

Name:

This I Believe

A JOURNEY THROUGH THE APOSTLE'S CREED

Week 5: I believe that Jesus ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father.

Day One

This portion of the creed invites us to consider the identity of Jesus as our ascended Lord who, from His exalted position at the Father's right hand, is ruling all things.

READ ACTS 1:1-11

How did Jesus and the two angels in white robes direct the disciples' attention to their present responsibilities?

Why would Jesus present Himself alive before promising the Holy Spirit and commissioning the disciples to be witnesses of the gospel?

As gloriously expressed by this Scripture passage and this section of the creed, the ascension confirms that Jesus is no longer among the dead and never will be again. His power has proved to be greater than anything in this world—even death. The gospel of Jesus and salvation from sin are certain for people who believe in Him.

READ ACTS 2:32-38

As Peter preached the first Christian sermon, he concluded with the fact that Jesus rose from the dead, ascended into heaven, and sent His Holy Spirit.

God had made it known through Scripture, through His Son, and now through His Spirit that Jesus is the Messiah promised by the Old Testament prophets and the reigning Lord of all creation. This passage teaches us that as Jesus sits at the right hand of the Father, He sends or pours out the Holy Spirit. The biblical account of Jesus' ascension into heaven is meant to give us certainty.

What phrases in this passage emphasize Jesus' authority? Identify each phrase and briefly explain what it communicates.

How do these prophecies and testimonies give you confidence?

Although Jesus ascended into heaven, it is wrong to say that He is not active in the world. In reading the Book of Acts, we see numerous occasions in which Jesus was still working in the world.

Throughout the Book of Acts and the New Testament as a whole, the Holy Spirit is always mentioned when Christians are empowered as witnesses of Jesus. We've received the Spirit in order to know God and to make Him known with boldness.

Like the disciples who were looking into heaven after Jesus' ascension, what do you need to do right now to obey Jesus and to be His witness?

Prayer

Father, I pray to You in the power of the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, who's at Your right hand at this very moment. I praise Your Son because You've exalted Him above all things and because He rules and reigns over all things. I worship and exalt Your Son because He's worthy. I look forward to the day when You'll send Him to us again, and everyone in heaven and on earth will confess that He's Lord. Amen.

Day Two

We often hear about what Jesus has done and what He's going to do; however, it's easy to forget about Jesus' current role in heaven.

It's vital to keep at the forefront of our hearts and minds what He has done. That's the cornerstone of the gospel as we've studied in previous weeks. But we also have a future hope that's certain. We'll look more at the future judgment and the reign of Christ in coming sessions. But don't rush past who Christ is right now and what that means for our lives today.

READ HEBREWS 7:23-28

Verse 25 says Jesus makes intercession for us. Because Jesus ascended to the Father, He speaks to the Father on our behalf as our High Priest. This is why Christians pray in the name of Jesus. We approach God the Father with confidence through Jesus, our intercessor.

Write a definition of *intercession*, either in your own words or from a dictionary. Describe how Jesus' intercession applies to your relationship with God.

Robert Murray McCheyne, a 19th century pastor in the Church of Scotland, once said, "If I could hear Christ praying for me in the next room, I would not fear a million enemies. Yet distance makes no difference; he is praying for me."

How does the knowledge that Christ is praying for you personally give you hope and confidence?

READ ROMANS 8:26-28

When have you felt at a total loss to express your thoughts, feelings, or needs?

In what specific areas of your life are you glad to know Christ and His Spirit are interceding on your behalf?

An implication of being at the Father's right hand is that Jesus has unique authority and a unique relationship with the Father, one that belongs only to the Son. He shares in all His Father's power and authority. His presence with the Father doesn't make Him absent from the world but uniquely powerful and present by His Spirit.

READ ROMANS 8:9-17

The Holy Spirit is present and active not only in the world around you but also in you. God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is not only sovereign and in control of all things, but He's also making Himself and His will known to you-His child. You've been created and redeemed for greater things than the temporary things of the flesh. God knows your deepest desires and needs, and He perfectly satisfies every one. He's good, and He's with you all the time.

Prayer

Father, I come to You in the name of Your Son, who's exalted with You in glory and majesty. Thank You for making a way for me to approach Your holy presence.

There's no other way into Your presence than through Your Son. I love Him because You've given all things over to His sovereign reign and dominion, for all things were created through Him and for Him. Thank You for giving me such a great High Priest who can sympathize with me and intercede for me.

I ask that You won't delay in sending Him back to His people, for the sake of our joy and Your glory. I ask all these things in His beautiful name and by the Spirit whom He has generously and abundantly poured out on me. Amen.

Day Three

One way you can know Jesus is alive and well is that you can meet and know Him. Or course, if you're in Christ, you already know this.

Athanasius, a fourth-century Christian theologian, wrote. "We are agreed that a dead person can do nothing: yet the Saviour works mightily every day, drawing men to religion, persuading them to virtue, teaching them about immortality, quickening their thirst for heavenly things, revealing the knowledge of the Father, inspiring strength in face of death, manifesting Himself to each, and displacing the irreligion of idols." He concluded that the conversion of a sinner is "the work of One Who lives, not of one dead; and, more than that, it is the work of God." In other words, because Jesus rose from the dead. we can have confidence that He has the power to help us grow to be more like Him.

READ ACTS 9:1-9

Can people see a noticeable difference between who you are and the world or between who you are and who you once were?

Explain.

Though your testimony may not seem as dramatic as Saul's, it is no less miraculous. Describe that experience.

Has the reality of who Jesus is transformed your life? How so? Be specific.

Now let's look back at this week's study through the Apostles Creed Grid:

1. SYMMETRY

The fact that Jesus ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father Almighty should give you confidence and a sense of holy discontentment, a refusal to settle for anything less than a life that glorifies the risen Lord.

2. CLARITY

You don't have to (and you can't) live the Christian life by your own strength. Your abilities have no effect on the righteousness of Christ and on your mission to be His witness. You live in His power. He's interceding on your behalf.

3. COMMUNITY

The living God, Jesus Christ, changed Saul's life. He can change anything in your life too. That also means He can change anybody around you, no matter how deeply entrenched in sin they may be. Because you can be sure that Jesus is alive and in control, you can have confidence that He's at work in and through you. You aren't yet what you'll be. He's not finished with you. He has made Himself known to you and is working through you as His witness.

4. COUNSEL

When you fall into temptation, don't give in to the paralysis of guilt and shame. You'll be surprised by how often your weaknesses can encourage and stir up the faith of your brothers and sisters in Christ. Allow God's radical work in your life—including your past sin and current struggles—to testify of the worthiness and power of Jesus Christ. Your Lord ever reigns at the right hand of the Father in heaven.

Prayer

Thank God that Jesus is alive and in control, seated at His right hand with all authority. Pray for boldness to testify of His worthiness in your life.

