

Title: THREE MOVEMENTS OF GOD, A SPATIAL SKETCH OF THE GOSPEL,  
JOHN 3:14-21.

(Chatham, NJ; 03/22/09, AM) [E – Order of Space Outline]

Theme: The Gospel can be described as Christ descending from heaven, ascending back to heaven, and the sending of the Holy Spirit back to earth.

Purpose: To present the Gospel in a unique way and to help us know that there is a transcendent presence of God for our help and comfort.

Introduction:

1. Jesus sought to explain to Nicodemus the story of healing, salvation, and life.
2. Like many people today he was oblivious to God's workings and the movement of the Holy Spirit. Jesus is astonished that a teacher of Israel didn't know this.
3. Jesus uses a well-known story: the punishment and healing of the snakes in Numbers 21:4-9. (In 2 Kings 18:4 Hezekiah must destroy this for it has become an object of worship.)
4. The statement about his being lifted up just as the snake was lifted up demonstrates the movement of the Holy Spirit.
5. Christ descended to reveal heavenly things; he will be lifted up to draw all men to him; because of this people will have life.
6. Although we can't speak of a spatial orientation with God since he occupies all time and space at once, we trace his movements from our own perspective.
7. Christ descended and was lifted up; he ascended and sat at God's right hand; he sent back the Holy Spirit to abide with us. (This is a spatial sketch of the Gospel.)

## I. Christ Descended and Was Lifted Up.

### A. The Son of Man has descended.

1. A picture of the Son of Man in Daniel 7.
2. He left the heavenly dwelling to live among us, John 1:14.
3. His descent required him to humble himself by taking on human nature.

### B. Now he must be lifted up.

1. The snake was lifted up to bring about healing.
2. By the mere act of looking at the serpent, they could be saved.
3. When Hezekiah destroyed the serpent that Moses made, we are made aware that its power was not inherent but only invested with healing by God.

### C. Satan's power broken.

1. Jesus descended from heaven for the purpose of being lifted up, John 12:32.
2. He alludes of course to the crucifixion.
3. There is a power inscrutable to the human mind.
4. This movement is God's Spirit bringing new birth, and this is the original topic with Nicodemus.

## II. He Ascended and Is Seated at the Right Hand of God.

### A. Ascended back to the heavenly places.

1. The disciples saw him ascend, Acts 1.
2. Seated at the right hand of God with all authority, Eph. 1:20-21 & 1 Peter 3:22.

3. His commission to the church is founded on his position of authority, Mt. 28:18.
4. Though this is criticized by detractors of Christianity, his ascension to the right hand of God legitimizes our belief that he is the sole mediator between God and man.
5. No other human can make such a claim.
6. No other has descended from heaven and ascended back.

B. His ascension was a triumph.

1. Ephesians 4:8 adapts a quote from Psalm 68.
2. Psalm 68 praises God for his triumph over all his enemies.
3. Jesus ascended and now fills all things, verse 10.
4. He has furthermore seated us with him in the heavenly places, Eph. 2:6.
5. Though we were dead in our trespasses, 2:1-3, he has made us alive with him, 4.
6. His triumph has ascertained life for us.

III. He Sent the Holy Spirit to Us.

A. The promise of help and comfort.

1. Jesus' departure precipitated the coming of the comforter, John 16:7.
2. Jesus promised him to the disciples at his departure.
3. He is the guarantee of our inheritance, Eph. 1:14.

B. Christ's ascension also precipitated other things which indicate his presence.

1. When he ascended to heaven, he gifted the church with ministries, Eph. 4:11.
2. They are the means by which the church is empowered through the Holy Spirit.
3. In addition because Christ has drawn us into the heavenly realms with him, Eph. 2:6, we are also gifted with good works, Eph. 2:10.
4. In fact, those things were prepared for us ahead of time.
5. These good works are the direct result of grace and the power of Christ working in us.

Conclusion:

1. Christ descended; Christ ascended; Christ sent.
2. His presence has not only left an indelible mark on the world, but his mark is evidence of his abiding presence.
3. He abides with us by the power of the Holy Spirit; we are counseled to abide in him.
4. He was lifted up on the cross in order to lift us up to seat us with him in the heavenly realms.
5. And so we live a life indicative of living on a higher plane, Col 3:1-2.
6. Let us in all ways seek to live the life he gained for us by descending, ascending, and sending.
7. And when people see this life in us, we can tell them the story in three movements.