

The Apostles Creed

I believe in God the Father, Almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth:
And in Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, our Lord:
Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,
born of the Virgin Mary:
Suffered under Pontius Pilate;
was crucified, dead and buried:
He descended into hell:
The third day he rose again from the dead:
He ascended into heaven,
and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty:
From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead:
I believe in the Holy Ghost:
The (universal) holy catholic church:
The communion of saints:
The forgiveness of sins:
The resurrection of the body:
And the life everlasting.
Amen

“He ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty...”

1. “He ascended into heaven”

-It is of utmost important to not only affirm the physical bodily resurrection of Christ but also the fact of His ascension into Heaven as it is recorded in Luke 24:50-53 & Acts 1:9-11. Jesus Christ _____ ascended into heaven and is still there today.

-The ascension of Christ is very important for several reasons. It is a _____ part of the Christian faith. Here are a few reasons why the ascension of Christ is important:

-The ascension helps our faith grasp the _____ of Christ. Augustine of Hippo wrote, *“It was necessary, then, that the form of a servant be taken away from their eyes, because, through gazing upon it, they thought that alone which they saw to be Christ...But the ‘ascension to the Father’ meant, so to appear as He is equal to the Father, that the limit of the sight which sufficeth us might be attained there.”*

-When Christ ascended to heaven, He opened the path to the Father that had formerly been _____ because of the rebellion of Adam the first. John Calvin writes, *“the Lord by his ascent to heaven opened the way into the Heavenly Kingdom, which had been closed through Adam [John 14:3]. Since he entered heaven in our flesh, as if in our name, it follows...that we do not await heaven with a bare hope, but in our Head already possess it.”* Christ is in Heaven in the flesh (as the first-fruits) guaranteeing a bodily resurrection for His people.

-When Christ ascended to heaven, He took His place before the Father as our _____ and intercessor. Hebrews 7:25 says, *“Consequently, He is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.”*

-When Christ ascended to heaven, He ascended as King, the glorious Victor over the prince of this world. The ascension into Heaven can be viewed as the real “_____” as Victorious Conqueror.

-It was necessary for Christ to ascend to heaven so that the Holy Spirit might be given for the building up of the church. The sending of the Holy Spirit was the sending of the Spirit in _____ for the establishment of the world-wide church. In former days the “church” (people of God) was small and isolated to a small corner of the earth but after Pentecost the church “turns the world upside down” (Acts 17:6). It was Christ, from Heaven, who poured out the Spirit in power upon the apostles at Pentecost (Acts 2:33).

-Christ said that He was going to Heaven “to prepare a place for us.” If Christ did not ascend to Heaven-Heaven would not be _____ for us. J.C. Ryle writes this, “*Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people--a place which we shall find Christ Himself has made ready for true Christians. He has prepared it by procuring a right for every sinner who believes to enter in. None can stop us, and say we have no business there. He has prepared it by going before us as our Head and Representative, and taking possession of it for all the members of His mystical body. As our Forerunner He has marched in, leading captivity captive, and has planted His banner in the land of glory. He has prepared it by carrying our names with Him as our High Priest into the holy of holies, and making angels ready to receive us. Those who enter heaven will find they are neither unknown nor unexpected.*”

2. “and sitteth”

-Hebrews 1:3 says, “After making purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.” (also Heb. 8:1) Why is it important that Christ is seated? Because it signifies the _____ of His work of redemption. He has taken His seat because the work of atonement is finished. He has taken His seat as King. He has taken His seat and has been given all authority to rule and govern, for He must “until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death.” (1 Corinthians 15:25-26)

-His _____ as Victorious King is important for us to understand. As John Calvin writes, “*He therefore sits on high, transfusing us with his power, that He may quicken us to spiritual life, sanctify us by his Spirit, adorn His church with divers gifts of His grace, keep it safe from all harm by His protection, restrain the raging enemies of His cross and of our salvation by the strength of His hand, and finally hold all power in heaven and on earth. All this He does until He shall lay low all his enemies [1 Cor. 15:25; cf. Ps. 110:1] (who are our enemies too) and complete the building of His church.*”

3. “at the right hand of God the Father Almighty”

-Jesus Christ sat down at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. This signifies the _____ that the Father takes in the Son and His completed work. The seat of highest honor was reserved for the Son. This is a way of showing that no other is more pleasing to the Father, nor is there another who has the authority or honor that belongs to Christ. None can rival His authority. John Owen writes, “*yet by his sitting down at the right hand of God he was revealed, manifested, declared to be more excellent than all the angels in heaven.*” None in heaven (nor on earth) can rival Him.