



A few Sundays ago, as we were concluding our discussion of the Gospel of Luke at BibleShare, we came to the section towards the end of Luke where we read of the ascension of Jesus into heaven. Many of us have read this event of the ascension of Jesus in this account in Luke as well as in the Gospel of Mark and the Book of Acts. Below are the scriptures to which I would like for us to discuss.

*"So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God."* - Mark 16:19 (KJV)

*"And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven."* Luke 24:51 (KJV)

*"And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight."* Acts 1:9 (KJV)

I am quite sure that we all have read and heard these scriptures countless times. However, many times I believe we do just that - just read these scriptures. In the Gospel accounts given in Luke and Mark, they are placed at the very end of these Gospels. The tendency of the believer is to quickly glance and read these scriptures simply because they are at the end without paying to much attention to the vast richness and great truth that these seemingly obscure scriptures bring to the table.

As believers we hold tremendous value to the crucifixion of Jesus as well as His resurrection - as we should for these are foundational to the whole Gospel message. Jesus' death on the cross is paramount for the atonement and remission of the sins of the world. Through His crucifixion Jesus "paid the price" for our redemption by the shedding of His blood and His death on the cross. He became THE once and for all FINAL sacrifice for the atonement of sin that allows anyone who believes in what He did to be restored back into relationship and "oneness" with our God. Being God's true High Priest, after the order of Melchizedek (not Aaron), Jesus offered the perfect sacrifice, Himself, as the spotless, sacrificial Lamb.

As I also mentioned, the resurrection of Jesus is also foundational and vital to the Gospel message. For Jesus, even though He died as the perfect sacrifice, He then rose from the grave. In doing this, we know that he defeated the final enemy, spiritual death, which is separation from God. Jesus stripped the enemy of his illegally usurped "power" over mankind because of sin and now holds the "keys" of death and Life. He resurrected, but not like Lazarus or any other who were previously risen from their tombs. For if you think about it, they may have rose from their tombs but it was just for a while. Each of them ultimately physically died again. We never read of any of those who were raised from the dead taken up directly into heaven. No, Jesus' resurrection was very different. He resurrected as the first 'born again man" - the first of many. Jesus died in our place for the remission of our sin - sin that brought spiritual death. As we all know it didn't end at the crucifixion. He totally defeated spiritual death by rising as the first of many at His resurrection.

However, it is just as vital to grasp and understand that it also didn't end at His resurrection, either. Another, crucial aspect to the Gospel message is that Jesus "ascended" to the Father. It is of the utmost importance that we do not equate the "ascension" of Jesus with His "resurrection." They are two separate yet vital components to the Gospel message concerning Jesus. Mark tells us that Jesus ascended and is now seated at the right hand of the Father. This aspect of the Gospel message, the ascension, must be truly grasped and understood by every believer. For just as the crucifixion and resurrection of the Son of God were prophesied in the Jewish scriptures, so was His ascension and the importance of it was prophesied.

Let's look at Daniel 7:13,14 (KJV) - *"I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. 14 And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."* For some of us we look at this as a Messianic prophecy, which it is. Unfortunately, many of us look at these scriptures and think it is a Messianic prophecy concerning the "return" of Jesus. However, if we look closely at this prophetic word by the prophet Daniel, we may get a different understanding of what He saw and what he was referring to.

To do this we need to get a good understanding of the "characters" in this vision. Most of them are very obvious. The one who was "like the Son of man" is obviously referring to Jesus - the Messiah, the Son of God who many times in the Gospels referred to Himself as the "Son of Man." (Hmmm, I wonder why???) The next "character" we meet is the "Ancient of Days." This is one of the names and/or titles that Yahweh calls Himself. Therefore, it is obviously referring to Father, God. Another important element and "character" in this night vision is the statement that this one like the Son of man, "came in the **clouds**." That statement alone should start to get the "bells a ringing" within your thinking. Let's continue.

One of our first clues in understanding these scriptures is that we see that Daniel "saw in a night vision." What he was saying was that the Lord took him into the "spirit realm." He was taken **up** into heavenly Throne Room where he saw the Ancient of Days. The second clue is that Daniel saw "one like the Son of Man" coming "with the clouds of heaven." This One who was "like the Son of Man" was **going to** the "Ancient of Days." The "Ancient of Days," as we said is Father God who would be in the "Throne Room of Heaven" seated upon His throne. If we understand this correctly, we begin to see that this is taking place in Heaven, not on earth. The Son of Man is going up (ascending) to the Ancient of Days, not coming down to earth. This is what we read of on Acts 1:9 - *"...he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight."*

Daniel states that the Son of Man is **going up** in "clouds." The "clouds" being the "Shekinah" glory of God which is also representative of the Holy Spirit. These "clouds," the "Shekinah" the Holy Spirit" were ushering and presenting the Son of Man to the Ancient of Days. Daniel goes on to say that *"they brought him near"* before the Ancient of Days. Who are the "they" that were bringing the Son of Man to the Ancient of Days? Along with the Holy Spirit, these were the heavenly hosts of angels. Daniel was seeing the procession of Heaven welcoming Jesus, the Son of Man, the Son of God back to where He originally came from.

This was what the final chapter of the mission of the "Lamb of God." The plan of the Father from the beginning of time was that His Son would be "the Lamb slain before the foundations of the earth." It was given to the prophets to proclaim. It was accomplished when Jesus came to earth as a little baby wrapped in "swaddling clothes." The "road" back to the Throne Room for Jesus would be His life upon this earth. It would include His training up of His disciples. It would include the rejection, persecution and ultimate crucifixion by the very ones He came to save. It was accomplished through the tremendous heartache of separation between the Father and the Son as the Son, voluntarily, became sin and took the punishment

for every sinner. It was accomplished through the resurrection signifying that the Son conquered and overcame "death and separation from God" which is the ultimate enemy. The culmination of it all was now taking place - the coronation of King Jesus. This was the grand procession of Heaven welcoming the glorious King of kings back home.

In Daniel's vision we see the Son of Man, Jesus, come before the "Ancient of Days" (the Father). He was given all "*dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.*" Daniel's vision was of Jesus not returning to earth for a second time but rather it was of Jesus returning back to His rightful place at the right hand of the Father. This is what we see in the accounts found in Mark, Luke and the Book of Acts of the ascension of Jesus. We see Jesus **taken up into the clouds** being carried and received into Heaven. We can only imagine as angels lined the pathway. Other angels decreeing, rejoicing and celebrating the return of the Son of God. There were shouts of praise and heavenly song as the procession of the King enters into the Throne Room for the coronation of King Jesus. Oh what spender!! Oh what majesty!! Oh what glory!!

Grasping, understanding and never forgetting the ascension of Jesus back to His rightful place at the right hand of the Father as the Lamb in the midst of the Throne, is another essential to our Gospel message and to our very own salvation. Jesus' ascension to the Father was witnessed by Daniel hundreds of years earlier in a "night vision." Daniel prophesied and documented that this would take place - and it did. The Messiah, the Son of God, the Son of Man, would return from His mission on earth, "crowned with many crowns" as He was given power and dominion over all things. It was because of this final chapter of Jesus' mission that now we as believers can partake in the wonderful blessings of the Kingdom. Most importantly is that we are able to be restored back into relationship with the One and only true God. It was here where all heaven could have declared - mission accomplished!!!

It was at this time that Jesus returned to His original state of glory. In the Book of Revelation we get a description by the Apostle John of this glorified Son of God. I'm quite sure that there are really no words that could possibly describe what John beheld when He saw Jesus. He tried in the best way He could. Let us read of this wonderful description of our glorious King in words that could never be anywhere near being adequate concerning what John beheld. "*And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.*" (Revelation 1:12-16 - KJV)

We can understand why in the very next verse John writes: "*And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead.*" (Revelation 1:17 - KJV) It was at this point that Jesus makes it very clear about what took place at His ascension back into the Throne Room as He declares: "*Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.*" (Revelation 1:17-18 - KJV). Jesus was declaring that He was, is and always will be the One who is given all power, dominion and authority over all things. Why? Because He holds the keys!!! This was the total fulfillment of what David "saw" and declared in Psalm 110:1, "*The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.*" And again David prophesies of this event in Psalm 68:18 - "*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.*"

A few years ago the Lord had given me a song which I believe is fitting for our discussion. Below are the lyrics.

## PROCESSION OF THE KING

HOLY HOLY; HOLY HOLY;  
LORD GOD MOST HIGH;  
LET YOUR MAJESTY AND YOUR SPLENDOR  
WITH THE TRAIN OF YOUR GLORY FILL THIS SANCTUARY  
LORD GOD MOST HIGH; LORD GOD MOST HIGH;

ANGELS BOW THEIR KNEE, AS CREATION JOINS  
IN THEIR WORSHIP OF THE RIGHTEOUS ONE  
YOUR GRANDEUR TRANSCENDS THE AGES  
HALLOWED BE THY NAME  
OUR SOLEMN ASSEMBLY WELCOMES YOU IN OUR MIDST  
AS YOU TAKE YOUR PLACE IN THE SEAT OF HONOR  
BRILLIANT AND RADIANT IS YOUR GREATNESS  
SOVEREIGN, ANNOINTED KING

LET YOUR MAJESTY AND YOUR SPLENDOR  
WITH THE TRAIN OF YOUR GLORY FILL THIS SANCTUARY

If you would like to listen to a very simple version of this song please copy and paste the following link to your browser. <http://www.simplysimpleworship.com/Audio-Procession%20of%20the%20King.mp3>

As we conclude our discussion, we must keep in mind that the Apostles and many of Jesus' disciples were witnesses of the crucifixion and the resurrection as well as the ascension. This affirmed, confirmed and sealed their faith in who Jesus was and is. The New Testament was written by men who were thoroughly convinced that Jesus was and is now at the right hand of the Father. They believed that through His blood and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit that they were in a relationship of "oneness" with their risen Lord **who has ascended** and is now the King who is at the right hand of the Father. To the believers it became the fact that Jesus is not only alive but He is in the midst of the Throne as the Messiah, the Son of God, the Son of Man, the King of kings and the Lord of lords who reigns in all honor, majesty, dominion and power. All Hail to the King!!!