension Displays the Glory of God** – in Ephesians 1:19 we read Paul praying - that we would know… "what is the ***immeasurable greatness of his power*** toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might". Then in Ephesians 2:6-7 we read, ***"raised us up with him*** and ***seated us with him in the heavenly places*** in Christ Jesus, [7] ***so that*** in the coming ages ***he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus."***
    - **Slide 9 :**
    - "what is the ***immeasurable greatness of his power*** toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might [20] that he worked in Christ when ***he raised him from the dead*** and ***seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places" – Ephesians 1:19***
    - ***"raised us up with him*** and ***seated us with him in the heavenly places*** in Christ Jesus, [7] ***so that*** in the coming ages ***he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." – Ephesians 2:6-7***
    - God's plan is was to put Christ into the lowest of humiliating locations, the grave, and then raise Him by His power, up to the highest locations of exaltation, the right hand of God…for the purpose of displaying His glory and grace for all time.
      The immeasurable greatness of His power in raising and seating Christ and in raising and seating us with Christ is for the ultimate purpose of displaying the immeasurable riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus – unto the glory of God.

  - **What is currently oppressing you?** Sometimes in life we feel the effects of the flesh, this fallen world, death, marital conflict, conflict with others, in parenting, in the workplace, spiritual oppression. We can feel like the oppression is SO HEAVY that we have no power over it.
    - **First,** just know that we all go through this…what you are going through is not foreign. We all struggle with the effects of a fallen world.
    - **Second,** know that if God allows that oppression to continue…He will use it for good in your life, and He will bring glory to Himself through it, and the sun will rise…it will be over. You will come out of it!
    - **Third,** you reign over every rule, authority, dominion, power in Christ…so that even your worst enemy God uses for good in your life. You may not see it now, but you will.
  - Next week we will talk about the Second Coming. The Rule and Reign of Jesus has already begun in seed form, but He is Coming back again. Are you ready for Him? Jesus said this speaking of His Coming, "watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour".