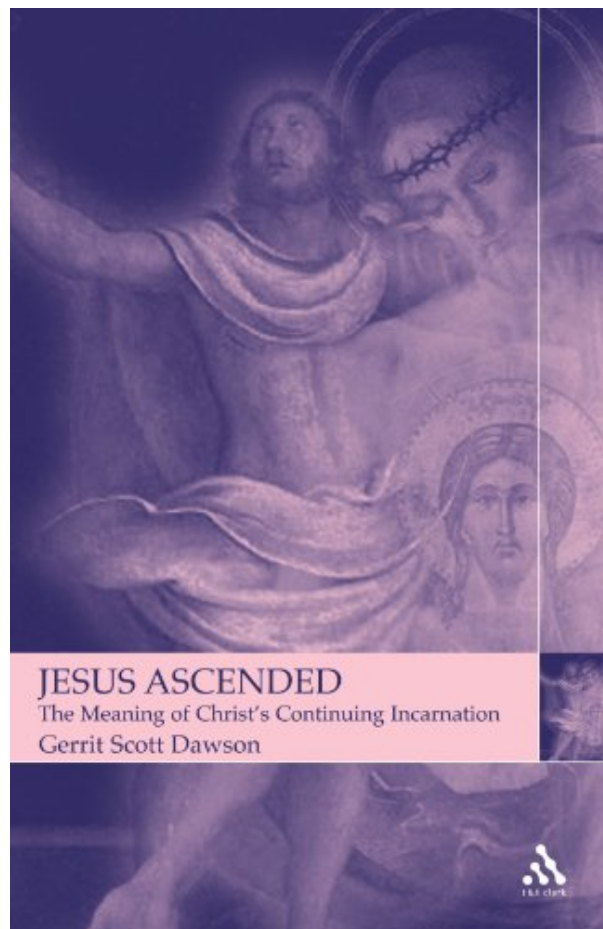
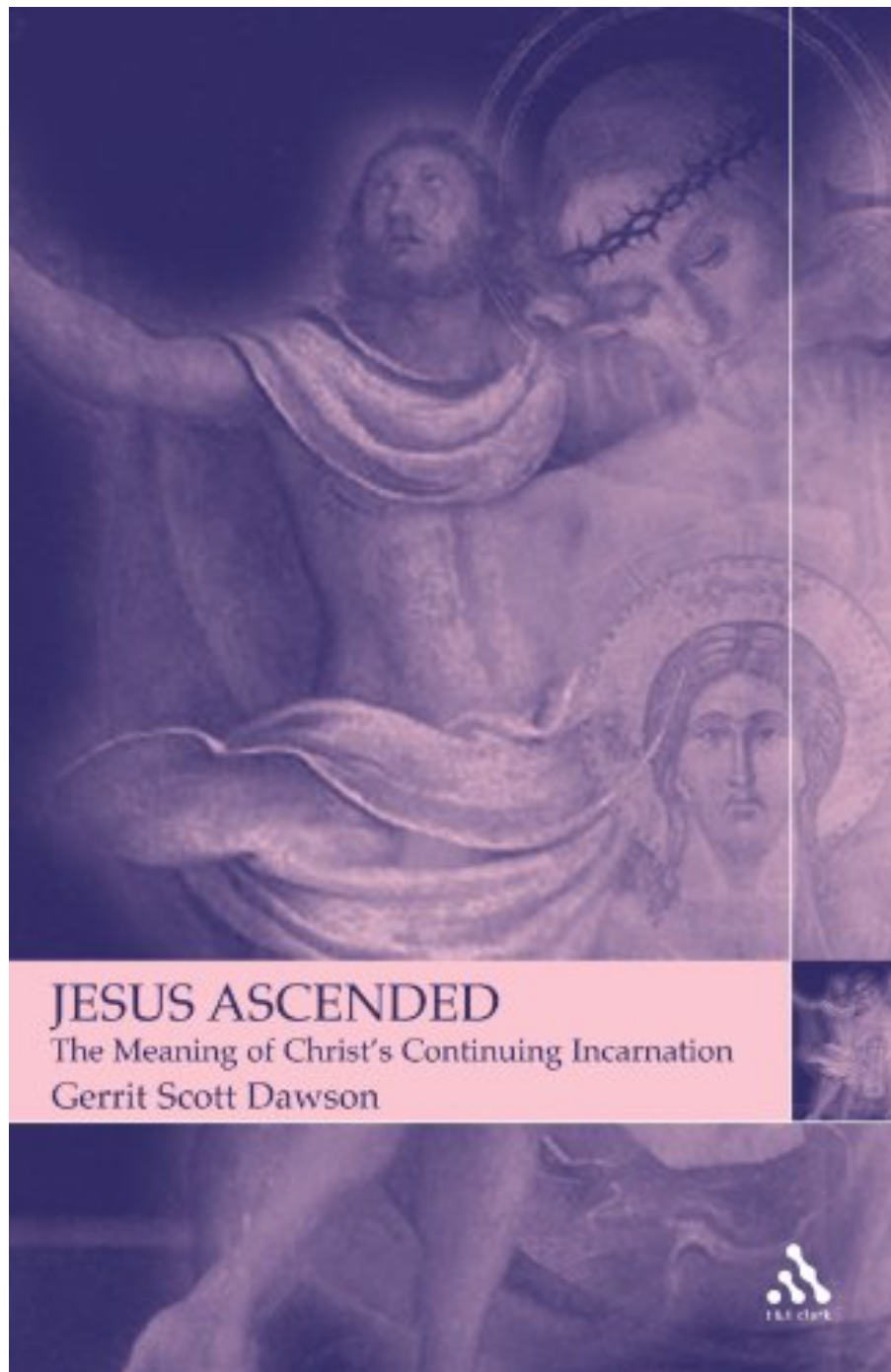


JESUS ASCENDED: THE MEANING OF CHRIST'S CONTINUING INCARNATION BY GERRIT DAWSON



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The book presents the Ascension as public truth, examining questions such as when did Jesus ascend - and how, where did he go, with what kind of body and into what kind of space? It discusses the nature of Jesus' victory, how it has been challenged, how it has been understood at different times in history, and how it relates to his second coming. The author examines the relevance of the doctrine for personal spiritual life: our union with Christ, Jesus praying for us, worship, and our own prayers. He goes on to consider living in God's kingdom, the tension between waiting for the kingdom and working for it now, suffering, humanisation, and the church and the world today. The book approaches the Ascension thematically, making it a useful teaching tool. Its themes arise from the categories in which the Church Fathers employed the doctrine. Gerrit Dawson shows the Ascension to be a vital key to understanding in a fresh way the person and work of Christ, union with Christ, the mission of the church in the world, Christian identity and spiritual theology. A unique feature of the book is the way Dawson combines a full presentation of Nicene trinitarian Christology with its application to the practicalities of Christian life today.

Praise for *Jesus Ascended*:

'Gerrit Dawson harkens back to an older vision of ministry, that of the pastor-theologian. This vision is remarkably illustrated in this beautifully written book that can properly lay claim to being practical theology.... Very highly recommended for both pastors and theologians who want to have a faith grounded in the continuing reality of the incarnation in the ascension of Jesus.' Andrew Purves, Princeton Theological Seminary

'This is a truly outstanding book for students, pastors and thinking Christians alike. I could not recommend it more enthusiastically!' Alan Torrance, St Andrew's University, UK

'A yawning gulf often appears between the interests of preacher and scholar, of pastor and theologian. Serious attempts to bridge that gulf are too few. This book is one of them. It brings to life the voice of the Fathers on the subject of the ascension of Jesus, and calls the church back to the roots of its faith.' Douglas Farrow, McGill University, Canada

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Most helpful customer reviews

13 of 13 people found the following review helpful.

He Took Us With Him

By K. Neil Earle

At last, a competent theologian who can write fairly clearly, perhaps because he is also a pastor! If what Gerrit Dawson is saying in "Jesus Ascended" is true then the Good News is very good indeed. As well as giving almost a thumbnail compendium from Early Church writings, Dawson zeroes in relentlessly on the point that when Jesus ascended he actually took us with him to the "heavenly places" (Ephesians 2:6). No, really took us there in the Spirit, not just in symbol. As a student of the trinitarian theologian Tom Torrance, Dawson derives these conclusions from the Incarnation of the God-Man, Jesus of Nazareth. He extrapolates a lot of this from John 21:18 where the newly risen Lord tells Mary on resurrection morning, "I am ascending to my Father and your Father and to my God and your God."

Solidarity with the Godhead! There it is! For Dawson the implications of the Ascension thus flow from the Incarnation as a seamless whole. "God became man that we may come to God" (Barth); "The Godhead was not stripped of humanity by the resurrection but adorned with it. He remains one of us" (Gregory Nazianzen); "The Son of God takes our humanity...sanctifies it by His vicarious life in the Spirit...and in his resurrection and ascension carries it into the holy place of God" (James Torrance).

This is heady stuff indeed but Dawson seems on solid Chalcedonian footing in tying the Ascension to the Incarnation and Resurrection--as J.I. Packer might say: three mysteries for the price of one! Along the way he clarifies Psalm 68 and gives evangelistic meaning to "lift up your heads, O ye gates" as predictors of the Ascension, which, by the way, Dawson is right to portray as a Roman victory triumph to heaven, even though Jesus triumphs specifically over those very Romans (Colossians 2:15; Ephesians 1:16-23). The "Roman triumph" analogy needed badly to be revived. The Ascension was "leading captivity captive," a text Christians know about but seemingly leave out of most preaching. And some of the implications of all this Dawson traces out by my own slightly reworked quote from the third century theologian, Tertullian: "The way of ascent was leveled by the footsteps of the Lord...an entrance opened up by the might of Christ and that no delay or inquest will meet Christians (in heaven) since they have there not to be put to the question but received."

"Not put to the question but received" radically revises the old picture of judgement after death. To sum it all up, Jesus as our Forerunner (Hebrews 6:20) is the very pattern and Guarantor of the glorified humanity which awaits us. True, most of this has been known before but rarely so well expressed in recent times and with implications for pastoral life. There are some quibbles--Dawson should have been using "glorified flesh" more often when speaking of Jesus working for us now in the heavenlies. Otherwise the Chrysostom (died 407) quote "Dust now sits at the right hand of the Father" may appear too spectacularly jarring for new students of incarnational theology. But Dawson has done great service by legibly breathing life into many texts too often subordinated in our pastoral teaching and reminding us that Christians have known most of this all along but need to have it freshly explained.

14 of 17 people found the following review helpful.

A goosebump on every page!

By Bookworm

I bought the book as a reference for a class I was teaching. In addition to a wealth of information, as well as quotations from ancient and modern sources, I found eye-opening insights that changed forever my perception of Jesus' ascension. I can't recommend it more highly.

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful.

A must read to fully understand heaven and Christ

By DocTheology

Rarely does a book come along that suggests a known theological topic (the ascension of Christ) yet completely grasps you with the depth, the Scriptures and the thoughtfulness of this book. The author helps us to think through the aspects of Christ's raised physical body and how that body exists in time and space and place and yet, as fully God, Christ's deity exists beyond time and space. This is a volume every Christian pastor and teacher should read and a doctrine that is handled superbly by the author. Yes, it does go deep at themes, but the thinking and the examples never derail the reader but taking them too deep. It is by far a "5 star" in my library.

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