

The Ascension of Christ – Part 2 of 3

Thank you for joining me once again for It's a Good Life. Today, we continue our study in the life of Christ. This will be study number eighteen in the life of Christ, and we're looking at the ascension.

Before we look at that today, let me invite you to look at our Website, www.LRWM.org. On the Website, you'll be able to download transcripts of this program and other programs of It's a Good Life. You'll also be able to listen to this program once again as you're hearing it now on the radio. You'll be able to listen to it on the computer on the Internet, and you'll also be able to listen to other programs of It's a Good Life.

Or you can write to me, Lewis Woodard, 497 Judith Avenue, Fruitland Park, FL 34731. And as always, it's a joy to be able to share the Word of God with you.

Well, last time, we looked at a fourfold purpose of Christ waiting forty days to ascend to the Father. The first purpose of this forty-day period was to convince the disciples of the reality of the resurrection. Acts 1:1-3 speaks of that. Then the second purpose of the forty-day period was to communicate truth about His kingdom. In Acts 1:3, it talks about that.

And the third purpose of the forty-day period was to confirm the promise of His presence. John 14:18 says, *I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.* And of course, we know that He sent the Great Comforter, the Holy Spirit, to abide with those people He was speaking to at that point, and at that time. He has also spoken that to us today. We have the Spirit of God if we know Jesus as our Savior.

And the fourth purpose of the forty-day period was to command His disciples, His apostles,

and this commandment is, of course, in Acts 1:2. And the solemn commandments given to the disciples comprise what is generally known as the Great Commission of going into all the world and preaching and teaching about Jesus Christ. Matthew 28:18-20 speaks of that.

Well, today, let's look further into the subject of the ascension of our Lord. The Lord has ascended and gone back to Heaven. In Acts 1:9-11, it says, *And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.*

Now, this second coming of the Lord is not the rapture. It is not when He comes back for the church. This is speaking of His second coming when He will come back to set up His kingdom upon this earth. Remember, He had been talking and teaching the disciples about setting up the kingdom, so quite naturally, this actually goes along with the teaching that He was giving there. These men in white apparel said, "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you is going to come back in like manner," and they're saying He's coming back to set up His kingdom.

Well, we know by studying the Scriptures and comparing Scripture with Scripture that Jesus is coming back for those of us who have trusted Him during this period of time. We are known as the bride of Christ, the church. He's coming back for us. That is not the second coming. That is the rapture of the church

when we will be caught up together with Him. We'll go up. He'll say, "Come up hither," and the dead in Christ shall rise first and then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with Him in the clouds, and the Bible says, to be forever with the Lord.

In Luke 24:51, it says, *And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.* He ascended into Heaven. The ascension of Christ marks the division between the earthly and heavenly ministries of Christ. Christ is not just sitting around in Heaven. He has a ministry there.

And the Gospel of Luke ends with the account of the ascension. In Luke 24:51, it says, *And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.* The book of Acts begins by mentioning the ascension, Acts 1:9: *And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.* You know, the book of Luke and the book of Acts, if you're a Bible student, you understand that these two books were written by Luke the physician. Is it any wonder then that, as the book of Luke ends with Him being carried up into Heaven, the book of Acts starts by mentioning the ascension of Christ, Him being carried up into Heaven?

Our Lord's ascension took place in broad daylight in the presence of many witnesses. Acts 1:11, once again, says *Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as he have seen him go into heaven.*

There's a thought that comes to mind here. What about people living today who claim that they have seen Christ or have seen a vision of Christ? I learned a long time ago you can't

argue with something that a person says happened to them. You can't argue with an experience. I do not believe the Bible teaches that you and I today will see the Lord personally until He comes back for us. As you think about the question, what about those people who claim to have seen Him today? First Peter 1:8 says, *Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:*

And John 20:29 says, *Jesus saith unto him... This is to Thomas... because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.*

These people are missing out on a great blessing, not only by saying that they've seen the Lord. Now once again, you can't argue with something that a person has experienced or they believe they've experienced, but they are missing out on a great blessing because it says, *blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.*

Second Corinthians 5:6-7 says this: *Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: For we walk by faith, not by sight.*

We don't have to see the Lord with our physical eyes in order to have the faith to believe in Him. The Bible says faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God, so therefore, I depend upon the Word of God in order to see Christ. And I'm guaranteed a blessing when I see Him through His Word. Blessed are those who have not seen but yet who believe.

Now the ascension of Christ was an event that was predicted in the Old Testament Scriptures. Someone said you can't go by the Old Testament. That's under the law.

Well, the Bible points to Christ all through the Scriptures, and the Old Testament, we understand, is unfolded in the New Testament. We go back to the Old Testament, and in Psalm 16:10-11, it says, *For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One...* That's Jesus... *to see corruption.* ¹¹*Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.*

Many other verses now, if you go to the book of Acts and you compare this with Old Testament Scripture, Acts 2:25-36, you'll see this is mentioned in the Old Testament. Psalm 68:18 says, *Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the LORD God might dwell among them.* The Ascension of Christ was predicted before it happened, and we go back and we read these verses and we understand that it was no surprise. Jesus was not surprised that He was ascending back to the Father. The Father was not surprised. The Holy Spirit was not surprised, and we shouldn't be surprised either because all through the Word of God, and especially these verses I just read, speaks of His ascension back to the Father.

Ephesians 4:8 says, *Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high... It's taking place, according to the Bible... he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.*

Psalm 110:1 says, *The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.* When are the enemies going to be made the Lord's footstool? It's when he comes back the second time to set up His kingdom.

Remember, we said that He schooled the disciples about the kingdom. They wanted to know about the kingdom, so therefore, we

understand that, when His enemies are made His footstool, that's when He comes back the second time, not in the rapture of the church, but He is coming back to set up His kingdom, and at that time His enemies will be subdued.

Well, where is He? In Psalm 110:1, we understand that this is a very significant prophecy concerning Christ, because it is directly quoted in seven New Testament passages: Matthew 22:44, Mark 12:36, Luke 20:42-43, Acts 2:34-35, I Corinthians 15:25, Hebrews 1:13, and Hebrews 10:12-13.

And it's also mentioned indirectly in several other passages. You can see, for example, Matthew 26:64, the ascension of Christ. Remember... He was crucified. He was buried, and He was resurrected on that third day. He was seen by over five hundred people. We've already studied that. He was seen by over five hundred people at one time.

He's alive today. He's alive for you. If you've never trusted him as your Savior, let me invite you to do so right now. If you had been the only person living on this Earth at this time, Christ would have died for you. He died. He came into this world to seek and to save those who are lost. Before you can be saved, you've got to realize you are lost. You've got to realize, as the Bible says for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. All. Not just some, but all. Had you been the only person on this Earth, you would be all. If there were billions of people, which there are, it says that He died for all. And all those people who will trust Him as Savior will be saved, and He's the only way. He says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes to the Father but by me."

Have you trusted Him as your Savior? Have you admitted, "Lord, I know I'm a sinner. I know I can't save myself, but I believe that Your gift, the gift of God, is eternal life through You, through Jesus Christ. I receive

You. I receive the gift of God today. I know I can't save myself. I want to go to Heaven. I want to serve You right now on this Earth. Please come into my life. I receive You into my heart. I receive You into my innermost being. I receive You, Lord, the best I know how at this point in my life. I'm trusting in You to save me and take me to Heaven."

If you'll pray a prayer something like that, the Bible says for whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. Ask Him to come into your heart right now.

Well, it's been good being with you again today, and let me invite you to tune in the next time when you'll hear me say, "It is a good life." In the meantime, look at our website, www.LRWM.org. Next time we'll continue our study in the ascension of Christ. May the Lord bless you richly is my prayer.