

KNOWING THE ASCENSION

THE NEED OF KNOWING THE **REDEMPTION** OF CHRIST

In order to know ascension, we need firstly to know the **redemption** of Christ, because ascension is included in it. Concerning Christ's redemption, many comprehend only Christ's crucifixion, His dying for us. Some see something deeper; they realize that Christ's redemption includes also the resurrection. But if we read the Scriptures again carefully and examine our experiences, we will discover that His redemption **includes ascension** also... If any part is missing, the redemption of Christ cannot be regarded as complete.

Ascension is the conclusion of His death and resurrection... Since the Lord's ascension is the conclusion of His death and resurrection, all three steps are closely connected. When the Lord came forth from death and entered into resurrection, He had already reached the heavenly realm. **Immediately** following death and resurrection is ascension. In Christianity, there is an inaccurate understanding that Christ ascended forty days after His resurrection. Actually, in the resurrection morning the Lord ascended to the heavens. In that morning, the Lord appeared to Mary Magdalene and said to her, "*Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended unto the Father.*" And He continued, saying, "*I ascend unto my Father*" (John 20:17). In the evening of the same day, the Lord again appeared to the disciples and said, "*Handle me, and see*" (Luke 24:39). By this time the Lord could let men touch Him. This reveals that before this time He had already ascended to the heavens and offered to God the freshness of His resurrection. Therefore, before His ascension in the sight of His disciples forty days later, He could say, "*All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and earth.*" This authority was obtained **from God** when He ascended to the heavens on the resurrection morning. Thus we see that Christ's death and resurrection are connected with His ascension.. Finishing of school cannot be separated from graduation; when one finishes his study, he graduates. Likewise, when the Lord was risen from the dead, He ascended.

In Christ's ascension, He brought all that He had accomplished through His death and resurrection to the heavens. He brought the fruit of all His redeeming work into the heavenly realm. Thus, the Lord today, in the position of His ascension, applies the efficacy of His redemption to man. Certainly, the Lord's forgiveness of our sins is based on His blood shed on the cross. But if He had not ascended to the heavens, He would not have been able to apply His death or His blood. He has achieved redemption on the cross, but it is **in His ascension that He applies** His redemption... All that Christ has accomplished through His death and resurrection is brought into the ascension for application. Without ascension, nothing in Christ's salvation can be applied to us in a practical way.

THE NEED OF KNOWING THE **POSITION** OF OUR SALVATION

In order to know the ascension, we need secondly to know the **position** of our salvation...The position of ascension which we have obtained rests not only on the fact of ascension which God has accomplished in Christ, but also on the life of ascension which we have obtained within us. In Colossians 3:1-4 the Apostle asks us to set our mind “*on the things that are above.*” This is based on the fact that Christ is our life. Christ is sitting in the heavenly places at the right hand of God. Because we have Him as our life, we also are hid with Him in God. This reveals that neither in His death nor in His resurrection, but **in His ascension**, Christ caused us to obtain life and became our life. Although this life has passed through death and resurrection, yet it is in the position of ascension that Christ gives this life to us. This life is ascended and heavenly, and is given **from heaven**. It is a life which reaches heaven. Therefore, once we obtain this life, we have fellowship with heaven and are joined to heaven. Although according to outward conditions we still live on earth, yet according to the inner life we are already in heaven. The situation is just like the Lord’s during His time on earth. He said then that though He “*descended out of heaven,*” He was still “*in heaven*” (John 3:13). This was due to the fact that His life is heavenly and connected with heaven.

For example, an electric light bulb gives light because of the electric current within it. This electric current originates from the power plant and is connected with the power plant. Therefore, externally speaking, its light shines forth in this room. But, in respect to the electric current within the bulb, its position is at the power plant. Likewise, we as saved ones can be manifested in this age as shining light (Phil. 2:15; Matt. 5:14-16) because of the ascended life which saves us and is now within us. This life flows into us from heaven, and it is also connected with heaven. It flows into us **from heaven**, and it also **brings us to heaven**. With this life that is connected with heaven, we are also a people that is connected with heaven. Therefore, just as from Christ’s standpoint ascension is the conclusion of His redemption, even so from our standpoint ascension is the position of our salvation.

THE NEED OF KNOWING THE **SPIRITUAL FUNCTIONS**

In order to know the ascension, we need thirdly to know the spiritual functions. **All the spiritual gifts of Christians are given by the Lord in ascension** (Eph. 4:8) and are for us to apply in the position of ascension. Therefore, if we do not know the ground of ascension nor stand fast upon it, we will be unable to apply the spiritual gifts. The functions of the spiritual gifts can only be made manifest on the ground of ascension.

For example, the reason many brothers and sisters have visited people to no avail is that they have already **fallen** from the position of ascension and live in some situation on earth. If we want to visit people with much effectiveness, it is not necessary for us to speak much or preach many truths. We need only to **maintain** the position of ascension in our daily

living; we need only to be continually touching heaven in our inner being and live in the heavenly condition, the heavenly atmosphere, which, when touched by others, will enable them to obtain the heavenly supply. This also applies to the prayers offered in meetings. The prayers of some brothers and sisters impart a feeling of emptiness and oldness to others because they have already lost the position of ascension. The phraseology of their prayers may be very attractive, but before God and before Satan there is no weight. There is also **no effect** in the spiritual realm. Other brothers and sisters, however, are not so. They stand fast in the position of ascension and live in the life of heaven. Their daily living is of heaven; therefore, their prayers also are of heaven. When they open their mouths, they give a heavenly taste. Only this kind of prayer can touch the throne in the heavens and shake the gates of hell, thereby producing much spiritual consequence. Therefore, regardless of what our spiritual functions are, we must apply them **in the heavenly position** and manifest them in the heavenly realm.

THE NEED OF KNOWING THE POSITION OF WARFARE

In order to know the ascension, we need fourthly to know the position of warfare. The position of spiritual warfare is absolutely in the heavenly places. Whenever we lose the position of ascension, we are unable to carry on any spiritual warfare. On the battlefield, all military strategists pay attention to the problem of position. On the spiritual battleground, this principle is even more important. We can say that spiritual warfare depends solely on the problem of position...This means that we must first be men of ascension with the position of ascension before we can attack the enemy in the air **from above**. If we are men of earth and lose the position of ascension, we will fall into the hand of the enemy and cannot fight against him. Therefore, the position of spiritual warfare is absolutely in the heavens.

This principle of warfare is also very evident in our practical daily living. Whether in the church, at home, or at the place of our employment, whenever we have a touch of sin, a love for the world, a display of temper, a dealing in craftiness, or a living in the earthly life, **we simply cannot be strong** before the enemy and fight against him. At this time we are already earthly and have fallen into the hand of the enemy. On the other hand, if we constantly have fellowship with the Lord, walk in spirit, and live in the heavenly life, we are heavenly and **abide in the position** of ascension. Then we can stay on higher ground over against lower ground and deal with Satan... We can also say seriously to Satan, "*We are disgusted with this. We are against this.*" When we make such a severe declaration and strong expression, the entire host of Satan will retreat. His work will also be completely destroyed. But if we live in the earthly life, using natural methods and means, we will never be able to solve these problems. We have already fallen from heaven and lost the position of warfare. We have no way to deal with God's enemy and nullify his works.

Many Christians today are greatly concerned with the problem of power. But the Lord has saved us not only to the state of possessing power, but also to the place of having **authority**. Those in the heavenly realm not only have power, but also authority. Those with power can only cause others to be moved. But those with authority cause others not only to be moved, but also to be reverent and fearful. For example, consider some brothers and sisters who love the world and live according to the flesh. When they see brothers or sisters loving the Lord, seeking Him, and living in the spirit, they admire them very much and are moved. This is a matter of **power**. But if they meet other brothers or sisters who are living in the realm of ascension, they feel not only a certain power which causes them to be moved, but also a certain phenomenon which causes them to be reverent and fearful. With such brothers or sisters there is the heavenly reality; therefore, they are also full of **heavenly authority**. Thus, while they are walking among men, they bring with them a certain fearsomeness, which **causes others** to be reverent. We may illustrate this by an automobile moving along the road. Although it is full of power, yet a traffic policeman has authority over it. When he blows his whistle, the car must stop. Again, it is like an army. Although it has great power, yet the general has the authority. When he gives an order, the army must obey. This proves that authority is over power and can control power; therefore, authority is greater than power.

THE EXPERIENCE OF ASCENSION

We obtain the position of ascension the moment we are saved. But how can we experience ascension? Simply speaking, the experience of ascension is **the outcome** of our experiencing resurrection through death. Even as Christ ascended to the heavenly places through death and resurrection, so also may we experience ascension through death and resurrection.

Let us consider the history of the Israelites entering the land of Canaan. Once they left their wilderness wanderings and crossed the Jordan, they entered Canaan. The land of Canaan signifies the all-inclusive Christ in the heavenlies. At the same time, it also typifies the heavenly realm. Therefore, when the Israelites entered Canaan, typically speaking, they **entered the heavenly realm**. When they crossed the Jordan, they buried twelve stones at the bottom of the river, signifying their death and burial. Then they removed twelve stones from the bottom of the river, signifying their resurrection. They brought these twelve stones into the land of Canaan, signifying their passing through death and resurrection and **entering into the heavenly realm**. Therefore, their entering Canaan after crossing Jordan typifies our experiencing the ascension through death and resurrection. Whenever we experience death and resurrection, we reach the realm of ascension.

In conclusion,... if we want to experience ascension, we must first seek to experience death and resurrection. We must severely put to death by the Lord's cross everything of sins, the world, the temper, the flesh, the self, and the natural constitution, and enter into the Lord's

resurrection by the Holy Spirit. Then we can experience ascension and **be a heavenly people** in the realm of ascension.