

First Peter – Then and Now
(Lesson # 8 – The Importance of the Ascension)

Introduction

- A. The text: ... *Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand—with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.* 1 Peter 3:21,22
- B. We have a tendency to overlook the Ascension in our reference to the redeeming work of the Lord Jesus. From the Biblical viewpoint it is extremely important.
- C. We need to keep two facets of this subject in mind: what the Ascension meant to the Lord Jesus, and how it was a part of His redemptive work in which we are identified.

I. The Importance of His Ascension – *Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven.*

The Lord Jesus was born into the world to defeat His enemies. They were and are, Satan and his demons, as well as the devastation caused by His enemies: error, sin, sickness, death, and Hell. (See I Corinthians 15:23-26, 55-58)

The Scripture declares the Lord Jesus **defeated** His enemies in the Crucifixion (Colossians 2:15), **demonstrated** that victory in His Resurrection (Ephesians 4:8), and **displayed** that victory in His Ascension (Ephesians 1:20-22).

*But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. This is why it says:
"When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men."
(Ephesians 4:7,8 NIV)*

The picture of the Lord Jesus returning home in triumph (Psalm 68 and Ephesians 4:8) was based on a well know and rather common event when the Bible was being written. It was the celebration that occurred when a king went against his enemies and won the battle. As the king would return to his home (a fortress/castle city), he would lead a processional of his men. He would be riding in his royal chariot with his enemies chained to the chariot and walking alongside (**he led captives in his train**). His men would have wagons filled with the plunder they had taken in battle. As they proceeded into the city the king would be proclaimed as victorious and the soldiers would throw out of the wagons the spoils of their victory (**gave gifts to men**) to the people lining the streets.

What a wonderful time the Ascension was for the Lord Jesus. He had finished the work His Father had given Him to do. What a welcome He must have received when He returned home. Who can imagine the praise and adoration of the angels? What wonderful songs they must have composed for His homecoming. How delightful it must have been for the Lord Jesus, to be so adored by angels, and probably by saints in Heaven, and most of all to receive the "well done" of His Heavenly Father.

II. The Importance of His Exaltation – *Jesus Christ ... is at God's Right Hand*

- A. The Ascension is a testimony to His finished work. (1)
- B. The Ascension is a testimony to His provision of the Holy Spirit. (2)
- C. The Ascension is a testimony to and basis for our assurance. (3)
- D. The Ascension is a testimony to His provision for spiritual gifts. (4)
- E. The Ascension is a testimony to and basis for our sanctification. (5)
- F. The Ascension is a testimony to and basis for our security. (6)
- G. The Ascension is a testimony to and basis for our belief in providence. (7)
- H. The Ascension is a testimony to and basis for encouragement. (8)
- I. The Ascension is a testimony to and basis for our invitation for prayer. (9)

III. The Importance of His Authority -- ... *Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand--with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.*

- A. The Ascension is a testimony to the authority of Jesus Christ in His priesthood.
 - 1. He has a permanent priesthood. (10)
 - 2. He has a powerful priesthood. (11)
 - 3. He has a holy priesthood. (12)
 - 4. He has an authoritative priesthood. (13)
 - 5. He has a vicarious priesthood. (14)
 - 6. He has a perfected priesthood. (15)
- B. The Ascension is a testimony to the authority of Jesus Christ in His sovereign control.
 - 1. Jesus Christ has the authority to be the judge of all mankind and angels. (16)
 - 2. Jesus Christ has the authority to carry out His Father's plan. (17)
 - 3. Jesus Christ has the authority to commission, enable and protect His workers. (18)
- C. The Ascension is a testimony to the authority of Jesus Christ over His enemies. (19)