

Post Resurrection Acts of Christ

Commentary for January 16, 2018 — A Sequence of Events

Most are familiar with Christ's death, resurrection, His appearing to His disciples after His resurrection, and His ascension to heaven from the various accounts in the four Gospels. I explore details, some supernatural, of events occurring after Christ's resurrection.

Jesus was on the tree of crucifixion for three hours, and then He died. He was already dead when the spear was thrust into His side. Blood and water came out of the wound, indicating death prior to being stabbed.¹ He ceased to exist in every conceivable way — His body died, His soul died (Matthew 10:28), and His spirit died. His spirit was made alive the moment He was resurrected (1 Peter 3:18).

Christ was buried by family, friends, and one wealthy Jewish leader, Joseph of Arimathea, who provided his new, unused family tomb (Matthew 27:56–61) for Jesus' burial. On Sunday morning after the Passover Jesus Christ was resurrected from the dead by God the Father (John chapter 20; Matthew 28:1–7). There was a period before He went to heaven when He appeared before His Father. We do not know how long that was:

"Jesus said unto her, 'Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.'

Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her."

• **John 20:17–18**

He ascended to heaven to appear before His God and Father. We learn from the apostle Paul in the Book of Hebrews about the important ritual actions Christ performed that were vitally important for all of humanity.²

The Levitical sacrificial system was a teaching instrument for Israel, the nations, and for

¹ "[On the Physical Death of Jesus Christ](#)." An article reprinted from *JAMA* – The Journal of the American Medical Association, March 21, 1986, Volume 256. In their website, click on "[continue](#)."

² Christ was still a man after His resurrection: **"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus"** (1 Timothy 2:5). The Greek word for "man" is *anthropous*.

I am not a big fan of religious ceremonies. God however uses pageantry and ceremony for legitimate purposes, unlike many religious ceremonies which are in reality "traditions of men" that make void the Word of God (Matthew 15:2–9; Mark 7:3–13; Galatians 1:14; Colossians 2:8; 1 Peter 1:18). Paul gave the Gentile *ekklesias* traditions that he encouraged them to keep (1 Corinthians 11:2; 2 Thessalonians 2:15, 3:6). Those traditions were not specified in detail so we do not know exactly how they functioned. Rest assured those biblical traditions were perverted (pagan holidays, buildings designed like temples with pagan symbolism, strange vestments, and unbiblical liturgy) by Gentile church leaders after the death of the apostles, and even more perverted after the second generation of leaders died. Those would be leaders appointed by the apostles, such as Timothy and Titus.

every human being. The Levitical priesthood and its sacrifices were never designed to “save” anyone. The Levitical system provided atonement, a covering, a shelter from sin for a time (Hebrews 10: 1–4). Salvation can only come through a proper and worthy propitiation by a mediator who was Jesus, God’s anointed, His Christ (1 Timothy 2: 4–5).

Jesus’ death took away our sins. His being made alive again made us righteous. That is the meaning of “justification,” to make one righteous. Only He was worthy to justify or make righteous all children of Adam to YHWH (God the Father) and transform them from enemies, to friends, and to children of God. This is discussed in Romans chapter 5.³ Christ’s acts will transform you, me, and every human being into the true image and likeness of God as He said from the beginning (Genesis 1:26–31). That will occur after our spiritual resurrections.

Jesus’ Actions Before God’s Throne in Heaven

He came before His Father as a Melchisedec Priest representing all humanity, of which the Levitical priesthood was a type. He sprinkled His own blood on the altar in heaven:

“But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal [eonian] redemption for us.

For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal [eonian, age-lasting] Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”

• ***Hebrews 9:11–14***

Christ’s sacrifice was not just for us, but for those in heaven also, as Paul continues:

“And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.”

• ***Hebrews 9:22–24***

What are **“the patterns of things in the heavens”**? Paul is referring to the Tabernacle in the time of Moses down to the time of King Solomon, and from then, he means the Temples in Jerusalem, which during his lifetime was still standing. Christ entered **“into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.”**

Once in heaven, Christ went before the throne of God, probably surrounded by the heavenly council, all the angels, and other beings (seraphim, cherubim) attending. Christ spoke to His Father directly, face to face, quoting a portion of Psalm 40: 8:

³ This process is fully explained by Dr. Ernest Martin in [Chapter 8: “The Imputation of Christ’s Righteousness to His People”](#) of his book [The Essentials of New Testament Doctrine](#), free online, and for purchase in print.

"Then said he [Christ], 'Lo, I come to do your will, O God.'" He takes away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

And every priest stands daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins:

But this man [*anthropos*, meaning Jesus], after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever ["continually" in Greek, not "eons"], sat down on the right hand of God."

• *Hebrews 10:9–12*

All the information in Hebrews about Jesus in heaven after His resurrection must come from a vision. If it came through the apostle Paul, the vision may have occurred when he was in Arabia (Galatians 1:15–17; Mt. Sinai is in Arabia, Galatians 4:25). Or, this could have been the vision Paul described in 2 Corinthians 12:1–5,⁴ the more likely of the two possibilities.

Psalm 40 is a psalm of David. Jesus likely read these words often and applied them to Himself, just as He did after His resurrection when He appeared before God. Reading Psalm 40, some of it applies to Jesus in His ministry, and during His last hours and crucifixion. Remember, David was a prophet, as well as a king (Acts 2:29–30).

Below is Psalm 40:6–10. The first five verses refer to David, not Jesus in His life or after His resurrection. Verses 6–10 do apply to Christ more than to David, though written by David:

"Sacrifice and offering you did not desire; mine ears have you opened: burnt offering and sin offering have you not required. Then said I,

'Lo [behold], I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do your will, O my God: yea, your law is within my heart. I have preached righteousness in the great congregation:

lo [behold], I have not refrained my lips, O YHWH, you know it. I have not hid your righteousness within my heart; I have declared your faithfulness and your salvation: I have not concealed your lovingkindness and your truth from the great congregation.'"

• *Psalm 40:6–10*

The thoughts in these verses of Psalm 40 could easily have come from Christ's lips at the time He presented Himself before His God. All the acts described were done by King David in a small way, but Christ truly fulfilled them in His ministry.

As a result, God had Christ Jesus sit at His right hand to again rule with even greater authority. This also was prophesied by David:

⁴ 2 Corinthians 12:1–5:

"I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knows;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knows;) How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities.

Perhaps Paul later was able **"to utter"** the messages he heard and tell what he saw in the most holy place of the heavenly Temple where God and Christ were presiding. If so, what Paul saw and heard would have happened in reality decades before he wrote Hebrews.

"YHWH said unto my Lord,

'Sit you at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool. YHWH shall send the rod of your strength out of [from] Zion: you rule in the midst of your enemies. your people shall be willing in the day of your power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: you have the dew of your youth.

YHWH has sworn, and will not repent, you are a priest for ever [for the age] after the order of Melchizedek."

• *Psalm 110:1–4*

This passage is cited in part by the apostle Peter in Acts chapter 2.

Jesus Preaches to the Spirits in Prison

After Jesus put His own blood on the altar before God before all of heaven, and after He received the return of His power and glory, He visited spirits in a supernatural prison:

"For Christ also has once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickenened by the Spirit:

By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.

The like figure whereunto even baptism [Christ's baptism] does also now save us ... by the resurrection of Jesus Christ: Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him."

• *1 Peter 3:18–22*

Like the ark for Noah, Christ is the means of salvation for mankind. We shall participate with Christ in His glory (Ephesians 1:3–7). Note also that His preaching to the spirits is introduced and concluded with a mention of His resurrection; it did not occur while He was dead.

Things Christ Is Doing Now

At present, Christ is busy working. **[1]** He sustains all of creation (Colossians 1:15–17; Hebrews 1:3) under God the Father. **[2]** He governs the Kingdom of God (now in heaven) and in the future on earth (Psalm 82:8, 145:10–13; Isaiah 9:6–7). **[3]** Christ is the Head of the *ekklesia* of God:

"And he is the head of the body, the church [*ekklesia* in Greek]: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell."

• *Colossians 1:18–19*

He is also **[4]** preparing a place for each of us in heaven (John 14:2–3). These habitations are likely within New Jerusalem described in Revelation 21:9–22:5. Truly, God's will shall be done through Christ's work. We will be able to participate in all His works after He returns and we inherit the Kingdom of God.

David Sielaff
david@askelm.com