



# Reclaim the Coronation of the Ascension! Embrace Christ's Rightful Place in Everything

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What do you think might be the most neglected truth today in the entire panoply of evangelical doctrines?

My discovery after decades of travel across the globe, into almost every stream of the Church, leaves just one answer: the ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ. More specifically, the *coronation* of his ascension.

Consider this: Christmas celebrates Jesus' incarnation. Good Friday remembers his crucifixion. Easter trumpets his resurrection. But how many congregations ever set aside even one Sunday a year to proclaim the coronation of God's Son—to celebrate the actual day Jesus was welcomed to sit on God's throne?

Yes, in the Western church calendar some traditions set aside the last Sunday before Advent begins as the Feast of Christ the King Sunday (Wikipedia has a great article about it.) But even then, not many who participate grasp the profound ramifications of what was accomplished when our Savior assumed his cosmic royal title as the one who "in everything is to have the supremacy" (Colossians 1:18). And few of us incorporate this truth into every facet of our daily walk with Jesus.

## What if there had been *no* ascension?

Just think of this: If Jesus had not ascended—if there had not been a day, like today is a day, when the Father invited his Son to sit at his right hand—what would be left for us? In other words, what if there had not been a moment when, in so many words, the Father was free to announce to his Son, before all heaven, an affirmation something like this?

*Dear Son: All you have accomplished for my people by your incarnation, your life of righteousness, your teachings and healings, your atoning sacrifice, and your definitive disabling of death are totally sufficient! You have fulfilled all that's needed for the reclamation of the universe. So come, my Son, take the crown and the glory. Begin to reign as King of kings and Lord of lords, forever and ever!*

Is it not evident that despite all Jesus did for us in all those other essential ways, we still would be utterly lost if there had been no ascension coronation?

In other words, if the Father had *not* been *fully* satisfied with all that his Son did for us, would not all of his sacrificial work have been rendered null and void? Would we not be forever undone, without help and without hope, if Jesus had not entered heaven on our behalf, celebrated with hymns of victory?

Furthermore, if Christ had *not* ascended for us, where else could we go to find the Father's welcoming arms? There would be no High Priest to represent us and intercede for us at the throne. We would be stripped of our open access into God's presence.

There would be no one preparing a home for our eternal dwelling. Our lives, as well as the whole universe, would be without the Mediator necessary to reconcile and reconstitute all things with the will of God (Colossians 1:18-20; Ephesians 1:9-10).

Also, this means Pentecost would have been permanently *postponed*, leaving believers today devoid of the Spirit's indwelling power. In addition, the hundreds of God's promises meant to become Jesus' inheritance and then shared by him with all who belong to him would be locked up and shelved.

That means the joy of Jesus' indwelling life and power meant for all the saints would elude us because the Master himself would be stuck in the past, as it were, where he was last seen 2000 years ago, visiting with his disciples after exiting the tomb—but since then left both at the fringes of history and our own life journey.

**But Jesus *has* ascended!**  
**Not passively but *actively* —**  
**“He went up” (Acts 1).**

Exactly forty days after he rolled back the *stone*, he sat down on the *throne*—making it the most dominant piece of furniture in all creation. He has been exalted permanently above every name in this age and the age to come (Ephesians 1:20-23).

Therefore, we *are* saved! Right now, we share daily in the risen, ascended life of the Ascended One! In fact, Scripture declares that in God’s eyes, we are already “seated with Christ in the heavenly realms” (Ephesians 2). That’s how wrapped up every Christian is in the coronation of Jesus’ ascension and all that flows from it.

Bishop N. T. Wright gives the wonder of the Ascension rich, *historical* perspective by contrasting it with first-century myths about Roman emperors. He writes in his book *Simply Jesus*:

Anyone familiar with the world of the early Roman Empire would realize what was happening. After the death of Julius Caesar, people swore they had seen his soul ascending to heaven. Augustus, Caesar’s adopted son, promptly declared that Julius was, therefore, a god; which meant that he, Augustus, was now ‘ of god’ . . . When Augustus himself died, the process was repeated, as it was with many (though not all) of his successors. The parallel is sufficiently close to make any readers in the Roman world realize what is going on.

Jesus is radically upstaging Caesar. Actually, if we think of the [Ascension] as the opening frame of the book of Acts, we get the point, because the closing frame is Paul in Rome, under Caesar’s nose, announcing God as king and Jesus as Lord . . . the strange paradox [is] Paul in chains announcing that the Roman world has a new emperor. *[It] sets the tone for all kingdom work in the present time* (emphasis added).

We must not lose sight of the fact that the early disciples took on a mission to proclaim Christ not only as Redeemer but also as *Conqueror*, as the only legitimate sovereign of all, as the “Ruler of the kings of the earth (Revelation 1)—the one whom N. T. Wright names as the “Cosmic Caesar.”

Did you know that until the end of the first millennium, many congregations placed graphics portraying the Ascension in the dome of their church buildings? It was their way of reminding members, each time they gathered, that they convened in the presence of the *reigning* Christ.

Should that not be the experience of every congregation on planet earth today whenever we gather to worship, pray, study God's Word, fellowship, or prepare ourselves for mission? We are *always* living in the presence of the Supreme Commander of the ages, who holds sway at all times in everything—in every nation, in every place, in every church, in every life. Ephesians 4:8-10 tells us that Christ ascended *in order to* fill the universe with himself!

## **Is it any wonder Psalm 110 defines our greatest reality!**

Why is it that the Old Testament passage most frequently quoted or referenced in the New Testament—in Jesus' teachings, in Acts, in the Revelation, and in almost every epistle—is Psalms 110:1-4?

Of the thousands of verses in the Hebrew Bible, early Christians identified this text as the most helpful in interpreting what was happening before their very eyes as the gospel spread across the empire. They were convinced that the wonders God was performing all around them in Jesus' name flowed out of and pointed toward the coronation of his ascension—just as fully and dramatically as predicted in Psalm 110, which reads in the NIV translation:

The LORD says to my lord:

“Sit at my right hand  
until I make your enemies  
a footstool for your feet.”  
The LORD will extend your mighty scepter  
from Zion, saying,  
“Rule in the midst of your enemies!”  
Your troops will be willing  
on your day of battle.  
Arrayed in holy splendor,  
your young men will come to you  
like dew from the morning's womb.  
The LORD has sworn  
and will not change his mind:  
“You are a priest forever,  
in the order of Melchizedek.”

Surprisingly, Psalm 110 is also one of the *briefest* of all the Psalms, comprising only eleven verses. So why did this portion of Scripture achieve dominance among New Testament

Christians? Could it have something to do with the proactive nature of the vision with which it opens—with this *decree*:

The LORD says to my lord:

“***Sit*** at my right hand  
until I ***make*** your enemies  
a footstool for your feet.”

The LORD will ***extend*** your mighty scepter  
from Zion, saying,  
“***Rule*** in the midst of your enemies!” (emphasis added)

One thing that was immediately clear to first-century Jesus followers: This ancient hymn foretold the ascension and crowning of Jesus as Lord of all!

Note how the active verbs,—*sit*, *make*, *extend*, *rule*—relate to someone taking the authority of a king. These verses foreshadow Jesus being raised on high to actively rule and prevail as our Royal Majesty, both for his own people (“Your troops will be willing on your day of battle, arrayed in holy majesty,” verse 3) as well as among the peoples of the earth (“The LORD will extend your mighty scepter . . . in the midst of your enemies,” verses 2).

## **This one passage reveals the heart of the New Testament message.**

To start with, in the mandate of Psalm 110, the Father ordains the reign of his Son to flourish unabated forever. As much as any other Scripture, this hymn fulfills—or better yet, it *fills full*—the significance of the royal title reserved for Jesus alone at heaven’s coronation: “*the Christ*,”—that is, the “Anointed One.”

Its poetry reinforced for the early Church how the Father is working to coalesce everything under his Messiah, reconstituting even his enemies into a “footstool” compatible with the throne from which Messiah presides.

During his earthly career, the Master himself recited this Scripture when he confronted swarms of resistive religious leaders. He quoted its assertions to confound them, because it required them to deal with the biblical basis of his claims to be Messiah and Lord over all—especially over *them* (see Matthew 22).

Following suit, most New Testament writers laced their works with quotes from or references to Psalm 110, prevalent especially in Acts, Ephesians, Colossians, Hebrews, and Revelation.

However, here's what is most intriguing about this prime prophecy that was so foundational to how first-century churches thought about Jesus: It mentions *nothing* about his incarnation, crucifixion, or resurrection—as utterly crucial as all three are to our salvation. Did you notice that?

Instead, it focuses *exclusively* on the unparalleled transaction of the enthronement of Jesus in heaven—the one paramount event that sovereignly sealed for God's people the full ramifications of his incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection.

His coronation as the Christ unleashed the everlasting benefits of all *other* aspects of Christ's redemptive work into both Church and cosmos. To say it again:

Without the ascension of Jesus  
everything else he did for our salvation  
would be rendered null and void!

Perhaps that's why in Acts 2, as Peter preaches the first recorded sermon of the Christian movement, he drives his message steadily toward the Ascension, making it the core of his climactic appeal (to which 3000 responded in saving faith!). He did this by quoting, in his conclusion, from—yes, you guessed it—Psalm 110:

Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said, "The Lord said to my Lord: Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet." Therefore, let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah [Christ].

Since that hour, the saints in heaven and on earth continue to rejoice in the declaration of Psalm 110 about God's Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ—a manifesto never to be revised or rescinded or replaced.

## **How might we celebrate Christ's rightful place in everything?**

We can do this simply by expanding on the insights of Psalm 110 and reflecting on their implications as spelled out by a multitude of New Testament teachings.

Picture yourself there with the disciples (possibly one hundred twenty of them) gathered around the risen Christ on Olive Mountain. You are there on that matchless day when, as Luke 24 reports: “He lifted up his hands and blessed them. While he was blessing them, he left them. He was taken up into heaven. Then they worshiped him.”

Imagine yourself in that company, looking up as he departs. Then, with one voice you join the disciples in the following declaration as your matchless Savior ascends to be crowned King of Glory forever. (Try reciting this out loud to get the full impact of what is being said.)

**Go up on high, dearly loved Son.  
Sit beside your Father on the throne of heaven.**

You are the one person in the entire creation with whom he is  
unconditionally pleased.

He is wholly satisfied with all you have accomplished.

What you have achieved to fulfill his eternal plan—  
by your incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection—  
is thoroughly complete and fully sufficient  
for the salvation of all who belong to you.

The perfection of your mission of redemption  
ensures the Consummation for all creation.

**Go up on high, dearly loved Son.  
Sit beside your Father on the throne of heaven.**

Put on the royal diadem.

Now you are anointed and crowned  
as Prince of Peace and Ruler of all.

To you alone belongs the place of preeminence,  
preserved for you from the foundation of the world.

You are supreme in all things!

You are the end and goal of all things.

One day soon, every knee will bow to you  
and every tongue will confess that you are Lord and Christ.  
This will serve to focus all eyes on the Father's glory!

**Go up on high, dearly loved Son.  
Sit beside your Father on the throne of heaven.**

Reign throughout all creation and in every nation.



Reign on behalf of all whom you have redeemed.

Reign until you defeat every enemy,  
the last enemy being death itself.

Pour out the Spirit of power and revelation  
as the primary extension of your ascension.

Bring your saving victories into every place  
and among every tongue and peoples.

Out of the domains of darkness  
transfer a host of sinners into your kingdom,  
called and assembled by your gospel  
from every corner of the globe.

Reconcile them by your cleansing blood  
and fill them with your risen, ascended life.

Fold them into your awesome abounding dominion  
to thrive in union with you forever.

Or you might choose to celebrate by a more personal response—by embracing Jesus afresh as 1 Peter 3:15 calls us to do (in the Amplified Bible):

**“But in your hearts set Christ apart  
[as holy—acknowledging Him,  
giving Him first place in your lives]  
as Lord of all.”**