

# Christ's Ascension Our Ascension

by F.J. Huegel

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*F.J. Huegel's sermon emphasizes the believer's spiritual union with Christ and the transformative power of participating in His ascension through faith.*

**Scripture:** Genesis 6:3, Isaiah 40:31, John 1:16, John 17:24, Romans 8:32, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Ephesians 1:3, Ephesians 2:6, Hebrews 4:12, Revelation 3:21

**Topics:** "Spiritual Identity", "Participation in Christ"

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## Description

F.J. Huegel emphasizes the profound truth of believers' participation in Christ's ascension, illustrating that through faith, Christians are not only partakers of His death and resurrection but also share in His heavenly position. He draws parallels between the believer's journey and the biblical accounts of spiritual awakening, likening it to a transition from a barren existence to the richness of life in Christ. Huegel encourages believers to claim their rightful place in the Heavens, asserting that this union with Christ is both a present reality and a future hope. He highlights the necessity of faith to access these spiritual blessings and the transformative power of living in the fullness of Christ's life. Ultimately, he calls for a deeper understanding and appropriation of the believer's identity in Christ, urging the Church to rise and claim her glorious inheritance.

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## Transcript

HIS principle of participation. oneness with Christ has reaches so unfathomable that not even the spiritual man finds it easy to scale the heights and grasp its full meaning. We stand overawed. We stagger. Faith wavers.

I recall a recent visit to the sea after years of seclusion in a barren desert land. When my eyes caught sight of the far horizon, and the great roar of the breakers struck, as the chords of a great organ upon my heart, I stood speechless. When one looks out for the first time, after years of weary wandering in the desert land of a self-originated imitation of Christ, to the ocean of unfathomable riches which participation in Christ holds for the believer, one is not simply speechless. Like Saul of Tarsus, one falls to earth blinded by the Heavenly vision.

I must confess that when I first contemplated the phase of participation which we are about to consider, I staggered. Could it be that even this-Christ's ascension, was mine? Not hereafter, but now? Dared I mount this fiery chariot and like Elijah be swept into glory? Did the Scriptures actually teach such a thing? And how could one be upon earth and yet with Christ in the Heavens ? A thousand questions surged up

demanding a reply. But the Holy Spirit, who leads us, as we are willing and able to bear, into those mysteries, gave faith. I believed, and now I know. Faith is more than sight, as Hudson Taylor was wont to say. "It is the substance of things hoped for." We come actually to possess the very substance, the pith and the marrow of those unseen realities.

We are made not only partakers of Christ's death and resurrection, but of His very ascension. As Paul puts it, we were "made to sit together in the Heavenlies with Christ Jesus" (Eph. ii. 6). Jesus states the case in His High Priestly prayer, which had as its supreme object this very union of which we are speaking, in this wise: "I in them and Thou in Me . . . Father I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am that they may behold My glory." That He had in mind His going to the Father is evident enough, for He had already said: "And now I am no longer in the world. And now I come to Thee." By faith He was already taking His place at the right hand of the Father. He was returning by the way of the Cross, the empty tomb, and ascension to the Throne He had left, and by faith He was taking with Him those who in the foreknowledge of God were to form His mysticbody. The Heavenly Bridegroom was placing the Bride at His side on the Throne.

Believers and Christ are one. Therefore, the Saviour could say: "And Thou hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me." For this purpose Christ had come: to graft into Himself a new stock; as Son of Man to constitute Himself Head of a New Race; as Second Adam to be Federal Head of a New Humanity. And as this New Man (the body) should participate in His Cross, and in the Resurrection so he should also ascend with Him into Heaven.

True, it was a potential ascension and yet even in this life, it may become actual. We must learn to possess our possessions and to appropriate by faith what by Divine Trust is actually ours. Our "experimental position" should be made to conform to our "judicial position." God judges us dead, raised, and seated with Christ in the Heavenlies. "He hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. i. 3). We do well to look to the tenses of the verbs which the Holy Spirit employs, as F. B. Meyer points out. It is ours now. "He hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Heavenly places in Christ." It is not death (physical dissolution) which will bring us into our heritage in Christ. It is faith. We may now sit with Him in the Heavenlies, because God has already made us to sit there in the Person of Christ, the Head of the Church. If this seems too much, too great a blessing for such unworthy children, let us not forget that the merest crumb of spiritual blessing comes in the same way. It is only because we are "in Christ" that we presume to address the Father at all. Since it would be just as impossible to attain the least, without Christ, why shall we not attain the highest with Him? "He that spared not His only begotten Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things." Yea, even the Throne.

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My Throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with My Father in His Throne" (Rev. iii. 21).

Dr. G. A. Peck, for some years a missionary in Africa, has written a book on what he calls Throne Life, or Life in the Heavenlies, in which he expounds this phase of the Christian life in a unique way. He states that the believer before entering into glory through the portals of death, may take his place with Christ in the Heavenlies and draw upon the Saviour's Throne life. The Doctor sees the conquest of Canaan, the entrance of the children of Israel into the land of milk and honey, as the great Old Testament type. Canaan represents the highest union with Christ, the Throne-life to which every believer is called. Joshua represents the Holy Spirit who quickens and imparts faith and leads the believer into this union with Christ.

The Canaanites, sons of Anak, Giants, etc., represent the mighty forces of evil, Satanic and otherwise, which oppose the believer in his attempt to "take" the land of promise-i.e. his place with Christ in the Heavens. As to Joshua the Lord said: "Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you." So to the believer the Spirit says: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Heavenly places in Christ." It is held in trust. It is already the believer's judicially, and will become his actually upon the exercise of faith.

Though Dr. Peck's message fell upon stony ground (such a message could only be received by Spirit-taught hearts; it seems few were prepared) the glorious truth remains. And, praise God, there are many things which cause one to believe that the Church is being roused and is about to claim her glorious possessions-rise to take her place (I do not refer to her translation at Christ's coming) in the Heavens.

I realize that this is no "facile" doctrine, no light thing. But is anything related to Christ's coming, His passion, His death, His great programme of world evangelization, easy or simple? Perchance there are no mysteries connected with the Saviour's death for the sinner? Ah! yes there are. The greatest intellects need to be shorn of pride, lest entering here they stumble and fall. And the simplest souls need grace lest they fail to see. Only anointed eyes can pierce through the veil and see into the ante-chamber of the King. If, without the Holy oil we cannot grasp the A B C of Christology, should it surprise us that the X Y Z are not easily attained? The same anointing, which according to John "teacheth all things, is truth and is no lie, which has taught us to abide in Him," will also enable us "to mount up on wings as eagles," so that we may become not only potential but actual participants of Christ's Throne Life.

A bit of psychology will, I am sure, aid us at this point. Not only the Bible, but science as well declares man to be a tripartite being. He is spirit, soul, and body. "The God of peace," prays Paul, "sanctify you wholly and preserve you: I pray God, your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless." The Bible constantly distinguishes between spirit and soul. We are told that the Word divides asunder soul and spirit (Heb. iv. 1'2). When man fell he ceased to live in the spirit, which is the seat of Godconsciousness and which God intended should dominate. He sank into "the vessel of the soul," and then into the flesh. He became "flesh." We read that it repented the Lord that He had made man; for He said: "he also is flesh" (Gen. vi. 3) .

Now the purpose of -God in the great work of redemption is to bring man once more to a God-consciousness through the spirit; to quicken and to release the spirit of Man, disentangling it from that which is soulish and fleshly, and bringing it once more into the ascendancy that man might be dominated by the spirit.

So the Cross must cut, dividing asunder soul and spirit. The spirit, once released from the thralldom of the carnal, takes its place with Christ in the Heavens. The believer's life should flow in an unremitant stream from the Throne. As to his spirit, he is translated into the Kingdom of Christ, here and now. During His earthly ministry Jesus stood in just such relations; He could say: "No man hath ascended into Heaven, but he that came down from Heaven, even the Son of Man which is in Heaven." As to His spirit, Jesus was in Heaven even while He walked on earth and preached by the shores of Galilee. His life flowed in an unremitant stream from the Throne. The soul and the body were kept under.

Now when by faith we rise to claim our place in the Heavens, our spirits are released from the thralldom of the "flesh-life." They are disentangled from the "soulish life." We are no longer in bondage to "self." We are set free. Our life is no longer lived at the circumference. It flows from the center to the circumference.

Thus it is that we truly come into our own, not only as sons of God, but as men-the highest realms of manhood (the Manhood of the Master) unfold within us.

Oh! the glory of the Christian life when lived in the fullness of its prerogatives, when we learn to participate in Christ in all the wealth of the redemption which He has wrought out for us. Oh! that we might see the poverty of our spirits, the barrenness of our life, the death which still envelopes us because we have not incorporated in our being all that Christ would have us to receive. John could say: "And of His fullness have all we received, and grace for grace." How little of His fullness have we received. Oh! how many Christians are living on starvation rations, when all the time the King would have them so filled, so charged with the life of God, so rooted in the Divine fullness that, unable to contain themselves, rivers of living water should burst forth and flow out to a perishing world. "A garden enclosed is my sister," so speaks the Beloved (Christ) in Canticles, to the spouse (the Bride-the Church -or the individual Christian) "a spring . . . a fountain . . . The plants are an orchard of pomegranates with pleasant" fruits; camphire with spikenard . . . myrrh and aloes with all chief spices, a fountain of gardens, a well of living waters and streams from Lebanon" (Canticles iv. 12-15).

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