

Up and Away?!

Introduction

The Text

¹In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach,² until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen.³ He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.

⁴And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, “you heard from me;⁵ for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

⁶So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?”⁷ He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority.⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”⁹ And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight.¹⁰ And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes,¹¹ and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.” (Acts 1:1–11)

Why the Ascension on Resurrection Day?

- A. If you’ve been with us, you know that we’ve recently begun our journey through the book of Acts, and we’ve spent a number of weeks on these first eleven verses.
 - 1. As I thought about Easter and the resurrection of Jesus, I realize I could go to some other text and offer up a “special” message of some sort.
 - a. But I actually wanted to just stay right here. I want to consider these verses one last time, now particularly with a focus, not so much on the resurrection of Jesus as much as on the ascension.
- B. Now, of course, I recognize on Easter we specifically celebrate Jesus’ resurrection, coming as it does, three days after Good Friday. And the ascension, as we just read, is really something that takes place some “forty days” (v. 3) later.
 - 1. That being the case, even still, I hope you’ll indulge me. I want to consider the ascension with you this morning, really for two reasons in particular . . .

Reason #1: It’s Often Overlooked

- A. First, it’s often overlooked.

1. We talk about the incarnation, we make a big deal of the crucifixion, as we should. We celebrate the resurrection. We look for his second coming.
 2. But how many sermons have you heard on the ascension?
- B. It just seems a little odd to us, right?
1. It seems like maybe the biblical authors didn't know how to wrap up Jesus' earthly ministry so—in a manner similar to those old movies, where they end with the main character riding off into sunset—here we just have a slight twist on that, where Jesus riding off, not on a horse, but on a cloud.
- C. In some sense it seems a bit anticlimactic, a bit bizarre. I don't think we know really what to do with it. We don't get the significance of it. So we neglect it.
1. NT scholar Patrick Schreiner refers to the doctrine of Christ's ascension as the “**forgotten doctrine.**” He says it's one of the most neglected doctrines in Christian theology.
 2. Justin Dillehay refers to it as “**the most important doctrine you never think about.**”
 3. Another scholar refers to it as a “**theological footnote.**” Who really reads the footnotes, right? (Who really reads at all anymore?!) It's nice. It's there. You can skim it if you're particularly interested. But it's not all that important in the scheme of things.
 4. Kevin DeYoung asks: “**Is there any part of Christ's life on earth that we think about less than his ascension?**” It's a rhetorical question. He knows the answer: no.
- D. So the first reason I want to focus on it this morning is because we never do.

Reason #2: It's Utterly Essential

- A. But the second reason is this: the ascension, in my understanding, is actually as essential to our faith as it is neglected. It's as integral to the gospel as it is overlooked, whether we realize it or not.
- B. I mean, so far as I see it, this is really where the resurrection is headed.
1. The ascension just follows along that same redemptive trajectory initiated by the resurrection. It completes the idea. It finishes the thought.
 - a. The two can be distinguished but they cannot be separated.
 - i. In the resurrection, Jesus moves from death to life.
 - ii. In the ascension, Jesus takes that incorruptible life and moves it from earth to heaven.
 - (1) He takes what was earthly and localized and makes it cosmic.
- C. I'm not a NASCAR guy. If I'm honest, I find it profoundly boring—guys driving in circles for hours on end. I get the strange sense that everyone is just sitting around waiting for a crash, waiting for some action. Perhaps I don't understand the nuance to it all.

1. But here's the image I'm working with. The resurrection without the ascension would be like a racecar speeding round the track—miles ahead of the others, forerunner by a longshot—but, just as it's coming in from that last lap, it runs out of gas, the wheels pop off, the engine starts smoking, or whatever.
 - a. We had it, victory was ours, but we didn't quite cross the finish line. We didn't close the loop, literally in this case.

D. Now, to be honest, even this analogy fails to do justice to the ascension.

1. Because it's not just as if Jesus is finishing things with it. In a sense, he is.
2. But in another sense, as we'll soon see, he's just getting started.
 - a. The ascension, then, on the one hand, marks the Father's final authorization and endorsement of the Son and his redemptive work on the cross.
 - b. But, on the other hand, it also initiates a great escalation in Jesus' ministry. He advances from an earthly ministry to a heavenly one.
 - i. He doesn't get to the finish line and downshift, as it were.
 - ii. He crosses the line and revs up. "What's he doing? I thought the race was over?!" Ah, truly it's just begun! And off he goes, ready to push the gears of redemption to new levels.

E. So all I want to do with you this morning is consider this ascension of Jesus. What does it mean for us and our salvation and our relationship with God?

1. I could bring out so much more than I have time for here this morning. I've chosen five aspects to highlight: Aspect #1: Victory; Aspect #2: Sovereignty; Aspect #3: Advocacy; Aspect #4: Intimacy; and Aspect #5: Urgency. Let's take these one at a time!

Aspect #1: Victory

He Sat Down

- A. With this first aspect, I am here highlighting the fact that Jesus, upon his resurrection and ascension, is in fact done with something.
 1. As I've said, he's certainly not done with everything.
 2. But he is done with something. He's completed a task of great significance. And his ascension speaks to this and his ultimate triumph in it all.
- B. This is particularly brought out for us in the way the author of Hebrews talks about the ascension as Jesus ascending and sitting down beside his Father in heaven.
 1. So in [Heb. 1:3](#) we read: "After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high . . ."

2. And later, in [Heb. 10:12](#), he writes: “[W]hen Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God.”
- C. Now to speak of Jesus as sitting down here, means, in one sense, of course, the work is done. He’s entered his rest as it were.
1. And we’re invited to connect this with a similar rest God enters into after creation.
 - a. So in [Gen. 2:1-2](#) we read: “¹Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. ²And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done.”
 2. Just as God “sat down” and rested, as it were, after finishing the work of creation, so too now Jesus sits down and rests after finishing the work of redemption by way of his life, death, and resurrection.
 - a. He goes up . . . to sit down. The offering for sins has been made. The means of forgiveness has been established. The way back to God has been opened. “It is finished” ([John 19:30](#)).

Strive, Not to Earn Your Rest, But to Enter His!

- A. Oh that we might get this deep in our bones! So many people, in and out of Christ, are busy trying to work out their own righteousness, to prove why they’re good enough—whether before God or others.
1. There’s no rest. There’s no sitting down. And you’re exhausted.
- B. We’ll talk more about this in a minute, but, for now, just hear me: The work is done. What really needs to be done for you to be right, to be okay, to have a future and a hope—it has already been finished for you by Jesus.
1. You may be frantically moving about, but he’s sitting down.
 - a. Your work, if you want to call it that, is first to receive his work on your behalf by faith and, thereby, as the author of Hebrews says, to “enter [into] that rest” which he now is enjoying ([Heb. 4:11](#)).
 - i. Quit striving to earn your own rest, and strive, rather, to enter his. He’s already earned it for you.
- C. That’s the first thing to make clear. The ascension speaks to his redemptive accomplishment, his ultimate victory. He goes up . . . to sit down. It’s done!

Aspect #2: Sovereignty

At the Right Hand of God

A. The next thing that we must say about the ascension is that he goes up to sit down—not on a couch or lounge chair or something like this—but on a throne.

1. That’s what is meant by his sitting down “[at the right hand of God.](#)” It’s a place of power and prestige and authority—of royalty.
 - a. So in some places we’re told he’s sitting at the right hand of his Father’s throne.
 - b. In other places we’re told he’s sharing the throne. [Rev. 3:21: “I . . . conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne”](#) (cf. [Rev. 22:1](#)).
 - i. Whatever the case, we get the idea: The ascension is enthronement; it’s coronation; it’s Jesus sitting down, not just to rest, but to rule and reign over all.

B. You know, Jesus’ favorite title for himself, it would seem, was actually “Son of Man.” He refers to himself as such over eighty times across the four gospels.

1. And what he meant by it remains a bit ambiguous until the very end of his earthly ministry when he, at last, forges a clear connection between himself and the apocalyptic figure in [Dan. 7](#) (cf. [Matt. 26:64](#)).
 - a. But look at this. It would seem to me and many commentators that Daniel is likely talking about the ascension: “¹³ [I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. ¹⁴ And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed”](#) (vv. 13–14).

C. Peter, in his Pentecost sermon, also talks about the ascension of Jesus as his exaltation and enthronement.

1. So he says in [Acts 2:34-36](#): “³⁴ [David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says, ‘The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at my right hand, ³⁵ until I make your enemies your footstool.”’ ³⁶ Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.](#)”
 - a. How was Jesus made both “[Lord and Christ](#)” by God? Well, ultimately it was by way of the resurrection and, especially, the ascension.

He Holds the Scepter with Nail-Scarred Hands

A. That last line is amazing though isn’t it?—“[this Jesus whom crucified.](#)” Think about it: the one who is king over all holds the scepter with nail-scarred hands. And that means something, doesn’t it?

1. Listen, the modern secular culture we live in, we don't want to live under God's reign. We think he's just out to get us, to stop our fun. He's got all these rules. We'd rather be king of our own lives.
 - a. It sounds freeing at first, but, in reality, it's crushing. If there's no king on the throne, then it's up to us—we have to come up with the plan, we have to make the decisions, we have to get justice for ourselves, we have to work things for good, we have to write our own story.
 - i. And, quite frankly, we don't have the credentials for that kind of thing.
 - b. It's like my boy, he thinks he wants to run the house, it sounds freeing. But if I actually stepped away and put everything in his hands, it would crush him.
 - i. And some of us, we're feeling that because of how we've pushed God and King Jesus out of our lives.

- B. But, again, we do that because we think he's not going to rule and reign with our interests in mind. But **"God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified."** The one who is king over all holds the scepter with nail-scarred hands.
 1. Before he put on the crown of gold, he wore the crown of thorns.
 2. Before he took his place on the throne, he was nailed in place on the cross.
 3. The Lion of the tribe of Judah is also the Lamb of God who gave up his own life to take away the sins of the world.
 4. And he went through all of this for you . . . for me.
 - a. What does this mean? It means, we can have no doubt: the one who is ruling and reigning over all, will rule and reign for yours and my good . . . if we will have him.

- C. As Paul says famously in **Rom. 8:28: "[W]e know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose."**
 1. Listen, I know there are times that it just doesn't feel like God is up to good in your life at all. I know there are times you want to play armchair quarterback, you want to ascend the throne yourself and take over command.
 2. But I also know that, in Christ, God is working all things for your good. And, if you hang on, in time, you will see it.

Aspect #3: Advocacy

The Throne Room Is a Courtroom

- A. But you know, Jesus right now is doing more than resting, he's doing more than ruling and reigning, he's advocating . . . for us, on our behalf, to the Father.

- B. Here is where it's important that we remember: In the ancient world there wasn't this balance of power like we know here today, especially in America. You didn't have these various branches of government.
1. If you were the king you were also the judge. And so the throne room in that sense is also the courtroom. And the king would decide who's right and who's wrong.
 - a. You remember, for example, people bringing their matters to Solomon for decision and things (e.g. [1 Kings 3:16-28](#)). To come and stand before the king was to make an appeal to the highest court in the land.
 - i. And this is the sort of imagery that's invoked when we talk about Jesus as our advocate.
- C. We get the idea particularly from [1 John 2:1-2](#): “¹ My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.² He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.”
1. The idea here is that Jesus, while king and judge and sitting with his Father, he is at the same time something like a defense attorney before the Father for us.
 - a. The devil stands as the “accuser” of God's people, as he's called in [Rev. 12:10](#), and he “accuses them day and night before our God” (cf. [Job 1](#); [Zech 3](#)).
 - b. But Jesus, the righteous, stands in our defense.
- D. Kevin DeYoung, reflecting on this idea, writes: “Our Lord Jesus is in heaven pleading our case, so that whenever Satan accuses us in our conscience or dares to lay a charge against us before the Father, Jesus, Christ, God's own Son and our flawless advocate, stands ready to defend us and plead His own blood for our sakes. Think about that. Christ is our prayer partner in heaven. He intercedes for us before the throne.”
1. With that last line DeYoung footnotes [Rom. 8:34](#). Let me read it to you in context. And as I do, note the connection here to Jesus' ascension. Paul writes: “³¹ What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?³² He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?³³ Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.³⁴ Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us” (vv. 31–34).
 - a. He takes what he accomplished on earth at the cross and pleads our case with it in heaven before the Father.
 2. It is because of this, in view of our heavenly advocate, our eternal intercessor, Paul goes on to crescendo towards that magnificent conclusion: Therefore . . . “³⁸ I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers,³⁹

nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord” (vv. 38–39).

- E. The author of Hebrews sums all of this up for us in a verse, [Heb. 7:25](#): “[H]e is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.”
 - 1. Let the devil do his damndest, his case will invariably unravel before the defense of my advocate!

When the Devil Comes in the Night

- A. Have you ever had the devil come, maybe in the middle of the night, but you’re up, feeling down about something, and he just whispers into your mind: “You’re pathetic. Look at you. No one’s going to love you. You’re not good enough. You’re a mess. You’re filthy. You’re broken. You’re embarrassing. You’re going nowhere. You’re not beautiful. You’re not successful. You’re not a good person. You know it.”
- B. And, you know, we’re tempted to go off at this point to either one of two extremes.
 - 1. Either we receive that condemnation and we wallow it, we self-destruct, we spiral into darkness.
 - 2. Or we reject it and push back, but with that silly self-talk that the world is pushing these days. We get all these empty affirmations, these mantras—tell yourself now: “I am good, I am beautiful, I am successful.”
- C. I wonder if you’ve ever seen that old movie [Cool Runnings](#)? It’s loosely based on the beginnings of the Jamaican bobsled team as part of the winter Olympics. And there’s this little guy on the team who’s struggling with confidence, so one of the other teammates takes him aside, has him look in the mirror and repeat over and over again: “I see pride, I see power, I see a bad junior who won’t take no lip off of nobody!” And he repeats it a bit timidly at first. But by the end he’s yelling it, he’s believing, he’s manifesting his own destiny, speaking his own reality.
 - 1. And that’s the sort of thing we’re told to do when we’re feeling down. Don’t receive that word. Reject it.
 - a. I don’t need the approval or affirmation of anyone out there, I have my own approval. I’m just true to myself. I love myself. I’m authentically me and that’s good.
- D. And maybe that helps us in the moment, but we don’t escape the feeling that there’s something hollow about it. You see, we were created with this sense that we need the approval of someone outside of us to know we’re okay.
 - 1. We’re not self-sufficient, independent, autonomous creatures.
 - 2. We’re dependent from day one.

- a. The little baby in the crib, that was all of us. Helpless, needing love from outside or we don't make it a day.
 - b. And you know this is the reality that pictured for us even in the creation narrative of [Gen. 1](#). On the sixth day, God creates man and woman, and then he presents them to himself, as it were. They stand naked before his eyes, exposed—he can see right through them. And he blesses them and says, in essence: “This is very good. You are very good” (cf. [vv. 26-31](#)).

- E. And since then, as human beings, we need that verdict to come from outside us. And we're looking for it. We lost it from God because our sin, but we try to make up for it by getting it somewhere else, anywhere else.
 - 1. We try to find it in the workplace, in the university, in relationship with parents or significant others, or children even.
 - a. We want the verdict over our life to be good. So we try make the case. We get defensive and touchy. And we're always trying to trumpet our good deeds and hide our bad ones.
 - i. But it's never enough. It's never lasting. And deep down we know we're not who we ought to be.
 - (1) The devil's right. He's got a case. So what do we do with that?

- F. Ah, well here now we come to the option laid before us in the Scriptures with the gospel.
 - 1. You see we avoid these two extremes, ironically by bringing both of them together in Christ. We receive the condemnation and reject it at the same time.
 - a. “Yes, you're right. I am unworthy, I am broken, I am sinner—worse than I know.” Own it.
 - b. But don't you dare stop there. Jesus let himself be hung up on that cross so that you would not stop there.
 - i. Own it, but then turn and look the devil square in the eyes, and don't utter your empty mantras, let scream the truths of the gospel: “You are right, I am a sinner. But you are wrong. I'm not condemned. Jesus Christ the righteous, was counted as a sinner for me, so that nick the sinner could be counted as righteous in him. As [1 John 2](#) says: “[He is the propitiation](#) [—the wrath-appeasing sacrifice] [for \[my\] our sins . . .](#)” (v. 2). In Jesus I'm washed, forgiven, justified, loved, made pure, beautiful, successful.”
 - (1) Why do you think Paul says in [Eph 5:25-26](#): “[25 Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, 26 that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word . . .](#)” He speaks a better word over us. It's a verdict of grace!

He Gave No Answer

- A. I was struck this past week, as I read again the account of Jesus' last days.
1. When he's bound up and set in the courtroom, as it were, before the earthly authorities, do you remember what he says in response to all of their accusations? Nothing.
 - a. [Matt. 27:12-14](#): “¹² But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he gave no answer. ¹³ Then Pilate said to him, ‘Do you not hear how many things they testify against you?’ ¹⁴ But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed.” Pilate is baffled. What's he doing?
- B. What is Jesus doing on Good Friday? I'll tell you what he's doing. He's taking our judgement, our verdict.
1. He goes silently like a lamb led to the slaughter, not opening his mouth, not because he couldn't defend himself. Of course, he could (he tells Peter as much).
 2. But he doesn't advocate for himself because he wants to advocate for us. And the only way he can make a case for our forgiveness in the courtroom of heaven is if he takes our condemnation on the cross there at Calvary.
 - a. He interposes his own blood between our sin and the Father's wrath. “Father, I know you see the sin in these brothers and sisters. But their sin has already been paid for. It would be unjust to demand payment again. They're forgiven. They're free!”
- C. Jesus refused to speak up in his own defense, so he could always and forever speak up in ours!

Aspect #4: Intimacy

Going Away to Come in Closer

- A. There's more to the ascension than this idea that Jesus is up there somewhere, far from us—ruling, reigning, interceding for us . . . but far from us.
1. He's more than just a distant king or defense attorney.
 2. He's a friend and a helper and a comforter and an intimate companion. And he's right here, right now.
- B. You see the Scriptures actually say, somewhat paradoxically, that Jesus actually goes away so that he can come in closer than he ever had been before . . . by way of the Holy Spirit.
1. So in [John 14](#) he tells his disciples: “¹⁸ I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. ¹⁹ Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. ²⁰ In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. . . ²³ If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him” (vv. 18–20, 23).

- a. He's talking about how, when he ascends to the Father, no longer will he merely be standing beside his brothers. No!
- b. Instead he will pour out his Holy Spirit and take up residence in their hearts. He's going even deeper. He's drawing even closer.

Don't Cling to Me

- A. This is the sort of thing he's trying to get across to Mary Magdalene after his resurrection in [John 20](#). Do you remember this? It's a very moving scene.
 - 1. She's obviously distraught after the crucifixion of Jesus. And on that Sunday morning, she's outside the tomb, weeping, thinking all is lost.
 - 2. And Jesus, now resurrected, shows up, and she's overjoyed. She loses it. She grabs hold of him with all she has. And it's interesting. Here's what Jesus says: "[Jesus said to her, 'Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father . . .'](#)" (v. 17).
 - a. Now maybe at first we're thinking: "Jesus, don't be so harsh with her. Let her hug you man."
 - b. But Jesus isn't being harsh. And he's not against hugs. We know the issue here isn't with the fact that she's touching him, for he'll later invite the other disciples to do as much. The issue is with the way she's touching him.
- B. She's clinging to him—not just in a physical sense, but in an emotional, spiritual sense. She's scared to lose him. Scared to let him go. Scared that if she doesn't hold on, he'll be gone again forever.
 - 1. And he's saying: "Mary, don't you understand. If you don't let me go, I can't ascend. And if I don't ascend, I won't be able to come in even closer. I'm not ascending so that I might leave you. I'm ascending so that I might never leave you. I go to my Father so that, in the Spirit, I can come back into your heart. And then you'll never lose me again. It doesn't matter where you go, where you are, however good or hard, I'll be right there."
- C. You realize that's how Matthew's gospel ends. He's preparing for his departure. He gives his disciples the great commission. And then he ends with this: "[And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age](#)" (Matt. 28:20).
- D. This is the sort of thing Paul personally experiences, right?
 - 1. 2 Timothy is the last letter we have that Paul wrote. And in some sense, it seems like it's all going to end on a downer. He's sitting there in a Roman prison awaiting death. And worst of all, he tells of all these folks who have utterly forsaken him at this point. He's all alone, it would seem.
 - 2. Ah, but then, all at once, in some of the very last words he'd ever pen, to our great surprise and joy, he remarks: "But the Lord hasn't left me. The Lord is with me."
 - a. Listen, [2 Tim. 4:16-18](#): "¹⁶At my first defense no one came to stand by me, but all deserted me. May it not be charged against them!¹⁷ But the Lord stood by me and

strengthened me, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. So I was rescued from the lion's mouth. ¹⁸The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen."

- i. I thought the Lord was up in heaven somewhere, distant from us down here now.
- ii. No, Paul says. He's right here. And he'll always be, until he gets you there once and for all!

Aspect #5: Urgency

Why Do You Stand Looking into Heaven?

- A. This is the aspect that's brought out in the last verse of our text back in [Acts 1](#).
 1. Look at what the two angels say to the disciples as they stare up into space, a bit paralyzed in view of all that's taking place: "[Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven](#)" (v. 11).
 - a. In other words: "Because Jesus is ascended, don't just stand around . . . go! There's a mission to engage a world to reach. He's coming back, yes, but in the space between his ascension and return, there's an urgency to things."
- B. You see, he came in the first to be judged in our place, but he will come again to preside as judge over all.
 1. And your eternal well-being hinges on your relationship with him. If you reject his payment for you, you'll be set to pay for yourself. You gut your only chance of defense in the courtroom of heaven.
 - a. So, again, there's an urgency.
- C. There are two steps we really need to take in light of this:
 1. First, we need to repent and believe. We need to get right with God through Jesus, by turning from our sin and putting our full trust in him for forgiveness, for that verdict. Don't look elsewhere. Receive him.
 2. But then we also need to go and tell. And that's really where these disciples were, right? He says: "[\[Y\]ou will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth](#)" ([Acts 1:8](#)). The world needs to hear. And we're the ones they're going to hear it from.
 - a. Jesus Christ has come, he's lived, he's died, he's risen, he's ascended . . . and he's coming again. So let's go!