

Biblical Topics

Son – State of Exaltation

Christ's state of Exaltation consists in this, that in His human nature, Christ always and fully uses the divine attributes communicated to His human nature. As the humiliation, so the exaltation took place in the human nature of Christ. Even as a man He was Lord of all.

- Philippians 2:9-11: ⁹Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The Scriptures teach that Christ, having been made alive in His grave, descended into hell. This took place on Easter morning, after He had been made alive and before He arose. We do not know any particulars about the manner of His descent, but we do know that also in His human nature, which had been made alive. Christ did not descend into hell to suffer for our sins; He suffered hell's torment on the cross. He did not descend into hell to preach the Gospel of grace to the damned or to give them another chance. By His descent into hell Jesus showed that He was Lord over sin, death and hell. He proclaimed His victory over all His enemies.

- 1 Peter 3:18-19: ¹⁸ For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit, ¹⁹ through whom also he went and preached to the spirits in prison.

The Scriptures teach that on the third day Christ victoriously rose from the grave and showed Himself alive to His disciples. During next forty days He showed Himself alive, not to all people, but to His disciples and other close followers. He sat with them at various times and under different circumstances. They saw and touched Him, He spoke, ate, and drank with them. By many infallible proofs He convinced them that He was alive. The resurrection of Jesus is an indisputable fact.

- Acts 10:40-41: ⁴⁰ but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen. ⁴¹ He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen—by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead.
- 1 Corinthians 15:4-8: ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵ and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. ⁶ After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. ⁷ Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, ⁸ and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.
- Acts 1:3: After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.

Christ's resurrection is of the greatest importance to us and all mankind. It is of utmost comfort to us because it proves...

- A. That Christ is the Son of God. Jesus Himself had pointed to His resurrection as to the final proof of His divine mission.
 - Romans 1:4: and who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord.
- B. That His doctrine is the truth. The resurrection proves Jesus to be the Son of God and therefore also proves that the doctrine and religion He taught is divinely true.
 - John 2:19: Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days."
- C. That God the Father has accepted the sacrifice of His Son for the reconciliation of the world. If the life and death of Christ had not been a sufficient ransom for us, God certainly would not have raised Him.
 - 1 Corinthians 15:17: And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.
 - Romans 4:25: He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.
- D. That all believers shall rise unto eternal life. The resurrection of Christ proves 1) that there is such a thing as a resurrection of the dead, 2) that for all believers in Christ there is a resurrection unto life.
 - John 14:19: Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live.
 - John 11:25-26: ²⁵ Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; ²⁶ and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

The Scriptures teach that, in His human nature, Christ visibly ascended to heaven and entered into the glory of His Father, as our Forerunner. Forty days after His resurrection Christ ascended from Mount Olivet into heaven. In the meantime He had repeatedly appeared to His disciples, convinced them of the fact of His resurrection, and had spoken to them of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. Having finished the work for which He came into this world, He now returns triumphantly into the glory of His Father.

- Ephesians 4:10: He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.
- John 17:24: Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.
- John 14:3: And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.
- Acts 1:9-11: Christ's ascension.

The Scriptures teach that Christ, also in His human nature, rules and fills all things with divine power and majesty. Christ's sitting at the right hand of God must not be taken

literally, as though He were confined to a certain place sitting on the throne next to God's. It must be taken figuratively. The right hand of God is who's power. To sit at the right hand of God means to occupy a position of divine honor and power. In His divine nature Christ always was at the right hand of God, always wielding omnipotent power in ruling all things. Now also His human nature fully participated in this.

- Ephesians 1:20-23: ²⁰ which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, ²¹ far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. ²² And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, ²³ which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

We derive comfort from Christ's sitting on the right hand of God. This comfort is ours because of the exalted Christ who...

- A. As our Prophet sends men to preach the Gospel of redemption. Through the Gospel the blessings of His redemption may be offered to all mankind and believers may be kept in the faith. To accomplish this blessing our exalted Savior gives to His Church preachers, teachers and missionaries.
 - Ephesians 4:10-12: ¹⁰ He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) ¹¹ It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, ¹² to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.
- B. As our Priest intercedes (pleads) for us before God. Because of our old Adam we Christians still commit sins. These lie heavy on our conscience. Our exalted Savior is our Advocate with the Father and whenever our sins trouble us, let us turn to Jesus, who having atoned for our sins, pleads for us with the Father.
 - 1 John 2:1: My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.
 - Romans 8:34: Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.
- C. As our King governs and protects His Church and as Head of the Church, rules the world in the interest of the Church. The history of the past shows that God's people are under the special protection of God. Mighty empires have passed away, but the Church has continued to this day. No matter, how furiously at times the enemies raged against the Church, they did not and shall not prevail.
 - Romans 8:28: And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.
 - Psalm 110:1: The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet."

The Scriptures teach of Christ's coming to Judgment. They teach that...

- A. Christ will return visibly and in glory. The fact of Christ's return is foretold. As the disciples saw Him ascend into heaven, so shall all men see Him come in a cloud.

At the Last Day the resurrection of the dead will take place and this present world will be destroyed.

- Acts 1:11: “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.”
 - Revelation 1:7: Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him. So shall it be! Amen.
 - Matthew 25:31: “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory.
- B. He will then judge the world in righteousness by His Word. To judge means to pass sentence on someone. Christ will judge all men, the living and the dead, also fallen angels. It will be a righteous judgment. No one will have cause to complain that he was not treated fairly. All will be judged according to God’s Word. This Word will not be the Law but the Gospel. Each individual will be judged according to his attitude toward this Gospel, whether he believed it or not.
- Acts 10:42: He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead.
 - 2 Corinthians 5:10: For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.
 - Acts 17:31: For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead.
 - John 12:48: There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; that very word which I spoke will condemn him at the last day.
- C. He will come on the Last Day, which is appointed by God, but unknown to man. God did not reveal the date because He wants us to be ready at all times. While all unbelievers will be terrified at the crack of doom, we Christians should rejoice.
- Mark 13:32: No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.
 - 2 Peter 3:10: But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.
 - Matthew 24:27: For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.
 - 1 Peter 4:7: The end of all things is near. Therefore be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray.
 - Matthew 24 and 2 Thessalonians 2: Signs preceding Christ’s coming.

The purpose of Christ’s entire work of redemption is...

- A. That I may be His own; that is, (as Christ has bought me with His blood, I now belong to Him, and I am not my own master.) We were the servants of sin, but now we are God’s prized, purchased possession.

- Revelation 5:9: And they sang a new song: “You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.
 - 1 Corinthians 6:19-20: ¹⁹ Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; ²⁰ you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.
- B. That I may live under Him in His Kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness; that is, that I willingly serve Him by an active Christian life and enjoy His blessings, now on earth and hereafter in heaven.
- Galatians 2:20: I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.
 - Luke 1:74-75: ⁷⁴to rescue us from the hand of our enemies, and to enable us to serve him without fear ⁷⁵in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.
 - 2 Corinthians 5:15: And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.
 - Ephesians 2:10: For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

The above information is taken from: “Luther’s Small Catechism” annotated by Edward W. A. Koehler.