

People of God, Jesus Christ's Ascension into Heaven establishes worship as the highest, most important, and most powerful means for accomplishing the dominion mandate and the Great Commission.

In Luke 24:52-53, as Jesus was ascending into heaven before his disciples, it says, *“And they worshiped Him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple blessing God.”*

The only other occurrence of this word for worship in Luke's gospel is during Jesus' temptation in the wilderness (4:7-8). There it says,

“And the Devil took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, and said to him, ‘To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I will give it to whom I will. If you, then, will worship me [προσκυνήσῃς], it will all be yours.’ And Jesus answered him, ‘It is written, you shall worship [προσκυνήσεις] the Lord your God and Him only shall you serve.’”

This is important for two reasons. First, we must remember that, because of the fall of Adam into sin, the Devil has been given authority over all the kingdoms of the world. That is why he is able to give them to Jesus in the first place, but upon the condition that Jesus worship the Devil. This tells us that the fundamental sin of Adam, was first of all a sin of worship. Dominion was given the Devil because Adam worshiped him.

Second, this temptation to receive dominion over the kingdoms of the world through worship then highlights for us what is going on in Jesus' ascension into Heaven, when the disciples worship him.

In Dan. 7:13-14 the Ascension of Christ into Heaven is shown to us. And what we see is that Jesus' ascension into Heaven is him receiving the very thing that the Devil offers him in the wilderness temptation. It says:

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.

What is going on here? Jesus is tempted to receive these kingdoms through worshiping the Devil, which is exactly how he tricked Adam. Ut Jesus is the Second Adam, who is faithful where the first Adam failed.

Jesus refutes the Devil, saying, *it is written, You shall worship the Lord God, and him only shall you serve.* Now Jesus doesn't just find a verse in the OT that sounds good. Jesus is a master interpreter, and when he quotes a verse from the Scriptures, he is incorporating the whole context of the passage in which that verse is found.

Now, the passages he was quoting from were Deut 6:13; 10:20.¹ And the context of those passages teaches us that the command to worship the Lord God and to serve him only, was connected to Israel's success at

¹ Arthur A. Just Jr., *Luke 9:51–24:53*, Concordia Commentary (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1997), 1041.

casting out the Canaanites and inheriting the land. In other words, Israel's success at establishing a godly social order and receiving dominion over the land, was contingent upon worshiping God alone. God's kingdom rule over the land is established by faithful worship, first and foremost. That was the point of the passage in the Deuteronomy, and so, when Jesus incorporates that whole context into his conversation with the Devil, it helps us to understand better, what exactly is going on in the story.

You see, Jesus is the faithful Israelite, the Greater Joshua, who is about to get ready to enter into the Promised Land. And in order to conquer the enemies, like the Devil and his angels, he needs to worship the Lord God alone. And when Christ ascended into Heaven, the Devil was thrown down, along with the rulers and authorities and principalities and powers and dominions in the heavenly places with him. Jesus threw down the god of this world, the Devil, and ascended up to the Right Hand of the Father in Heaven, being highly exalted over all, ruling over all things for the sake of the church. And he did this because he was faithful in worship.

We cannot miss this point, People of God, Jesus succeeded, where Adam failed. Adam lost dominion because he worshiped the Devil. Jesus and the Church in Him, receives dominion over the earth, through faithful worship of God. And so, if we wish to see our Heavenly Joshua conquer the nations and bring them under His rule, and put his enemies under his feet, then it must happen for us in the same manner in which Christ himself received them - through worship.

We must never forget that the Kingdom of Christ is established, maintained, preserved, and continues, chiefly because of Worship. Which is why the disciples then, upon the Ascension of Jesus into heaven, when he entered into His Heavenly Kingdom, immediately worshiped the Lord. And they went into the temple to continually praise him there too. Because the kingdom of God is established on Earth as it is Heaven, through worship.

And so, what is the take away? If we are to our greater Joshua conquer our enemies and crush Satan under our feet, then we must understand the centrality and importance of worship. If we are going to see Roe vs Wade overturned, if we are going to see the enemies of Christ removed from positions of influence, if we are to see our efforts to reform Pella and to re-establish a godly culture here be successful, it will not be because of Christian's political activity. It will not be because of facebook groups. It will not be because we bought up a bunch of property and established businesses – all things which are good and we should be doing – But God establishes the work of our hands because we worship him faithfully in the Ascended Christ.

We worship and serve and pray to the one who scatters the proud in the imagination of their hearts, and who brings down the mighty from their thrones, and who exalts the humble and meek, and fills the hungry with good things.

We must always remember that the dominion and power and glory of all the kingdoms of the world are given to Christ because he was faithful to worship His Father by offering himself as the perfect sacrifice of atonement to God on our behalf. And if God is going to grant us success

in this world against our enemies, it is because Christ has received our worship and was pleased to extend his heavenly kingdom reign onto the Earth, as it is in heaven. And that is just one of the things we learn from the Ascension of Christ into heaven. Amen.