

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Remember that in the two states, *the Person of the Son of God is the subject*

1. It is not that the divine nature is humbled or exalted but that *the Person* is humbled and exalted acc. to His human nature.
 - a. Remember the states are legal positions: the Person of the Son was accounted guilty b/c of our sins imputed to Him; and the Person of the Son is acquitted & declared righteous b/c He satisfied justice.
 - b. The Person of the Son of God suffered in the flesh acc. to the human nature; and the Person of the Son of God has been exalted acc. to the human nature. The divine nature cannot be humiliated or exalted.
 - c. Therefore the Person of the Son of God experienced shame and misery, acc. to the human nature, and now experiences glory and bliss. Christ has been glorified in answer to His prayer (John 17:5).
2. **The humiliation and then exaltation of the Person of the Son of God consisted in distinct steps:**
 - a. **These are** lowly birth, lifelong suffering, death, burial & descension into hell; then resurrection, ascension, session & return.
 - b. And remember that in undergoing both humiliation and now exaltation **He did so as our Head.**

B. We looked last week at His Resurrection

1. **In His resurrection He not only came back to life** after three days in the grave, but He entered into a higher, more glorious life of immortality, a life fitted for heavenly glory (different from Lazarus, etc). The body is essentially the same, but glorified, a spiritual body (I Cor. 15).
2. **The proofs for His bodily resurrection are** a/ the empty tomb, b/ the position of the grave clothes, c/ the eyewitness accounts, d/ the behavior of the disciples.
3. **The significance of the Resurrection:** a/ glory for Jesus, b/ proof that Jesus had performed to God's satisfaction the work of salvation, c/ proof that Jesus has conquered death and acquired righteousness for us, d/ the source of our new life, e/ the promise [pledge] of our future (bodily) resurrection

II. THE ASCENSION INTO HEAVEN

A. Forty days after His Resurrection Jesus Christ “ascended into heaven” (Luke 24:51; Acts 1:9)

1. **The Ascension is a change of place for the Son of God acc. to His human nature.**
 - a. Between the Resurrection & Ascension, Jesus was physically present on earth in the body, teaching His disciples, making various appearances to them, and preparing them for His Ascension.
 - b. But at the end of the 40 days, Jesus took them to a specific location and He went up to heaven; His disciples saw Him going up; He was taken from them; a cloud covered Him and He was seen no more.
 - c. Jesus Christ will remain in heaven until the Last Day; then He will return again in the body in the same manner in which He ascended (Acts 1:11, 3:21).
2. **The Lutherans do not see Ascension as a *change of place*, but as a *change in quality* so that the human nature of Christ took some (if not all) of the qualities of deity (esp. omnipotence & omnipresence)**
 - a. Thus, say the Lutherans, the human nature of Jesus Christ is now omnipresent, ubiquitous or immense.
 - b. Therefore, say the Lutherans, Christ, acc. to His human nature can be (and is) still with us.
 - c. The Lutherans insist on the ubiquity of the human nature because of their view of the Lord's Supper.
3. **The significance of the Ascension is that our flesh is in heaven.**
 - a. *The divine nature did not ascend* because the divine nature is everywhere present, and even when Christ was on earth the divine nature of Christ filled heaven and earth, but the human nature (the flesh) of Christ *did ascend* from one place, earth, to another place, heaven.
 - b. Christ's human nature must be limited to one place because it is a real human nature, even after its exaltation. If it is not a real human nature, it is not *our* nature, and if it is not our nature, Christ is not related to us and He cannot save us. *And besides we must become like Him*, Phil. 3:21.
 - c. The objection of the Lutherans: if Christ's human nature is not present where His Godhead is, then the natures are separated or divided. This is not true, because the divine nature and the human nature are distinct (see Belgic Confession 19).
 - d. The wonder is that Christ never lays aside our flesh. He laid aside the weakness of our flesh and His lowly position, and He exalted our flesh, *but it remains our flesh*. He, our Head, is united to our flesh, forever!

B. Christ's Ascension is necessary for our salvation

1. Jesus Christ said repeatedly that *it is expedient for us that He go away*. Sometimes we might wonder at that and want Him to be with us physically but it is better for us that He has ascended (John 16:7)
 - a. Christ, as physically on earth, could only be in one place at once; if Christ were only present physically we would have to be in one location. The church could not spread (Matt. 18:20, 28:20).
 - b. But if Christ is present spiritually, by His grace and HS, He can be with us wherever we meet, and He can be with His people in every circumstance of life (bereavement, sickness, persecution, etc).
 - c. Thus, Christ keeps His promise: He comes to us, He remains with us, but in a deep, spiritual way.
2. His exalted position means that as Ascended Lord, He pours out upon us all the blessings of salvation.
 - a. Ten days after His Ascension, He poured out the Spirit on Pentecost (Acts 2:33).
 - b. From His position as Ascended Lord, He makes us partakers of His life, and He gives gifts to His Church (Psalm 68:18-19; Eph. 4:7-12).
 - c. And from His position as Ascended Lord, He intercedes for us as our Advocate (I John 2:1-2).

III. THE SESSION AT GOD'S RIGHT HAND AND RETURN TO JUDGE

A. It is one thing to ascend into heaven, but the session at God's Rt. Hand tells us Christ's position in heaven.

1. **The Rt. Hand of God is the highest possible position of power and glory.**
 - a. The angels and the archangels and the saints have a position in heaven, but Christ's position is the highest: Ps. 110:1; Acts 7:56; Eph. 1:20-23; Phil. 2:9-11; I Peter 3:22.
 - b. The Right Hand of God is not a physical location because God does not have a Right Hand in that sense, but it is a figurative expression. The Lutherans say [rightly] that God's Rt. Hand is everywhere present, but conclude [wrongly] that Christ's humanity is everywhere present.
 - c. Who or what is at the Right Hand? Not the divine nature. That's everywhere present. Not the human nature. But the Person of the Son of God: He is exalted to the highest position in the human nature.
2. **The session at the Rt. Hand of God is significant for Christ and for us.**
 - a. It is great glory for Christ: it is His public coronation as King of Heaven; it is the receiving of the power and glory promised to Him.
 - b. It is significant that Jesus Christ sits at the Rt. Hand of God: this indicates that His work of redemption is finished. That was finished when He said "It is finished" (John 19:30). We know that He has completely accomplished our salvation because we see Him by faith sitting at God's Rt. Hand.
 - c. The significance for us is mainly this: the one who is at the Rt. Hand of God ruling all things is our Savior, and therefore He rules wisely, and for our good.
 - d. Christ rules, says Psalm 110:3 with a view to subduing all His enemies under His feet: the devil, the demons, hell, death and all the wicked must serve Him and He will destroy them. In the meantime, He is exercising power to gather, protect, defend and preserve the Church from her enemies.

B. One last step in Christ's exaltation is future: His Second Coming to Judge [explained more in Eschatology]

1. **To be judge is a very glorious position. In the courtroom, the Judge is the figure of authority.**
 - a. Christ comes to judge in great power and glory: Matt. 25:31. The glory is seen in His judgment of all men and nations and even angels. No one shall escape His judgment. He will pronounce judgment upon all.
 - b. This will be a turning of the tables: Pilate, Herod, Caiaphas who judged Him will be judged. Even Satan!
 - c. His judgment will be the Final Judgment – there will be no miscarriages of justice, no corruption of the judge and no appeals to a different jurisdiction.
2. **The judgment will include believers. We will all be judged but believers must not fear the judgment (Matt. 25:34, 46; Romans 14:10; II Cor. 5:10).**
 - a. The verdict against us has already been made: we were found guilty in Christ, and Christ has acquitted us.
 - b. We must not fear the judgment, therefore. Christ will display to all the world that we are sinners, sinners utterly undeserving of salvation, but sinners washed in the blood of Christ.
 - c. Therefore we believe the Reformed Creeds, LD 19, Q&A 52; Belgic Confession, Art. 37.