

“The Ascension of Christ”
Mark 16:19
(Preached at Trinity, January 13, 2016)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. Tonight we end our excursion through the Book of Mark. We began our journey on March 11, 2009. We've walked with Jesus through His Galilean ministry, His journey to Jerusalem, and His suffering on the cross.
In **Chapter 16** we've witnessed the resurrection and heard our Lord's charge to His disciples to preach the Gospel to all men.
2. Mark's Gospel ends in triumph. We come to our Lord's ascension. After our Lord's resurrection He walked the earth with His disciples for 40 days. We don't have a detailed account of these days but they must have been days of intense teaching as He prepared His Apostles for their work that would turn the world upside down.
Acts 1:3 NAU - "To these He also presented Himself alive after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over *a period of forty days* and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God."
 - A. We need not suppose that Jesus dwelled upon the earth during these 40 days. Rather He came to earth for particular visitations.
 - B. He often came and then vanished out of their sight
On the road to Emmaus
Luke 24:31 NAU - " Then their eyes were opened and they recognized Him; and He vanished from their sight."
Mark 16:12 NAU - "After that, He appeared in a different form to two of them while they were walking along on their way to the country."
 - C. In fact John's Gospel implies that the initial ascension took place very soon after our Lord's Resurrection.
John 20:17 NAU - " Jesus said to her, "Stop clinging to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God'"
3. In **Verses 15-16** we read of the great commissioning of the disciples to carry the Gospel to the ends of the earth. Then Mark records our Lord's Ascension in **Verse 19**:
Mark 16:19 NAU - "So then, when the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God."
4. While His life upon this earth is referred to as His humiliation—the eternal God taking upon Himself the flesh of humanity and walking the earth as the Suffering Servant, His ascension is referred to as His exaltation—the Son of God returning to glory to sit at the right hand of majesty.
Hebrews 1:3 NAU - " And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high"

Philippians 2:9-11 NAU - " For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

- I. Since Jesus ascended and was glorified soon after His resurrection we can catch a glimpse of our Lord's glorified body
- A. When Jesus was resurrected from the grave His body was radically different.
1. It was no longer limited by material substance. Jesus went from one place to another without normal travel. He appeared and disappeared at will.
Luke 24:31 NAU - "Then their eyes were opened and they recognized Him; and He vanished from their sight."
 2. He was in the same body but at times He appeared quite differently
Mark 16:12 NAU - "After that, He appeared in a different form to two of them while they were walking along on their way to the country."
 3. Yet, in many ways His body was the same.
- B. He had a physical body
1. They saw Him
Mark 16:14 NAU - "Afterward He appeared to the eleven themselves as they were reclining *at the table*"
 2. They were able to touch Him.
Matthew 28:9 NAU - "And behold, Jesus met them and greeted them. And they came up and took hold of His feet and worshiped Him."
 3. They heard Him speak - **Mark 16:15 NAU** - "And He said to them"
 4. He ate with them
John 21:9-13 NAU - "So when they got out on the land, they saw a charcoal fire *already* laid and fish placed on it, and bread. ¹⁰ Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish which you have now caught."
¹¹ Simon Peter went up and drew the net to land, full of large fish, a hundred and fifty-three; and although there were so many, the net was not torn. ¹² Jesus said to them, "Come *and* have breakfast." None of the disciples ventured to question Him, "Who are You?" knowing that it was the Lord. ¹³ Jesus came and took the bread and gave *it* to them, and the fish likewise."
 5. We look forward to a physical resurrection – although in glorified bodies
1 Corinthians 15:42-44 NAU - "So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable *body*, it is raised an imperishable *body*; ⁴³ it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; ⁴⁴ it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual *body*."

6. Our physical bodies will change in form but they will still be *our* bodies
1 Corinthians 15:52-54 NAU - "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. ⁵³ For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. ⁵⁴ But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, "DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP in victory."
- C. He had a recognizable body
John 20:19-20 NAU - "So when it was evening on that day, the first *day* of the week, and when the doors were shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace *be* with you." ²⁰ And when He had said this, He showed them both His hands and His side. The disciples then rejoiced when they saw the Lord."
1. They recognized His face
 2. They saw His nail prints and pierced side
 3. We will know and recognize those people we knew on earth
- D. But again, He was sometimes unrecognizable
Mark 16:12 NAU - "He appeared in a different form to two of them while they were walking along on their way to the country."
1. There were elements of our Lord's resurrection that we will not share. Elements attached to Him as the Second Person of the Godhead
 2. Jesus was not bound by physical space
John 20:19 NAU - "So when it was evening on that day, the first *day* of the week, and when the doors were shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace *be* with you."
 3. He could move about without physical travel
 4. He could enter into rooms without opening the doors
 5. Although He has a physical body He is also omnipresent
 Although He possess a physical body we can also say He is in our midst
Matthew 18:20 – "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."
Revelation 2:1 NAU - "To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: The One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands"
- E. The same body Jesus possessed in His resurrection is the same body He will possess when He returns
Acts 1:10-11 NAU - "And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was going, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them. ¹¹ They also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven."
 – Although the radiance of His deity is blinding
Revelation 1:14-15 NAU - "His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire. ¹⁵ His feet *were* like burnished bronze, when it has been made to glow in a furnace, and His voice *was* like the sound of many waters."

II. This ascension of Christ points to His exaltation

A. He was raised in glory

Acts 1:9 – “And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.”

1. The cloud was a manifestation of His shekinah glory
Luke 9:34-35 NAU - "While he was saying this, a cloud formed and *began* to overshadow them; and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. ³⁵ Then a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My Son, *My Chosen One*; listen to Him!"
Exodus 24:15-16 NAU - "Then Moses went up to the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain. ¹⁶ The glory of the LORD rested on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it for six days; and on the seventh day He called to Moses from the midst of the cloud."
2. The angels stated Jesus will come back in the same way He departed
Mark 13:26 NAS - "And then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory."
Mark 14:62 NAS - "And Jesus said, "I am; and you shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven."
3. This can be compared to God's shekinah glory seen at the temple
Exodus 40:34-35 NAU - "Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. ³⁵ Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud had settled on it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle."
4. The glory of God is described in terms of light, brightness, shining radiance.
Hebrews 1:3 NAU - "He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high"
5. We are plagued by common thoughts of God. It affects our worship, our prayer life, how we live our lives before Him.

B. He was raised to occupy His throne

Mark 16:19 NAU - "So then, when the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God."

1. The entirety of the Old Testament by way of covenant and promise points forward to Christ and His Kingdom. God's eternal redemptive purpose is to choose a people and gather them together into His Kingdom. He sent forth His Son to redeem them through the shedding of His own blood.
2. Having accomplished God's eternal purpose Jesus has been raised to sit upon His throne as our Mediator
3. He is seated upon His throne as Ruler and Potentate. He is our Ruler and Protector. He will thoroughly vanquish all of His enemies.
1 Corinthians 15:25 NAU - "For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet."
Psalms 110:1 NAU - "The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at My right hand Until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet."
4. This means the period between the resurrection of Christ and the resurrection of the saints is the period of Kingdom conquest.

- a. During this reign of Christ there is a mixture of evil & good upon the earth. The Parable of the Wheat and Tares describes this.
Matthew 13:30 NAU - "Allow both to grow together until the harvest; and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat into my barn."
- b. Finally, in the end the Kingdom will be delivered over to the Father and God will be all in all
1 Corinthians 15:24 NAU - "then *comes* the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power."

III. The effect of the ascension upon believers

A. We have been blessed of Christ

Luke 24:50-53 NAU - "And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. ⁵¹ While He was blessing them, He parted from them and was carried up into heaven. ⁵² And they, after worshiping Him, returned to Jerusalem with great joy, ⁵³ and were continually in the temple praising God."

- 1. This can be seen as a consecration – Christ has set us apart for the work of the Kingdom
- 2. We have been equipped of Christ - He has sent forth His Spirit
Acts 1:8-9 NAU - "you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth." ⁹ And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight."

B. We have been commissioned by Christ

Mark 16:15 NAU - "And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation."

- 1. As Jesus ascended angels appeared to the disciples
Acts 1:10-11 NAU - "And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was going, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them. ¹¹ They also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky?"
- 2. The angels seemed to be saying – "What are you standing here for."
- 3. Christians are not to simply sit and wait for Christ to return. We have been commissioned to labor in the Kingdom.

C. We have the promise that we shall also experience the resurrection.

1 Corinthians 15:22-23 NAU - "For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. ²³ But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming,"

Romans 6:5 NAU - "For if we have become united with *Him* in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be *in the likeness* of His resurrection,"

Romans 8:11 NAU - "But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you."

Conclusion:

1. Jesus Christ now sits upon His throne of power and dominion as our King – He rules over us and defends us from our His and our enemies.
2. We can rest in the great comfort and confidence that He is with us.
Matthew 28:20 NAU - "and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."
3. We can rest in the blessed truth that He is coming back to receive us unto Himself.
They saw Him leave in power and glory. He will return in power and glory.
John 14:1-3 KJV - "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. ² In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."