



Cherrequine Bible Doctrine Ministries
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THE EXALTATION OF CHRIST

There are four aspects of Christ's exaltation:

1. Resurrection
2. Ascension
3. Session
4. Return in Glory

The resurrection was the transition point into Jesus' state of exaltation. It was the Person of Christ that was exalted, not just His human nature, but the focus of this activity of exaltation was the change in His human nature to a new, much more glorious state.

The resurrection was not just a restoration to life, but the beginning of a new, better kind of life, a resurrection life (Romans 6:9-10). After the resurrection, Jesus still had a physical body that could be touched and held (Matthew 28:9; John 20:17, 27), could break bread (Luke 24:30), prepare breakfast (John 21:12-13), and eat (Luke 24:42-43). It was a body of "flesh and bones," for Jesus said, A spirit has not flesh and bones as you see that I have.

Yet this physical body of Jesus was no longer subject to weakness, sickness, aging, or death. It was imperishable and glorious and powerful (I Corinthians 15:42-44; the term "spiritual" here means not "nonmaterial" but "conformed to the character of the Holy Spirit"). It is possible that John 20:19 implies that Jesus had the ability to enter a locked room miraculously. It is clear, however, that since Jesus was the "first-fruits" of the resurrection, we will be like Him when we are raised from the dead (I Corinthians 15:20, 23, 49; Philippians 3:21; I John 3:2).

The resurrection demonstrated the approval of God the Father and His satisfaction with Christ's work of redemption (Isaiah 53:11; Philippians 2:8-9). Now Christ was exalted to a new status with respect to the law as well: He was no longer under the law in the sense of being obligated to obey the OT as our representative, for His work of obedience in our place was complete (Romans 5:18-19).

The resurrection also was the initiation of a new relationship with God the Father, for Jesus was exalted to the role of messianic "Son" with new power and authority which were not His before as God-man (Matthew 28:18; Acts 13:33; Romans 1:4; Heb. 1:5).

Forty days after His resurrection (Acts 1:3), Jesus ascended up to heaven and entered more fully into the privileges of His state of exaltation. The NT clearly presents Jesus' ascension as a bodily ascension and therefore as ascension to a place (Luke 24:51; John 14:1-3; 16:28; 17:11; Acts 1:9-11), though it is a place ordinarily hidden from our physical eyes (Acts 7:55-56; 2 Kings 6:17). Thus, Jesus retained His human nature when He returned to heaven and will retain it forever (Hebrews 13:8). However, Jesus' human nature is now worthy of worship by all creation, unlike our human nature.

When Jesus ascended into heaven He received glory, honor, and authority that were not His before as God-man (Acts 2:33, 36; Philippians 2:9-11; I Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 1:3-4; 2:9), especially the authority to pour out the Holy Spirit on the Church in greater fullness and power than before (Acts 1:8; 2:33).

After Jesus ascended into heaven He also began His high priestly work of representing us before God the Father (Hebrews 9:24) and of interceding for us before God (7:25; Romans 8:34).

A further state in the exaltation of Christ was His sitting down at the right hand of the Father in heaven (Acts 2:33; Ephesians 1:20-22; Hebrews 1:3). This action shows both the completion of Christ's work of redemption and His reception of new authority as God-man to reign over the universe.