



The *Pulpit Exchange*

It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. (1 Corinthians 1:21)
So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading. (Nehemiah 8:8) Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend. (Proverbs 27:17)

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ASCENSION — Made Into an Acrostic

To reflect on the works and doings of our Lord, it is very appropriate that His people again gather together to draw to our minds to the finished work (as it were) of the earthly arrangement of His ministry. We want to look at some of these thoughts as we move through the message. I would like to think of the complete arrangement of our Lord coming to this world as a babe, fulfilling His earthly ministry

facing the hands of wicked men, His death, resurrection, and the ascension again back to His home in glory. In a sense, the ascension is a link between His humiliation and His glorification. The ascension is a link in that arrangement or His exaltation.

It is of interest how our Lord even prophesied of His ascension. Jesus told the Counsel that He will be sitting at the right hand of the Father on high and

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He even prophesied of His ascension. “Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God.” (Luke 22:69)

Acts 1:3–11 is the setting of the ascension. “To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God: (4) And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart

from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. (5) For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

(6) When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? (7) And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons,

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which the Father hath put in his own power. (8) But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. (9) And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. (10) And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; (11) 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." Then, we have the disciples returning to Jerusalem.

There are several things of interest to observe. In a sense, we are observing the last words that Jesus spoke on this earth. We have here the direction that Jesus gave to His disciples and to those who were gathered there with Him, that they should go to Jerusalem and wait. He mentioned to them about John baptizing with water. We look back at this in retrospect and say, "Yes, we understand this. They were to go back to Jerusalem, and they were to wait until they would

have been endued with the power of the Holy Ghost." However, let us remember that there were a lot of things happening for the apostles and for the disciples. Jesus was crucified, was in the grave, and He arose. Now, forty days later, He was taken out of their sight. I think it is of interest the words that Jesus used. He said, "John truly baptized with water." (Acts 1:5) That is something they would have been familiar with. It was something tangible that they could have seen and witnessed. Jesus simply said to them, "John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence."

That was a mystery. It was something that was yet to happen. As He was saying this, He was preparing them for His ascension, or His leaving them. They however, still had in their mind about the restoration of the kingdom to Israel. I do not think that they fully grasped it all, but they obeyed and went into the upper room. Verse 8 says, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." Again, Jesus' words were that they were to be witnesses. As we think of the departing words of our Lord as He ascended, it is a fact that even today, we His servants, that same message

is still going forth. We are to be witnesses. We are to be living examples of what Christ has done. I marvel at all this, as one would sit and meditate and contemplate this group of believers who were gathered together. In verses 10 and 11 they were standing there with their eyes gazed and fixed upon heaven, and that cloud that had received Jesus out of their sight. Yet that cloud, I believe, was still there and they were still gazing and had their rapt attention on what disappeared behind that cloud, to the point that these two angels came and said, “Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven?”

They were gazing into heaven. May that be a challenge for us that we still have our sights fixed on heaven today. There is maybe too much of a temptation to gaze about and look around. Let us keep looking up. The Bible tells us “Look up . . . for your redemption draweth nigh.” (Luke 21:28) Elsewhere the Scriptures say behold He is even at the door (Revelation 3:20). May that be a challenge for us all.

Philippians 2 relates Jesus’ humiliation, how He laid aside the glory that He had and how He came and was “in fashion as a man.” (Philippians 2:8) in facing all that He did. Jesus forewarned

His disciples of His ascension and departure. In John 16:7 He says, “Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away.” He was saying “It is expedient for you disciples for me to ascend.” “It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.” We could go on further in various other verses in John 16 and John 14 where it relates about the Comforter dwelling within us and being a part of us.

As we think of this arrangement because of Christ’s death, resurrection, and ascension, I would like to simply take this word ASCENSION, and do an acrostic with it. I am sure that there are other thoughts, words and applications that could be applied but this is what has been laid on my heart to share.

Therefore, because of Christ’s death, His resurrection and Ascension, I would take the A — *We give adoration to God.* We can do that. Adoration is, “a true sense.” It is “an act of paying honour and tribute to a divine being, a display of true love and reverence.” We could go to an Old Testament setting in Exodus 3:5 at the burning bush. Moses was told to remove his shoes because he was on holy ground.

Out of adoration, honour, and holiness he did that. I was thinking of Joshua when he was to take Jericho. As he was viewing what to do and how to do, outside of the wall a man confronted him and he asked him, “Art thou for us, or for our adversaries” (Joshua 5:13)? He replied, “Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy” (Joshua 5:15). Adoration and honour. Bowing the knee is another aspect of adoration and honour. I appreciate that we have been taught from little on up and we still exercise and practice this today — we bow our hearts and we bow our knees before the almighty God. This is adoration.

There is the two in Luke 18 who stood there and prayed. The publican, “smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner” (Luke 18:13). I see him bowing his heart to an almighty God, versus the prayer of the Pharisee in the various arrangements and excuses that he gave that he was not like other men. We could go on further. In the Genesis account, Joseph when he was made ruler by Pharaoh, and his brethren came unto him, they bowed themselves to the earth. We have other illustrations of that. Nebuchadnezzar, after Daniel interpreted the dream,

“fell upon his face, and worshipped Daniel” (Daniel 2:46), in reverence, as it were, to Daniel. We bring adoration to God by various arrangements and applications and may we never lose sight of that. It is God that we bring adoration to. It is in Him, in God alone, “we live, and move, and have our being” (Acts 17:28). In fact, it is in God “with whom we have to do” (Hebrews 4:13), the apostle Paul tells us. May that be a challenge to us.

I would like to relate a few things in Ephesians 3. I would like to break in here in the middle of Paul’s letter. He starts off in the first verse, “For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ.” Then, I would like to go break into his message. He says in verses 8–12, “Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; (9) And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: (10) To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, (11) According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in

Christ Jesus our Lord: (12) In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.” “For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Ephesians 3:14). One could go on here. I am simply breaking in here, in some of the feelings of Paul. I would think the intent in verse 10 “unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church,” means it would be made known unto God’s servants. Again, Paul was bringing adoration to God for all that God had made known and has shared. As Bible students and scholars we know that we are children of knowledge. We are children of the light. We are children of the day. May it behove us again that we would continue to bring adoration to God.

S — I would simply say this: that we experience salvation. Because of Jesus’ death, resurrection, and ascension we experience salvation. Salvation would imply a deliverance from sin, or victory over sin. One could go to various Old Testament arrangements. We know that the children of Israel of experienced salvation from Egypt. They were “brought . . . out with a mighty hand” (Deuteronomy 7:8) — they were delivered from —

They had victory over.

We could go to various verses, but I will bring only a few to our minds as we think of salvation. In Acts 4:12 (a familiar verse) “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” We experience salvation because of our risen and ascended Lord. We can experience delivery from sin. We experience victory over sin. Remember that. As I would think further about salvation, Acts 3:26 says, “Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.” Salvation turned us around. We think of repentance — to make a turnabout — godly sorrow and victory over sin and temptation.

The psalmist said, “The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid” (Psalm 27:1)? Salvation brings to us peace, calmness and tranquility of soul. My mind would also go to the angel in Matthew 1:21, as the angel spoke to Joseph. In the direction that he gave he said, “thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.” This is the arrangement that we see. We can experi-

ence salvation. I have all confidence to believe that is a part of what each one of us individually are enjoying — deliverance from, and victory over sin.

C — We participate in church life. We plan to participate in church life. We do not simply let it haphazardly happen how it does, or when it suits, but we plan to participate in church life. On Sunday mornings, we plan to come to church. We plan to arrive on time. We make efforts for that. David said, “I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD” (Psalm 122:1). It should be with joy and anticipation as we enter the house of God. The joys that swell up when we think, “I wonder what songs we will sing this morning? I wonder what the devotional meditation will be?”

We come with anticipation, zeal, and the spirit of worship. We are able to lay aside our temporal and earthly things. We have our minds focussed on God and what is being said. We loyally support our own church arrangement and fellowship, and we put our utmost into it. In this thought of participating in church life, I would like to share comments from Malachi 3:16 that relate to this type of thing. “Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the

LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name.” This can be more than in church life. This can be in our home life also, but the fact was that “they that feared the LORD,” and they “spake often.” This would imply a gathering together, or an encouraging one another, and each other, along the highway of life as we travel and journey the spiritual pathway. Therefore, may we with renewed zeal and effort continue to be participants in church life.

E — We can “esteem other[s] better than [ourselves]” (Philippians 2:3). Again, this is only because of the death and the resurrection and the ascension of our Lord. Yes, we can esteem others better than ourselves. We all know how it is in society today. The world says, “Me first. Look at me. Look at what I have done, or accomplished,” or however it may be. No, we are able to esteem others better than ourselves. Esteem would imply the concept of having a high regard or a respect and appreciation. Those are some thoughts that would be synonymous with that word esteem. We are able to do that because of what God through His Son has done for us.

Philippians 2:3 says, “Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.” Observe that it says, “but in lowliness of mind.” Therefore, it is a matter of self denial, of our attitudes, our mind, how we function and act that we are able to esteem others better than ourselves. Another Scripture with this same concept would be Romans 12:10 where it says, “in honour preferring one another.” It carries the same thought.

This does not mean that because someone is an elderly man or has white hair that we honour him. No, it could be the older to the younger. It could be any arrangement — anybody. We esteem others better than ourselves and we do that because of the grace of God. 1 Peter 5:5 relates to this also, in his writing. Again, it is a challenge to say it in my own words, if we keep our own minds “clothed with humility.” This relates again to us that we are able to do this because of the love of God that is within our hearts.

N — *Because of Jesus’ death, resurrection and ascension we are able to live a nonconformed life in this world.* One could relate here various aspects as I would think of nonconformity

and the separation arrangement. I would like to share a few verses from Romans 12:1, 2 (particularly verse 2) that I have in mind for this thought. “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” The challenge is here that we “be not conformed to this world.” That is where I like to go back again to Acts 1. These men were gazing up into heaven.

I would like to challenge us that we do not fall prey and lay down the non conformed life as we see the things around us. We need to keep our spiritual sights on heaven lest we fall prey to temptation, power and influences that are around us. May it ever behove us in the lives that we live. There are a few other Scriptures I would like to relate here and some more comments as I would think of the nonconformed life. James 4:4 says, (this is talking in a spiritual relationship) “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.” It is simply that way. We could say further on that, whosoever is a friend of God is . . . what? An enemy of

the world. This is the way it is. There are two different kingdoms and we need to keep that in focus. Therefore, let us drive our stakes in. We know we will not be able to please God and the world. Let us have our minds set — “We are determined. . . We have decided that we will please God,” and we are going forth on that arrangement.

There are various other verses that I would have to think of and that I would like to relate to this portion of Scripture. 1 John 2:15–17 says, “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.” Therefore, I would like to challenge us that we keep on exercising ourselves in the nonconformed arrangement that we have been our taught — our speech, our appearance, and all that it involved, so that we would not fall prey to the pressures around us. I would like to continue to give an encouragement here as I would think of the various areas of nonconformity.

As I think even our own little

county where we live, there are various Anabaptist groups that are there in our area as well as in any area geographically. There is simply a slow eroding away, and departing. We can sit here and say “Oh, yes,” as we would look back maybe at our past history and all that maybe we have come out from, and we see how far our former Mennonite (or other) arrangements or settings have apostatized. We say, “Whoa, we would never do that. We would never go that far,” but how did they arrive at the place they did? Is it not little by little by little?

Therefore, I would like to challenge us. I would mention maybe about the hat and the bonnet. Let us remember something, when God gave Moses the law, there was the commandment that the children of Israel were to sew that ribband of blue on the borders of their garment. Was there a saving power in that ribband of blue? No. Why were they to sew that ribband of blue on the borders of their garment? It was to help them remember. Read that. Study that in Numbers 15:38. Spend time and meditate on that. It was to help them remember. We need to continue to observe and go about our ways of life. We have a power within us that is enabling to us to live a nonconformed life. May we take heed

and have an interest and desire to do so.

S — *Because of His death, suffering, resurrection, and ascension, we can render Christian service.* There are probably various ways to render Christian service, but I would like to go back to the Old Testament setting where we have one aspect given in 1 Chronicles 29:5. It is of interest on this part how Christian service was rendered. I would like to pull this out here. The latter part tells us about the children of Israel at the time David was getting ready to build the Temple. It mentions here about “The gold for things of gold, and the silver for things of silver, and for all manner of work to be made by the hands of artificers.” Then, it says, “who then is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the LORD?” We can render Christian service to God. Verse 6, 7a mentions, “Then the chief of the fathers and princes of the tribes of Israel, and the captains of thousands and of hundreds, with the rulers of the king’s work, offered willingly, And gave for the service of the house of God.” The thought that I wanted was that they “offered willingly.” We can render Christian service, because we must, and God knows those attitudes. We can render Christian

service willingly, going the second mile and bending over backwards as it were, willing to “spend and be spent,” (2 Corinthians 12:15) and God sees that. God knows the attitudes of the heart of everyone. Again, Romans 12:1, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.” Why would we not want to render service to God? Think about that. It was God who made us. It has been God who has redeemed us. Why would we not want to render Christian service? May it continue to challenge us that we would want to — that the desire of our heart would be to present our bodies so that it complements what we say, and our actions, behaviour and what we do.

Again, in 1 Corinthians 7:22, 23, “For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord’s freeman.” We need to acknowledge that we have been called. God’s Spirit has spoken to us and we have responded in our life and have accepted the plan of salvation. That being the case, we are the Lord’s freeman. “likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ’s servant. Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men.” I would

like to challenge us in that thought. We have been called of God, and we are God's servant. We have been made free. We are God's freeman, because we have been made free from the bondage of sin. We have been made free from the bondage of spiritual death. Therefore, why not accept this challenge, since we have been bought with this price, the price of the blood of God's Son — that we "be not . . . the servants of men," but rather servants of God. May we be ready and helping others to have a consistent living. In fact, vocationally I think of Paul writing to Titus "To maintain good works for necessary uses" (Titus 3:14). It is all involved in rendering Christian service to God. May we willing and ready to take up that challenge in our experience in life.

I — Again, thinking of His death and resurrection and ascension we have intercession through prayer. Yes, because of the ascension of our Lord, we have an intercessor that meets and takes our prayers (as it were) to the Father, through prayer. We could go to various Scriptures. I would think first of Romans 8:34, "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for

us." Is that not interesting? He makes intercession for us. We think of all the prayer experiences that storm the gates of heaven and yet Christ is there ready and willing to make intercession for us. This is a wonderful arrangement.

Hebrews 7:25 gives the thought and concept of intercession. "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." How many times does the Bible have to say something until we believe it? Well, it only needs to say it once, and we should be ready to believe it. However, we have two parallel Scriptures here that refer to an interceder or a mediator whom we have, and who is there to help bring about an arrangement where two have been estranged from each other and they are able to come together as I would think of an intercessor or a mediator.

We can go to Hebrews 4 and can read the various aspects of the high priest, and of all that is involved in making intercession and interceding for the individuals who brought their offering for sacrifice. Therefore, in a sense, we also "have a great high priest" (Hebrews 4:14) (as we think of Jesus and His ascension) sitting "on the right hand of God"

(Hebrews 10:12). It is of interest that the account of the ascension in Luke's account is almost word for word in Mark's account. We can read that in the latter part of the book of Mark, in the last chapter.

O — We live in obedience to God's Word. Yes, we live in obedience. Some things are not spelled out, "Thou shalt," and "Thou shalt not," but the implications are there and we live in obedience to the Word of God. Again there are many who are involved in Church life. They go to church and we ask them — nominal Christianity — "Yes, I was in church on Sunday?" "Well, what did the preacher preach about?" "Well, I am not quite sure." Maybe some of us would be startled too, if someone asked us what our preacher preached about Sunday morning.

What I would like to say is that fact that we do more than simply listen — We do. We act out. We live in obedience to the Word of God. "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso

looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed" (James 1:22–25). He is simply saying, in this concept of this portion of Scripture that if any man be a hearer and not a doer, he likens him unto a man "beholding his natural face in a glass." I would assume that probably all of us looked in a glass, saw our natural face, combed their hair and brushed up a little bit to come to church. We all looked in a natural glass, and what does it say here? "beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was." He looked in a glass, cleaned himself up, combed his hair and went his way and that was it.

Spiritually, the natural face looking into a glass, is the glass — the Bible. Spiritually It is the glass. We look into the Bible. We have our daily devotions. Now, what do we do? We go our way. We lay it all aside and forget about it all. We are busily involved and those thoughts never re-enter our mind again. "It is my life, I do what I want to." No. We look in the glass. We read and we meditate on God's Word. It speaks to us directly. Maybe we read this

morning in John 3, or John 8, or some other portion of Scripture that comes to my mind. Take, for instance, John 8 in the occasion there with the woman caught in adultery. The Pharisees said, “this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act” (John 8:4), asking what shall they do with her. Jesus wrote in the dirt. I am only using this for an illustration. When this was all said and done, Jesus was standing there with the woman, Jesus and asked, “where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord.” And, what did Jesus say? “Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more” (John 8:10, 11). It is a challenge to us. We read God’s Word and we need to let it permeate our experience and our being. We need to be carrying it with us throughout the day, and allowing it to control our lives and our meditations. Yes, we have some decisions to make whether we need to purchase or not purchase. “You mean I should be thinking upon the Word of God?” I am not saying that, but we need to be looking into this glass until we have this experience permeated with a thought or a meditation that we can take with us throughout the day, and that is how we respond.

It is of interest how James

writes it here — how it is the human tendency to go our way and we forget all manners. We live in obedience to God’s Word in everyday life, not only on Sunday. We can go to Matthew 7:21–23, “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.” Then Jesus goes right on into this familiar account, “Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock” (Matthew 7:24). I would like to emphasize again that we live in obedience to God’s Word.

N — I would simply share this that we practice nonresistance. It is because of the Lord’s death, resurrection, and His ascension that we practice nonresistance. We could go to various accounts. In Matthew 5:38, 39 we have these words, “Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, That ye resist not

evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.” “Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you.” (Matthew 5:43, 44) When we study Matthew 5 and we observe the varied Old Testament Scripture that is quoted there, then we observe this little phrase, “But I say unto you.” This is now the New Testament. This is now the Life — the new arrangement. I think you find that about six or so times in Matthew 5. “But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.” How can we pray for someone that is holding a club over our heads. We cannot do it on our own power. How can we pray for someone who would be pointing a gun at us? It takes the power of God. We practice nonresistance, and we do not resist evil.

Romans 12:17 says, “Recompense to no man evil for evil.” “Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good” (Romans 12:20, 21). This is exactly opposite what the

world does. Here again, let us not be influenced by all that we see or hear, or even observe and witness. We want to be able to continue to practice nonresistance. The Bible tells us that we should “Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord” (Hebrews 12:14). That is a challenge. I would say especially the household of faith that we follow peace with all men. Maybe we are taken across in a business arrangement but we continue to follow peace and nonresistance in our experiences in life.

Some “added thoughts,” as I would think of the blessings of the ascension. They are too numerous to enumerate, but I would like to share a few outstanding ones — three or four blessings of the ascension. I would take this from some study. 1) “Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive” (Ephesians 4:8). I am not sure what you would have thought of already as you read over this portion of Scripture, but I come across this and I meditated on it. “When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive.” What is this saying to us? One of the applications that can be made for this Scripture is simply this. When Jesus ascended he placed into captivity, that thing, or that

which makes us captive. What brings us into captivity? What brings us captive? It is the devil — Satan. Our Lord had power over death and the grave and resurrection. I say “Halleluiah.” Our Lord even had power of the “prince of the power of the air” (Ephesians 2:2).

Jesus was able to ascend through the air to the realms of glory. What a wonderful experience. Jesus was yet, after His resurrection, in the domains of the devil, in the domains of Satan where you and I live. At the appointed time of the Father, he was able, and He did ascend through and overcome and take captive the captor of you and I. The devil was completely vanquished. I say it “finished the package” that God sent His Son here to do. He now had complete control over the prince of the power of the air. We see here that Jesus Christ placed into captivity that which makes us captive. In other words, “Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour” (Acts 5:31). We could go to other verses like Ephesians 1:19, 20, “And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead.” That

was fine and good. It was needed to be, but it did not stop there. “And set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places.” We can see the complete package of the part of the ascension along with this whole work of Calvary and the work of our Lord. “Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church” (Ephesians 1:21, 22). Observe: “hath put all things under his feet,” even the devil. He had taken captivity captive. If we would study Scripture, we see that He had the power to send His angel in Revelation 20 and to bind the devil with the chain in that bottomless pit for a thousand years. Control — our Lord is in control. I would like to challenge us beloved. Yes, things happen — experiences in life and all, but remember our Lord is in control. He always has been and He always will be.

Are we ready and willing to continue to live in obedience to Word of God? Our Lord is in control. Why not live in obedience to it? Why chafe? Why be dickering and milling and unhappy? Why not simply say, “Lord,

I give up. Take my life. Do with it in service . . . whatever is your will.” That is one blessing I see. One could go on with various thoughts, but I am thinking also yet maybe of another verse. Colossians 2:15 says, “And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.” The works of the devil. He now had complete dominion over all the devil has attempted, or will attempt to do.

2) *Another blessing would be the sending of His Holy Spirit which He had promised.* When they were gathered together, as He ascended, He promised that he would send His Holy Spirit. According to Scripture, ten days later in Acts 2 the Holy Spirit came. Again, if we make a study of all the types of the Old Testament, fifty days after the Passover was the feast of Pentecost. Here we see this beautiful picture type being fulfilled — the crucifixion of our Lord and now the giving of the Holy Spirit and how it paralleled to all the Old Testament types. We see the sending of the Holy Spirit.

In less than two months of time, Christ was crucified, buried, accompanied by the sorrow, the remorse, the grieving, or whatever, and then the resurrec-

tion, which brought a joy again to their experience. Peter talks about that “lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1 Peter 1:3). At the time of the ascension they were thinking “Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel” (Acts 1:6)? Then Jesus ascended and disappeared from them completely. He told them they were to wait until the coming of the Holy Spirit. Would there have been some confusion in our minds? We are here on this side and we look back and we read all this and we see how it happened. However, if we had really been in it, how would it have been? Well, in a sense we are in it now beloved. We are waiting for His return. We are in it, and may we continue to be challenged.

We have the sending of His Holy Spirit in Acts 2. We know the account there of how He came and the great message that Peter preached. I would like to read from John 14:16 for our benefit. “And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.” Jesus was not able to always every place, everywhere at one time in His physical form. He was saying that He would send them a Comforter who would be able to

abide with them “for ever.” Again, in verse 18, “I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.” We have the blessing of having the Holy Spirit within us. In all this relating to the various acrostic arrangement let us remember if we forget all else, “greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world” (1 John 4:4). We have the power within us to be able to carry out the very thoughts of this acrostic because “greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.”

3) The third blessing that I can see and I would again take this from Ephesians 4:8b, “gave gifts unto men,” and verses 11–13, “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.” Therefore, we have the challenge of these gifts that were given. This is why it is so important that we are able to esteem others better than ourselves because of the varied gifts that He has given to individuals. May we be willing to accept those gifts and move on to the

effective purpose for which the gifts were given for edifying, perfecting, and for unity. They were given so that the body of Christ could be blended together.

4) The fourth blessing that I would like to share would be the fact that not only is Jesus standing at the right hand of God interceding but also He is preparing a place for us. 1 Corinthians 2:9 gives this thought, “But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.” It is a challenge the things that God is preparing, and that Jesus is helping our father to prepare. John 14:1–3 gives the thought, “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.” This is a parallel thought to what the angels said to the group as they stood and observed Jesus go. “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” (Acts 1:11). According to Acts 1 there

could have been maybe one hundred and twenty who were gathered to see our Lord ascend.

I would like to conclude with a few thoughts yet. In time and history we have various events, great notable events that have happened and occurred. Some of those things, individuals were prepared for, and some of them, they were not. I think of the fall of Rome. Some people, no doubt, were prepared for it, and some were not. We could think of maybe the World Wars. Some were prepared and not prepared, and notable things happened.

I am thinking about the notable birth of our Lord. Some were prepared for that and some were not. We can study in Matthew's account how Herod, for instance, was not prepared for that. He did not seem knowledgeable of it and did not know how or what to think about it. Then yet my mind would go to Luke's account where I think of Simeon who was "waiting for the consolation of Israel" (Luke 2:25). He was prepared. He was looking. It is of interest as we study that.

In the history of the United States, there have been assassinations of various presidents over the years. Some were prepared for that and some not. We think of the crucifixion and the resur-

rection. Think of the two in Luke 24, on the road to Emmaus who were not prepared for all this that happened, until the Lord opened their eyes and then they knew it. It is of interest when you study. Why say all this? Even more current and more real to us are the events which took place on September 11, 2001 in which a lot of people were not prepared.

The Bible gives warning in various parables about the thief in the night and all that goes with that. I would like to challenge us, in conclusion, that the greatest and most noblest event of history is yet to come to pass. As we study these various things will you and I be ready? It could happen here in our lifetime — the return of our Lord. We read it in the Scriptures. I read it again from John 14:3, "if I go . . . I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

I would like to conclude by reading from 1 Thessalonians 4:14–18 for our meditations on this ascension day. "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are

asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with

the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." I trust this morning that may continue to be our desire. Yes, it is the desire of a lot of people to meet the Lord, but beloved I lay yet before the burden of it all. We need to be prepared and ready if we will be ushered into that eternal city.

Scripture References

	Exodus		John	2:2	119
3:5	108	8:4	117	3:8-12	109
	Numbers	8:10, 11	117	3:14	110
15:38	113	14:1-3	121	4:8	118, 121
	Deuteronomy	14:16	120	4:11-13	121
7:8	110	14:18	121		Philippians
	Joshua	16:7	108	2:3	111
5:13	109		Acts	2:8	108
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	1 Chronicles	1:5	107	2:15	120
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From the Previous Issue:

Forgetting Those Things Behind

From a message by John Wiens

Sunday, November 7, 2004

Deer Park Mennonite Church

Book Reprint (Continued)

One Hundred Lessons In Bible Study

LESSON 44.

Daniel.

- I. Lineage. — Isaiah 39:7; Daniel 1:3.
- II. His wisdom. — Daniel 1:4, 20; Ezekiel 28:3.
- III. His incorruptible character.
 1. Refused to eat the king's meat or drink the king's wine. — Daniel 1:8–21.

NOTE. — Daniel was probably the first total abstainer that ever stood before the king. We have here the first sign of his future greatness.
 2. Refused to bow to the image of Darius. — Daniel 6:10–14.

NOTE. — He not only refused to bow to the image, but openly continued his regular devotions. The same was a light to the world, strength and protection to himself, and glory to the cause of his Maker.
- IV. An interpreter of dreams and signs.
 1. Nebuchadnezzar's dreams. — 2; 4.
 2. The handwriting on the wall. — 5.
- V. The statesman.
 1. Is advanced in the kingdom. — 2:46–49.
 2. Is made the third ruler in the kingdom. — 5:29.
 3. The chief of presidents. — 6:1–3.
 4. The conspiracy against him. — 6:4–13.
 5. In the lions' den. — 6:14–23.
 6. Continues to prosper. — 6:25–28.
- VI. His visions and prophecies.

1. Of the four beasts and of God's kingdom. — 7.
2. Of the ram and he-goat. — 8.
3. Of the seventy weeks. — 9.
4. Of future conflicts between earthly kingdoms. — 11.
5. Of the deliverance of Israel. — 12.

VII. From the life, prophecies, and environments of Daniel, we learn —

1. That luxury weakens the body and mind.
2. That self-denial brings rich rewards.
3. That conspirators often become the victims of their own conspiracy.
4. That submission to popular sins is inexcusable weakness.
5. That God comforts His people in distress.
6. That God is able to deliver His people from any and all dangers.
7. That sacrifice for principle has the effect of causing others to turn to the Lord.
8. That the best of men have need of asking for a forgiveness of sins.
9. That men, in all stations of life, have their trials.
10. That worldly wisdom falls far short of the wisdom of God.

1. Where was Daniel at the time that his companions were in the fiery furnace?
2. Explain the prophecy of seventy weeks.
3. Did Daniel ever return to his native land?
4. What do we learn from Belshazzar's feast?
5. What was the pulse eaten by Daniel and his companions?

Children's Book Reprint (Continued)

THE PENNY TRACT

Revised and Reprinted © 2006

It would take a much longer space than I have to spare, to describe at full length the manner in which this little tract, with the

divine blessing wrought on this man's mind. It made him at first as I have just said, quite angry, and he showed his anger by rag-

ing at all religion and religious books and people whatever. In this humor he remained several days, till, his anger being in some measure spent, he became very low, and then it pleased the Lord to visit him with a deep conviction of sin. At this time he took up the tract again, reading it over and over, and calling to mind all his sins and transgressions; and such at length was the horror and despair which he manifested, that his poor wife, not knowing what else to do, called the minister to him.

Now the minister was a truly godly man, who knew that the foundations of true religion must be laid in deep humility, and that a man must feel the burden of his sins before he can be brought to lay hold of the Saviour. He therefore, went to work in the right way, and endeavored, with divine help, to give the poor man a still more clear idea of the dreadful nature of sin, and of the lost and undone state of all mankind by nature. He then proceeded to show him more plainly what the Saviour had done for sinners, assuring him, at the same time, that unless he were willing to give up all his sins, he never could have any interest in Christ. He also explained to him more largely the work of the Holy Spirit, and his power and agency

in cleansing and purifying the heart. Thus the minister discoursed with the poor man while still confined to his bed, and opened his mind upon many points of doctrine to which he had never before given a thought; he also gave him a Bible, and lent him several good books.

Notwithstanding the frequent visits of the minister, it was some time before Frank Downes even was able to grasp so much light or comfort as to enable him to conceive it possible for him to be saved; but after a while hope broke in upon him, he experienced the new birth and he became possessed of much peace of mind. During the former part of the time in which he lay under conviction, he made his wife, more miserable than ever; but when he began to have a sense of the divine favor, and to conceive that he was not altogether a lost one, his manner became more gentle, and his poor wife and infant son began to feel the benefit of the change which had passed upon him. But not to lengthen out this story too far, I must say in a few words, that it was the Lord's doing (divine providence) that the little tract sent by the young ladies to this poor man, should be the beginning of a very great change in him; and thus the Lord often

blesse a very small thing to the production of some mighty work.

As soon as Frank Downes was able to walk, he went to return his thanks to the minister for his kindness, and to consult him concerning his future mode of life. Frank Downes was most kindly received by the minister, who rejoiced to see so good a work begun and going on, as he hoped, in the heart of this poor man, who had hitherto been reckoned the worst character in the neighborhood. The minister took this occasion to point out to him the necessity, if he would have any good evidence of his interest in Christ, of leaving all his evil habits, and of endeavoring to procure his livelihood in an honest way. Moreover, he brought forward to him this verse, "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit: every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down and cast into the fire: wherefore, by their fruits ye shall know them." (Matthew 7:18-20)

Frank Downes promised the minister that he would never again have a hand in any thing unlawful. He sought with effort the way to join himself unto the Church. After a time of instruction in the way, he made his vows before God and witnesses in the

waters of baptism and thus identified himself with the Church — the body of Christ. I am happy to say that grace was given him to enable him, so far as man could see, to keep this resolution; and although it was some time before he could get into a regular and profitable way of business, yet he never fell again into his old evil courses, though he afterwards confessed he had many temptations to do so. Thus God, who had so remarkably, and through such feeble means, commenced this mighty work of restoring a wandering sinner to himself, failed not by degrees to bring His work to perfection.

It would be interesting to give an account of the happy change which took place in the house and family of Francis Downes after he became a believer. How true are the words of the holy Scriptures, "Godliness is profitable to all things, having promise of the life, that now is, and of that which is to come" (1 Timothy 4:8). What a valuable pennyworth was that which the ladies sent to Francis Downes! For as I said before, it was the means, under God, of bringing to pass this happy change in the heart and family of the poor man. We know that it is the Lord by whom these mighty events are brought to pass; but the Almighty

The Pulpit Exchange



is generally pleased to work by means, and blessed are those whom He chooses to employ as

instruments of His works of mercy. (to be concluded).

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