

Pastor Jeremy M. Thomas
Fredericksburg Bible Church
107 East Austin
Fredericksburg, Texas 78624
830-997-8834 jthomas@fbgbible.org

B0521 – May 29, 2005 – Major Bible Themes

Chapter 11 – God the Son: His Ascension

Presented by Dick Roesch

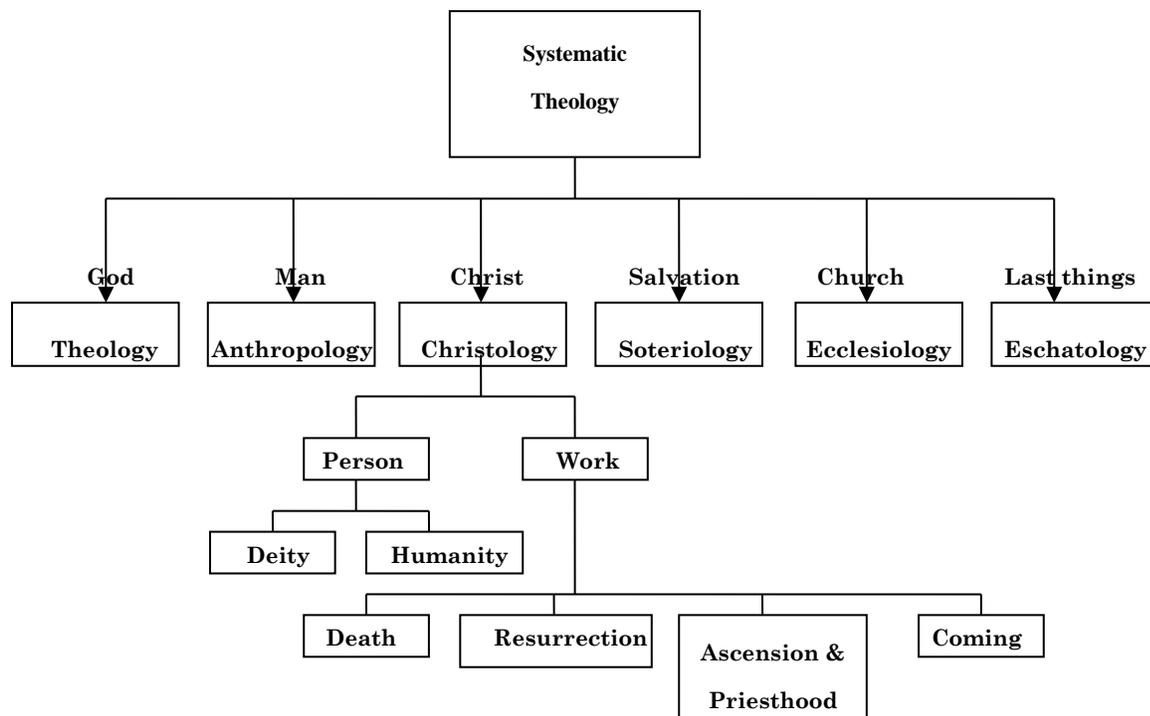
Before we get into the subject of the Ascension, let's pause for a bit to review the past few weeks of our study in Christology.

In this book: *Major Bible Themes*, Dr. Chafer is laying out some of the Bible doctrines of Christian Systematic Theology.

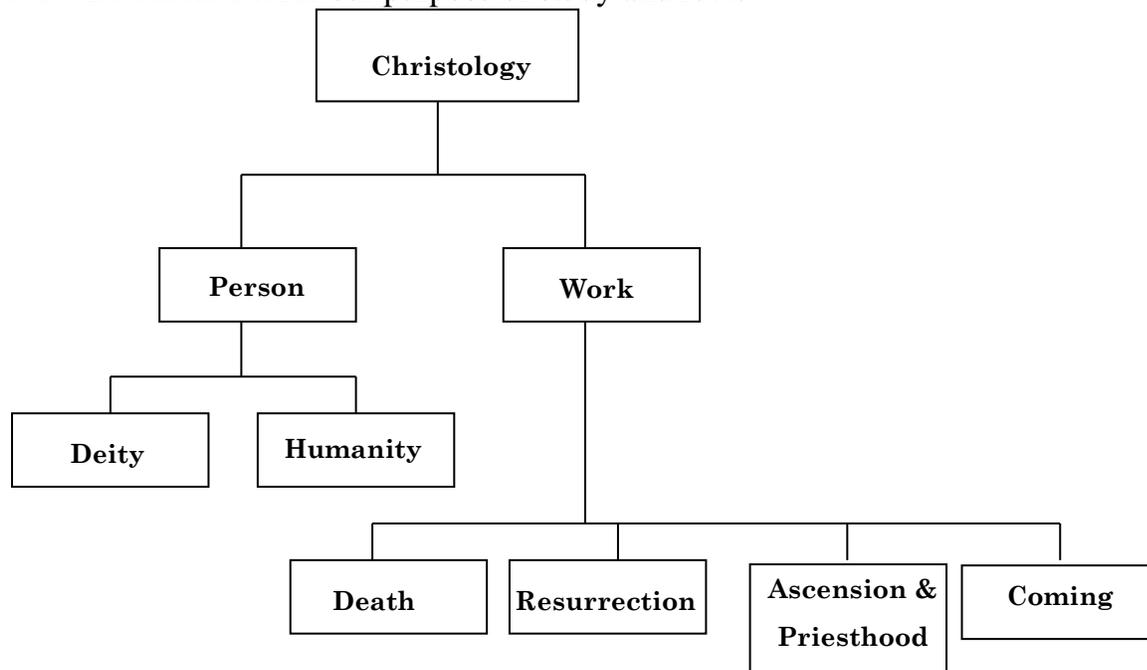
Dr Ryrie defines theology as “thinking about God and expressing those thoughts in some way.”

So, by reading this book, looking up and studying the various Biblical references and pondering the truths and implications set forth, and talking about it to someone – I think it only fair to tell you - you are theologians! In fact, we can narrow it a little further and call you Systematic Biblical Theologians. You probably hadn't thought of that, but it seemed worthwhile to mention it, if for no other reason than to get your attention.

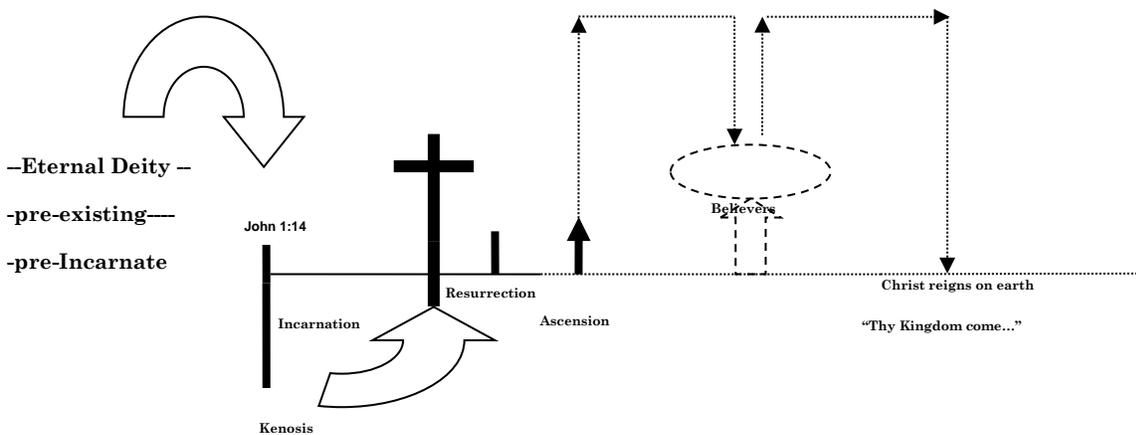
First, let's look at the bigger picture of where Christology fits in a systematic structure:



Now let's isolate it for our purpose of study and review:



Let's review some of what we've learned in the past few weeks in the study of Christology:



Some things we have studied so far of Christ's Person and Work

- That He existed before the Incarnation (pre-existence)
- That Christ is existed eternally
- That Christ is God (the great "I AM WHO I AM")
- That Christ (God) became a man at the Incarnation.
John 1:14 And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.
- That He is fully God, fully man (but without sin) – The God/Man
 He had to be fully man to suffer death.
 He had to be fully God to give His death infinite value.
- That He was perfectly obedient to His Father.
 John 4:34 Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to accomplish His work."

We also learned:

- **Hypostatic Union** (2 natures in 1 Person – God/Man)
- **Substitutionary death** (instead of, in place of) - vicariously
Isaiah 53:5 “But **He** was pierced through for **our** transgressions, **He** was crushed for **our** iniquities; The chastening for **our** well-being fell upon **Him**, And by **His** scourging we are healed.”

- **Atonement (the work of Christ on the cross)**

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Redemption (Christ’s death paid the penalty – sinners are purchased)

1 Cor 6:19-20 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been **bought** with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.

Propitiation (Satisfaction has been made to an all holy God)

1 John 4:10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Reconciliation (God’s relationship to man changes)

2 Cor 5:17-19 Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

- **Forgiveness** (a legal act of God)
whereby He removes the charges that were held against the sinner because atonement for those sins has been made - Christ in our place.
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- **Justification** (declared righteous – a legal act of God)
Believers are declared righteous (having right standing before God)
because the Righteousness of Christ has been imputed to them
Therefore God can enter into fellowship with them.

I’m reminded of what I heard on one of the tapes on Christology that Pastor Jeremy let me borrow, where it was recounted how Dr Chafer was still teaching in his older years (he died in he early eighty’s). The story goes that Dr Chafer couldn’t walk in his later years; and so he would be driven to the school where the young men would meet him, place him in a chair and carry him to the classroom. The students recall Dr Chafer sitting before them, with tears coming down his face saying, “Men, I have never gotten over the wonder of what it means to be declared righteous.”

Each believer in the atoning work of Jesus Christ can ponder the same wonderment and say:

“The Righteousness of Jesus Christ (the God/Man) has been placed to my spiritual account.”

Let’s remember something very important: God is always the Initiator and God is the provider.

In **John 6:44** Jesus said "No one can come to Me, unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day.”

Let me stop here for a moment.

What we have been studying is deep, profound, and soul moving.

Many books have been written on these subjects.

But if you are here this morning and have not accepted this “good news” of the atoning work of Jesus Christ (the God/Man) on the cross, let me suggest that the Father may be using this very occasion as a “drawing”.

In a sentence, **the gospel is the good news of what God has done for all men in Jesus Christ.**

He has made the provision for salvation through Christ’s work on the cross to everyone, but each person must accept or reject what God has provided. The acceptance is done by simple belief that Christ died for your sins. So I pray that you recognize the drawing of the Father and trust Christ alone as your savior. It won’t be your good deeds that mean anything at your death.

God has already done the perfect work in Christ. Put your faith in that!

Now, let’s continue.

Last week we looked at:

His Resurrection (the cornerstone of our Christian faith)

1 Cor 15:13 “But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain.”

The resurrection was proof that God was pleased with Christ’s sacrificial death.

Jesus was on earth for 40 days (almost a month and a half) showing that He was indeed resurrected - alive again, recognizable, the same person – He eat with his disciples, they could touch Him. Jesus left no doubt in the minds of His disciples that He had risen from the dead.

He is the first fruit – for we who believe in Him – will be like Him with an incorruptible body.

1 Cor 15:20-24a But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming..”

Now, let's look at His Ascension.

The Ascension

Predictions of the Ascension

After the “I am the bread of life” discourse to the Jews in the synagogue many of His disciples were discussing leaving His instruction.

Let's look at **John 6:61-62** “But Jesus, conscious that His disciples grumbled at this, said to them, ‘Does this cause you to stumble? What then if you should behold the Son of Man ascending where He was before?’

John 20:17 Here Jesus is talking to Mary Magdalene.

Jesus said to her, "Stop clinging to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to My brethren, and say to them, 'I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.'"

Other passages that refer to Jesus' leaving:

John 7:33 Jesus therefore said, "For a little while longer I am with you, then I go to Him who sent Me."

John 13:1 Now before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that His hour had come that He should depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.

John 15:26 "When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness of Me..."

John 16:10 “and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you no longer behold Me;”

John 16:28 "I came forth from the Father, and have come into the world; I am leaving the world again, and going to the Father."

So, clearly Jesus was telling his disciples that He was leaving and going to be with His Father, even though they could not comprehend fully it at the time.

The Fact of the Ascension

Mark 16:19 So then, when the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God.

This was in fulfillment of **Psalm 110:1** The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at My right hand, Until I make Thine enemies a footstool for Thy feet."

Luke 24:50-51 And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. And it came about that while He was blessing them, He parted from them.

Acts 1:9-11 And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was departing, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them; and they also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven."

I understand that in the Greek there is presented the picture of "hoisting a sail". So apparently it was a slow lift off, not a rocket shot and it wasn't an imagined "vision".

Christ is exalted.

What a celebration that must have been!

Phil 2:9-11 Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE SHOULD BOW, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Heb 2:9 says He was "crowned with glory and honor."

Angels, authorities, and powers are all subject to Him.

Evidence for the Arrival of Christ in Heaven

32 references listed by Chafer

We'll just look at three of them.

Stephen, the deacon, recorded in **Acts 7:55-56** But being full of the Holy Spirit, he gazed intently into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, and he said "Behold, I see the heavens opened up and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."

Saul, soon to be Paul – on his way to Damascus recorded in **Acts 9:3-6** And it came about that as he journeyed, he was approaching Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him; and he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" And he said, "Who art Thou, Lord?" And He said, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting, but rise, and enter the city, and it shall be told you what you must do."

John, on the Island of Patmos; recorded in **Rev 1:12-18** And I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands; and in the middle of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His breast with a golden girdle. And His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire; and His feet were like burnished bronze, when it has been caused to glow in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of many waters. And in His right hand He held seven stars; and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword; and His face was like the sun shining in its strength. And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as a dead man. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying, "Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.

The meaning of the Ascension

It marked the end of His earthly ministry

His mission was accomplished here. He had satisfied the will of the Father

It marked the return to the Father
to the One that sent Him on that mission.

It marked the return to His manifested glory

John 17:5 "And now, glorify Thou Me together with Thyself, Father, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was."

It marked the first entrance of resurrected humanity into heaven.

He is entering a new sphere of work

It enabled Him to send the Holy Spirit

John 16:7 "But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper shall not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you."

The Present Work of Christ

He is preparing a place for us

John 14:2 "In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you."

- He is building up and directing the Church of which He is the Head
 - He is nurturing, protecting and cleansing the Church – His bride
- Eph 5:25-27** Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her; that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the

church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless.

- He is interceding for us as our High Priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek, that is, as eternal King and Priest.

Heb 7:1-3 For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham as he was returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him to whom also Abraham apportioned a tenth part of all the spoils, was first of all, by the translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then also king of Salem, which is king of peace. Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, he abides a priest perpetually.

Heb 4:14-16 Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.

For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.

Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need.

That ends our study for today.

In the coming weeks, we will see what scripture tells us about our future life.

The next big event is Christ coming for his Church. You won't want to miss it!

[Back To The Top](#)

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