



## GLOBAL IMPACT MINISTRIES

*A Defense of the Apostolic  
Christian Faith*

### The Son of Man Ascending, John 6:62, John 3:13



“What then if you see **the Son of Man ascending to where He was before?**” John 6:62

“No one has gone **up to heaven** except the one who **came down from heaven**, the Son of Man **who is in heaven.**” John 3:13

John 6:62 refers to Jesus “where He WAS before” while John 3:13 refers to Jesus “who is in heaven.” During his earthly ministry, Jesus could not be said to have been “where He was before (John 6:62)” while being “in heaven (John 3:13)” at the same time. Since God’s word cannot contradict itself, the standard Trinitarian interpretations of John 6:62 and John 3:13 could not be correct.

The words, “No one has gone up to heaven except the one who came down from heaven” in John 3:13 imply that Jesus as a man had “gone up to heaven” sometime during his earthly ministry. For God as God cannot be said to have “gone up to heaven.” In like manner, Christ’s words in John 6:62 strongly imply that he had ascended to heaven: “What then if you see the Son of Man ascending...?” Therefore, based on these two verses, it is very plausible that the man Christ Jesus had “gone up to heaven” sometime during his earthly ministry.

Some have taught that Jesus was speaking figuratively in John 6:62 and even in John 3:13 but I do not see anything in Jesus’ words which would indicate that he was speaking figuratively here. Nor do I see anything which would indicate that he was addressing his resurrection. While there is no unequivocal evidence for any of us to know for sure what Jesus meant on these two occasions, it is likely that our Lord and Saviour received visions and revelations during his earthly ministry which far exceeded Paul’s visions and revelations in the Lord.

Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 12:2-4, “I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—**whether in the body I do not know**, or out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a man was **caught up to the third heaven**. 3And I know how such a man—whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, God knows—4was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which a man is not permitted to speak.”

Since the apostle Paul was apparently caught up to the third heaven in his spirit (perhaps even in his body), it is sensible to believe that Jesus would have had greater experiences than Paul during his earthly ministry. So from this perspective, let us look at what Jesus said in light of the apostle Paul having been “caught up to the third heaven.”

“What then if you see the Son of Man ascending to where He was before?” John 6:62

John 6:62 states that the Son of Man had ascended (apparently to heaven) and was there for a short time before coming down from heaven.

“No one has gone up to heaven except the one who came down from heaven, the Son of Man who is in heaven.” John 3:13

John 3:13 states that the Son of Man had “gone up to heaven” and then “came down from heaven,” while still being in heaven.

It is certainly possible that Jesus could have been caught up to heaven for short periods of time during his earthly ministry. If this were the case, then it would make sense for Jesus to say that “no one has gone up to heaven except the one who came down from heaven” because Enoch and Elijah never came down from heaven (not yet) after going up to heaven. Apparently, the apostle Paul later went up to heaven and came down from heaven (“whether in the body or out of the body” 2 Corinthians 12:2-4) but at the time that Jesus spoke these words, no man had gone up to heaven and came down.

*Note: The prophets saw visions of heavenly things but their spirits and bodies remained on the earth whenever they saw visions of God.*

While there is no direct scriptural evidence to prove that Jesus temporarily went up to heaven and then came down during his earthly ministry, we do know that Satan somehow took Jesus up to a high mountain and transported him to the pinnacle of the temple.

“Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory...” Matthew 4:8

“Then the devil took Him into the holy city and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple...” Matthew 4:5

Since Jesus’ ministry was greater than Paul’s, it makes sense to believe that Jesus would have also gone up to heaven to receive revelations that were greater than Paul’s. If this is the correct interpretation, then there is no contradiction in John 3:13 with the ascensions of Enoch and Elijah. While Enoch and Elijah were taken up to heaven, Enoch and Elijah never came back down from heaven after being taken up. Jesus as a true man with a true human

spirit could have briefly gone up to heaven and came down from heaven during his earthly ministry just as the apostle Paul appears to have done during his ministry.

If Jesus was addressing his deity as the omnipresent Spirit in John 6:62, then how could God have vacated heaven? John 6:62 clearly says, "where HE WAS (past tense) before." That would mean that God left heaven and was no longer in heaven while Jesus was on the earth (*Malachi 3:6 and Hebrews 13:8 prove that the deity of Jesus remains the same as the unchangeable God*). The omnipresent God as the omnipresent God cannot be said to be "where he WAS BEFORE." Hence, Jesus as the child born and as the Son given has to be a true man who could potentially be caught up to heaven like Paul rather than being an alleged omnipresent God the Son.

But what about John 3:13b which says, "...the Son of Man who IS IN HEAVEN?"

"What then if you see the Son of Man ascending to where He was before?" John 6:62

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Jesus used "figurative language" (*John 16:25*) about the Father but promised that he would later tell his disciples "plainly about the Father." Philippians 2:6-7 states that Jesus continually emptied himself of his divine rights and privileges during his earthly ministry. Therefore it makes sense to believe that Jesus would have used his human titles as Son of God and Son of Man to hide his true identity ("*Truly you are a God who hides himself, O God of Israel, the Saviour*" - *Isaiah 45:15*) rather than publicly affirming his true divine identity as "God with us" (*Matthew 1:23*) who was "made fully human in every way" (*Heb. 2:17*).

Wherefore, while the human spirit of Jesus could ascend up to heaven and come down (for God became a man), his "substance of being" (*hypostasis - Heb. 1:3*) is the substance of being of God the Father "reproduced" or "copied" (*charakter - Heb. 1:3*) as a true human being. This would explain why the true identity of Jesus was "in heaven" and on earth at the same time (*John 3:13*) and this would explain why Jesus as God existed before Abraham (*John 8:58*) before also becoming a human son.

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