

The Ascension

(Week 6)

“He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty”

Because of His humility and tremendous victory, Jesus is exalted to the highest position in the universe, from which, with His Father, He governs all creation. He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords, that is He is the Boss of the Bosses. In this capacity, He leads His disciples in the here and now.

It is perhaps easy to imagine the Lord being taken up into the clouds where He relaxes and plays the harp to wile away the time until Judgment Day. This, however, is not the idea presented in the New Testament. Jesus was busy on earth, but He still has work to do in the heavens. He is the General, directing the war-effort, though the ultimate outcome has already been decided in His favor.¹ He is not miles behind the front, either; because Christ is so intimately connected and present with His people, He is suffering with us in the trenches.² At the same time, He is our voice back at headquarters, so that we can be sure we are getting a more than fair hearing in the ultimate court of law.³ As Jesus said of the Father, we can say of Him: “[He] is still working.”⁴

This is the idea the Lord was trying to impress on His band of followers just prior to His ascension. He opens the Great Commission with: “All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth.”⁵ His last command makes no sense, if He is not speaking from the position of ultimate authority. Those who are His disciples can go boldly to every person on earth, regardless of what any governmental, social, or religious authority says, because a higher authority than theirs has spoken. It matters not if Christ’s authority is acknowledged—it is often not. We who obey Him are His emissaries and are clothed with His authority when we do what He has told us to do.

We do not merely go at His command, we follow Him into the breach. He closes the Great Commission with: “And remember: I am with you always, to the end of the age.”⁶ To those who walked closely with Jesus for years in the dust of the Holy Land, and for us who never had that experience, it would seem like the Lord is not with us. The Ascension has hid our Master from our eyes. The Devil would like nothing better than to have us believe that because Christ is invisible to us, Christ is not present with us. Jesus puts that belief to rest, with His own words, while His feet are planted firmly on the ground, just before He is raised to sit at the right hand of the Father.

In our pluralistic society it is uncomfortable, and maybe even weird, to speak of, much less claim, an absolute authority. Yet, that is what Jesus has. In our age of crumbling authority, the Rock of Ages stands firm. In our time of oppressive authority, the will of the all-good King is medicine. He is present and He is in charge. Take heart and listen up!

1 John 16:7-15; Acts 1:1+2

2 Acts 7:54-56; 9:5; Colossians 1:24

3 Hebrews 7:25; 1 John 2:1

4 John 5:17

5 Matthew 28:18

6 Matthew 28:20