

The Present Work of the Lord Jesus Christ

Introduction:

While the Bible focuses much attention of the past work of the Lord Jesus Christ, His present ministry in Heaven is of great importance and comfort to the believer.

This ministry began with the Ascension of Christ, and will conclude with His second coming.

I. The Ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ

A. The Time of His Ascension.

The Lord remained on earth for 40 days after His resurrection. — Acts 1:3.

During this time He conducted what is usually termed His “post-resurrection ministry.”

B. The Manner of His Ascension.

See: Acts 1:8-11

1. It was Bodily, Personal, and Visible.

2. It was a Preview of His Second Coming in Glory. — Zechariah 14:4

C. The Significance of His Ascension.

1. It demonstrated the Completeness of Christ’s Atonement.

The fact that He was received of the Father is evidence that His earthly ministry was accepted.

Note: There were evidently two ascensions of Christ.

Having accomplished the great sacrifice of Himself for sin, went to Heaven in order to present His blood before the mercy seat — according to the pattern of Leviticus 16. See: Hebrews 9:16-18. He then returned to earth to accomplish His post-resurrection ministry.

John 20:17 indicates Christ did this immediately after His resurrection. He said “Touch me not” to Mary, but later the same day allowed His disciples to touch Him — verse 20; also: verse 27 and I John 1:1.

2. It opened the way for the sending of the Holy Spirit.

The return of the Son to Heaven facilitated the sending of the Comforter, Whose blessed Person would indwell every believer everywhere, and through Whom Christ could be Head over His many churches everywhere. See: John 7:39; 16:7

D. The Present Location of Jesus Christ.

1. He is Seated.

Hebrews 10:12. The fact that He “sat down” indicates the completeness of His work of redemption.

2. He is Seated at the Right Hand of the Throne of the Father.

Hebrews 10:13. The fact that Christ did not sit upon His own throne, or upon the “throne of David,” indicates He is expecting to become King over the earth.

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3. He is in His Resurrection Body.

Christ is not an unseen Spirit in Heaven. In this way, Christ differs from the His pre-incarnate form.

Note: Why was Christ standing at the throne in Acts 7:55?

While there is no definitive answer to this question, the obvious reason is that He stood to receive the soul and spirit of Stephen. (Psalm 116:15)

II. The Present Work of Christ for the Believer

A. Christ Makes Intercession for all Believers.

Hebrews 7:25

This work began during Christ's earthly ministry (John 17) and will continue in Heaven as long as His own are in the world.

What a glorious thought — Christ prayed for me!! John 17:20.

B. Christ Appears before the Father as the Believer's Advocate.

Satan is the "accuser of the brethren" — Revelation 12:10. He is somehow able to accuse every Christian when he or she sins.

An "Advocate" is a defense attorney. Christ speaks up on our behalf, and His advocacy is based upon His shed blood which continues to speak for us — I John 2:1; Hebrews 12:24.

C. Christ Continues His Cleansing Work on Behalf of Each Believer.

See: I John 1:9.

This work is freely given on the basis of the confession of our sins.

D. Christ Enjoys Sweet Fellowship with Each Believer.

According to Ephesians 2:6, each Christian is seated with Christ in heavenly places. This fact has to do with our STANDING in Christ and assures us not only of permanent UNION, but of continual COMMUNION.

See: John 10:27; I John 1:3, 4.

E. Christ Provides Every Believer Free and Confident Access to the Father through Prayer.

See: John 16:23-24; Hebrews 4:14-16; 10:19-22; I John 5:14-15

F. Christ is Preparing a Place for Each Christian in Heaven.

See: John 14:2

III. The Present Work of Christ for His Churches.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the Head of each true New Testament church, Colossians 1:18. He is the "Chief Shepherd" and "Bishop" over each of His Churches — I Peter 2:25; 5:4.

In this capacity, it is the Lord Jesus Christ who:

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- A. Adds to the Membership of Each Church.
Acts 2:47
- B. Calls Men into Ministry
I Timothy 1:12
- C. Bestows Spiritual Gifts upon the Members of Each Church.
Romans 12:4-8; I Corinthians 12:1-11.
- D. Bestows Gifted Men upon Each Church for Spiritual Benefit.
Ephesians 4:11-16
- E. Supplies Each Church's Needs.
Philippians 4:19