

HC 46-47- Is Christ on earth, or is he in Heaven?

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: The answer is “yes.” Yes, Jesus has gone to heaven, and yes, Jesus is on earth. You will hear about these 2 doctrines and the implications of these wonderful doctrines today.

Our headings are:

Jesus Christ is in heaven

Jesus Christ is on earth

Our goals are: That you will find peace, confidence, and strength knowing you are never alone as you live and work for Jesus.

Jesus Christ is in Heaven

46 Q. WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY SAYING, “HE ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN”?

A. That Christ, while his disciples watched, was lifted up from the earth to heaven and will be there for our good until he comes again to judge the living and the dead.

1. Many witnesses saw the glorious ascension of the Lord Jesus on a mountain outside Jerusalem.

Luke 24:51 Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven.

Acts 1:9 Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. 10 And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, 11 who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven."

Hundreds, maybe thousands, saw him going back into heaven. (He didn't go to India!)

Jews and Gentiles witnessed his going to heaven. What a gloriously amazing sight that must have been!

Jesus' ascension was reinforced by the description of his returning later. (He could not come back unless he went!) The angels said: "Jesus was going to come again...from heaven!" And to lend weight to his return, the angels reminded the witnesses they had work to do before Jesus' return— work to restore creation so man might have dominion, as he originally commanded in the Garden of Eden. They were to make disciples of the nations!

Acts 3:19 "Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, 20 "and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, 21 "whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.

2. After his ascension Jesus' body was transformed into a glorious body – a body that could exist in heaven, and yet keep, to some degree, the form he had on earth...like the nail scars in his hand.

But there is no physical flesh and blood in heaven.

There are some false teachings regarding this matter.

a. Christ's ascension and presence in heaven denies the repugnant doctrine of transubstantiation of Roman Catholics. The bread and wine of Holy Communion cannot become the real body and blood of the Lord. Jesus' His real body is in heaven.

b. Christ's ascension and presence in heaven denies the Lutheran doctrine of consubstantiation. Jesus' real body is not somehow under or above the bread and the wine. Jesus went to heaven and his real body is there—not on earth.

c. The Lord was not a phantom as Docetism teaches. His real body is in heaven. Many saw him go up in his real body.

3. Jesus has to be in heaven to be at the right hand of his Father to pray for you.

(A “right hand man” has power and influence.) So your adversary, the Devil, cannot stand against your Heavenly Advocate! God receives the requests of his Son and rejects the Devil's request to harm them.

Romans 8:34 Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.

4. Jesus has to be in heaven to rule because that's where his throne is!

Colossians 3:1 If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.

5. Jesus has to be in heaven to equip you with gifts for your work – ruling to advance his dominion until he returns.

Apostle Paul quoted Psalm 68 and confirmed that Jesus Christ's ascension was not just a triumph...but that he continues to work for his children. (And you are to seek those gifts!)

Ephesians 4:8 Therefore He says: "When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And gave gifts to men." 9 (Now this, "He ascended" —what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, **that He might fill all things.**)

In V10 Jesus had to fulfill the things which were spoken about him. That was from Psalm 68.

Psalm 68:18...You have received gifts among men, Even from the rebellious, That the LORD God might dwell there. 19 Blessed be the Lord, **Who daily loads us with benefits,** The God of our salvation! Selah 20 Our God is the God of salvation; And to GOD the Lord belong escapes from death.

In Psalm 68, **before the gifts are mentioned, the church sings of the victory processional of the warrior king.** The king, mighty in battle, brought home the booty and the captive soldiers and slaves walked through the streets of Jerusalem to the temple that Jehovah would be glorified. And the king gave out gifts.

Similarly, **after Jesus ascended on high and won the victory, he as the powerful one, gives gifts to men to enrich and equip them for their God-given tasks.** So Jesus is not in heaven singing "In the sweet, by and by." He is there to protect his people, bless them, and prepare them for their work of destroying his enemies. This means the focus of Jesus' work is **not paying off all your financial debts and giving you an expensive vacation.** It is a King who is going with you to conquer the world!

5. Christ will be in heaven forever, unlike the priests in the OT.

Hebrews 7:23 Also there were many priests, because they were prevented by death from continuing. 24 But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. 25 Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. **26 For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens;**

Jesus Christ is On Earth

47 Q. BUT ISN'T CHRIST WITH US UNTIL THE END OF THE WORLD AS HE PROMISED US?

A. Christ is true man and true God. In his human nature Christ is not now on **earth; but in his divinity, majesty, grace, and Spirit he is not absent from us for a moment.**

1. Jesus' Divinity is present everywhere.

Yes, his physical body is in heaven, but his Divine nature is omnipresent. Remember, Jesus has 2 natures: his human nature and his Divine nature. His 2 natures are never mixed or confused. His **glorified human nature is limited to heaven,** but his **Divine nature, is never limited by space** as his human body is. So when he promised to be with his church always, you can take him at his word.

Matthew 28:19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations... and lo, **I am with you always, even to the end of the age.**" Amen.

2. Further, Jesus is present on earth through his Holy Spirit.

He clearly promised his Spirit – his Spirit who would **communicate all things necessary** for Christians to know through God's Word, **comfort all Christians,** **convict the world of sin,** and **call on the Father for all Christians.**

John 16:5 "But now I go away to Him who sent Me, and none of you asks Me, 'Where are You going?' 6 "But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. 7 "Nevertheless I tell you the truth. **It is to your advantage that I go away;** for if I do not go away, **the Helper will not come to you;** but if I depart, I will send Him to you. 8 "And when He has come, He will **convict the world of sin,** and of **righteousness,** and of **judgment:**

The Psalmist had long ago spoken of the ever-present Spirit who would do all of these same things about **which Jesus spoke, especially comfort the struggling!**

Psalm 139:7 Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? 8 If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there. 9 If I take the wings of the morning, And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, 10 **Even there Your hand shall lead me**, And Your right hand shall hold me.

3. Why is the reminder of the Holy Spirit's presence so important?

a. Jesus did not redeem you to let you die alone or abandon you as orphans to fend for yourselves. He knew that for your full salvation he had to always be with you through his Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is in you to **pray for you**, he **gives you courage** in the face of challenges, he gives you **words to speak** when you are presented with the opportunity, **he comforts you when you are persecuted**, and he **assures you that you are always God's child**.

John 14:16 "And I will pray the Father, and **He will give you another Helper**, that He may abide with you forever— 17 "the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. 18 "**I will not leave you orphans**; I will come to you. 19 "A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. **Because I live, you will live also**.

Even with modern technology, it is not the same when you are away from those loved ones for a long time. It is great to have texting, WhatsApp, Snapchat, and Instagram, but there is something always missing. **You want to see, feel, and touch your loved ones**. Without that closeness, it can sometimes put strains on relationships. But Jesus is not limited that way. **You have his Holy Spirit – in you!**

b. Jesus equips you by his Holy Spirit to work for him.

4. Christ's ascension to heaven after his resurrection was part of God's plan all along, not something developed later, as you saw from Psalm 68.

So those who believe Jesus will come and set up a physical kingdom in this world are solely deceived and are deceiving others. (Pre-millennialism.) His Spirit will be here until the end of the earth. He will not come back and establish an earthly kingdom in Jerusalem. He is doing so now through you. You must work now! **To think that Jesus has to come back physically to earth to expand his kingdom is to imply the gifts he has given to his church now were ineffective**...and he has failed in his plan. Adam failed. Jesus doesn't!

Conclusion:

Jesus' human body went to heaven to **prepare** a home for you and he will take you there one day. He **prays** for you and **equips you** to do his work. He is **present** on earth as well. He is here in his Divinity, majesty, grace, and Holy Spirit. **You need him to be in heaven. You need him to be on earth. He is!**

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. Do you ever feel like you are fighting all life's battles alone? Feeling depressed? Confused about Covid? Worried about your marriage? Concerned about your career? Struggling with sin? Feeling like no one cares? Jesus Christ never leaves you nor forsakes you. Though you cannot see Jesus now, he always sees you and he is everywhere present. You have the God of the universe with you. His Spirit is in you to help – to teach, to comfort, to strengthen! More, he has a personal stake in you...he redeemed you with his blood. He would not lift you up to let you down?

2. Are you performing your duties on earth? Remember the angel said: "Why are you staring into heaven, don't you know you have work to do now?" So this message is for you today. Start with telling the world about the resurrection so men can look up for one who is coming for them one day.

Finally, if you see Jesus as simply a good man who set a good example and try to imitate him, you will die in your sins and go to hell. If you see Jesus as Redeemer who died on the cross for the sins of the world...who now has

gone to heaven...who offers his Spirit to those who believe... and you ask him to make you his child, then all of these blessings are yours...and you will inherit heaven for eternity.