

The Ascension of Christ
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Introduction: Christianity is founded on historical evidence.

- A. Some falsely claim that Christianity is *based upon myth or legend*. They simply have never examined the foundations of Christianity! **(Acts 1:1-3)**
 - 1. How can anyone know who is the historical Jesus? Start *with reading the written accounts!*
 - 2. When one makes timely claims about public events in history, then there is *a process of reason to determine what is true!*
- B. What *changed the disciples of Christ* to become bold proclaimers of these truths?
 - 1. They were eyewitnesses to events that *would change any man!*
 - 2. Consider the change in Thomas! **(Jn 20:26-29)**

I. Three key eyewitness events

- A. The disciples saw many things that *established proof* that Jesus came from God.
 - 1. These same things were also seen by *both friends and enemies*. Some would not try to reason. (Jn 10:24-25)
 - 2. *Honest men* could clearly understand the meaning. (Jn 3:2)
 - 3. This evidence gave the disciples *strength to stay with Jesus*. They still needed a stronger faith for the work Jesus would give them! **(Jn 6:67-69)**
- B. There are three events seen by some or all of the apostles.
 - 1. *The transfiguration of Christ* was seen by Peter, James and John. **(2 Pt 1:16-18)**
 - a. Imagine seeing and hearing Moses and Elijah talking with Jesus.
 - b. Now imagine entering into the presence of God and hearing His voice!
 - 2. *The resurrection of Christ* was seen by all many times over 40 days! **(Acts 1:3)**
 - a. This was to be the focal point to establish faith in Christ. There was much accompanying evidence to establish this truth. **(1 Cor 15:1-6)**
 - b. Imagine the change these appearances caused in the disciples! **(2 Pt 1:3)**
 - 3. *The ascension of Christ* was the final eyewitness, historical event. **(Acts 1:9)**

II. Jesus plainly foretold of His future ascension

- A. Jesus often *foretold of His death and resurrection*. **(Lk 9:22-23, 44-45)**
 - 1. Because they could not imagine it possible for men to kill Jesus, their prejudice temporarily blinded them.
 - 2. His *enemies plainly understood* His prophecies. **(Mt 27:63-64)**
- B. Jesus also *plainly foretold of his future ascension* to heaven!
 - 1. Jesus raised the question of His ascension to unbelievers. **(Jn 6:62)**
 - 2. This event would be a powerful proof of everything He had been saying about *being with the Father before His birth*. **(Jn 8:56-58)**
- C. Jesus had Mary not only announce His resurrection but also *His coming ascension!* **(Jn 20:16-18)**
 - 1. He came from heaven and He would *soon return to heaven*.

2. They did not witness the nature and facts surrounding His birth, but they would be eyewitnesses to His return!

III. The ascension of Christ is a crucial element of our hope.

- A. Why do we have a hope of heaven? **(Rom 8:24-25; 1 Pt 3:15)**
 1. There is evidence upon which we can reason.
 2. Do we expect to be with God in a preprepared place? Then Jesus ascended to make that very preparation! **(Jn 14:2-3)**
 3. How did Jesus presently get to be at the right hand of God? **(Acts 7:55-56)**
- B. Jesus' ascension was essential to the full delivery of His inspired, written word! **(Jn 16:7-13)**
 1. Jesus can now work always be with the disciples. **(Mt 28:20)**
 2. Through the Holy Spirit He can now do a perfect work of revealing His full will. We now have it in written words.
- C. Jesus continues to work for us at the right hand of God! **(Rom 5:10)**
 1. In heaven he can appeal to God on our behalf.
 2. He also works to provide for us in untold ways!

IV. Views of the ascension of Christ

- A. The clouds of ascension as seen from earth. **(Mk 16:19-20; Lk 24:50-53)**
 1. Here we have numerous witnesses that give credibility to the event.
 2. The greatest detail of the viewpoint of earth is found in the book of Acts. **(Acts 1:4-11)**
 - a. There had been others who ascended to heaven like Enoch and Elijah, but not like Jesus did!
 - b. The disciples were filled with wonder and fear at what would come next.
 - c. The angel had to remind them "there is work to do!"
- B. The clouds of ascension as seen from heaven. **(Dan 7:13-14)**
 1. Jesus is like a victorious Roman general returning home from victory with the spoils. **(Psa 68:18-19; Eph 4:8-13)**
 2. Imagine the scene as Jesus approached the gates of heaven! **(Psa 24:7-10)**
 3. Do we realize that Jesus gave these gifts to us so that we might work in His kingdom? **(Eph 4:16)**

IV. These truths about the ascension of Christ should change us.

- A. This is not just an interesting historical fact. It has great implications on our lives.
 1. We will be buried and raised because of His resurrection! **(Col 2:12)**
 2. We live a life of hope based on our future ascension! **(1 Thess 4:17-18)**
- B. Can we see the unseen through the testimony of the Apostles?

Conclusion: Let us let Christ work for each of us at the right hand of God!