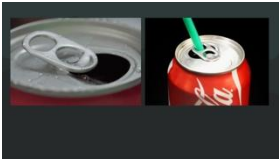




The Ascension

Mark 16:19-20; Luke 24:50-53; Acts 1:6-11

(June 21 -- Pastor Darin)



Pop can tabs are designed to hold straws when you spin them around, arrows on your gas gauge show which side the tank is on, slots in a truck bed are designed to fit 2x6 so you can section it off and the hole on a pot handle is actually meant to hold a stirring spoon. Everyday stuff we've seen many times – just didn't know the significance of them. That is how many of us have heard about Jesus' ascension – we knew about it but missed the significance.



Good kings in the ancient world were expected to do a number of things but primarily they were to save their people from enemies. When they returned triumphantly from battle they were paraded through the streets of the capital city so the whole population could see them and rejoice in the victory for the good of the nation. Then they were brought to the palace and ascended the steps to receive symbols of honour and glory and authority. When Jesus emerged from the tomb after 3 days he revealed himself as the risen Messiah, the conquering King over sin, death and the Devil. Jesus was then "paraded" before; individuals, the group of disciples and at one point a crowd of 500 people over a period of 40 days. Then Jesus ascended to the throne room of the Ancient of Days to receive glory and authority. Now we can see that the Ascension was the final capstone to Jesus full identity as the Messiah King. The Prophet Daniel predicted it many centuries before (Dan.7:13-14). If Jesus had not ascended the first readers of the Gospel accounts would have said, "Hey, something is missing here...you call Jesus a King but where's his ascension to the throne room?"



Because Jesus' ascension confirms him as conqueror over sin, death and the Devil, it means that you and I can have full confidence that it is not up to us to defeat every enemy that faces us. Whether it is...Serious & Deep conflict with another person, a battle against debilitating anxiety or fear in the face of horrendous health challenges...we are citizens of the Kingdom of God where Jesus rules as King and beyond that we've been adopted into the Royal family. So stop living your life as if you fight every single battle alone and in your strength. Ephesians 1:18-20; 1 Corinthians 15:10 and Colossians 1:29 plainly state the same truth.

? Are you familiar with those verses?

? Have you thought much about that concept that we aren't alone – he fights the battles for us and we can depend upon his strength?

? If we took this to heart and really lived into it – how might this change our perspective?

Point II.
The High Priest
Ascended

When Darin and Lori were first married, she bought him the first novel in a fantasy series called "The Wheel of Time". He didn't know it when he started but the series would eventually fill 14 volumes. Quite a commitment. 🙏

The "Creator" in the novel is pictured as creating the world and then taking his hands off it and having nothing to do with it. The whole battle against evil and "The Dark One" is up to the people. Such a view of God is called DEISM and is 100% the opposite of how the Bible portrays God. Jesus, in his role as High Priest, means that his work is ongoing, ever present and always done on our behalf.

Leviticus 16:12-14 tells us that on 1 day each year, the "Day of Atonement" – the High Priest would wash and purify himself and sacrifice a bull on the altar for his own sin and that of his family. Then he would sacrifice a goat on behalf of the sins of the nation. Then he would **ascend** the steps of the Temple through a cloud of incense into the Holy of Holies – the immediate visible presence of God. All of that incredible symbolism is fulfilled in Jesus, the ultimate High Priest. He is both the offering and the offer. At his ascension he ascends to the Holy of Holies through the clouds and assumes his role as the Great High Priest.



Hebrews 2:18 and Hebrews 7:23-25 tell us that Jesus empathizes with us because he too was tempted (but unlike us, never gave in to it) and his ongoing work is to intercede for us. Jesus doesn't have to convince God the Father to love us, the heart of God the Father is love. In the absolute white-hot purity of God's holiness however, we keep finding new ways to sin – so we need Jesus' ongoing work as both offeror and offering – exactly the role of the Great High Priest.

? Have you thought much about Jesus' ongoing role after his ascension?

? Have you thought about how the Ascension of Jesus finishes his work of saving us?

As we finish this year long series in the Gospel of Mark may it hit you afresh that Jesus is the baby in the manger, the carpenter who learned a trade, the Saviour of the world, the King of Kings and the Ultimate High Priest.