

## THE COMING OF JESUS

In the last issue of *The Newsletter* we stated, “when Jesus returns to the earth, commonly called ‘the second coming,’ is better translated ‘*The Second Appearing*.’” However, the Scripture does refer to “the coming of Jesus,” but isn’t referring to his coming back to earth the second time. We begin with two scriptures where Jesus is said to be *coming*. Matthew 24:30: “And then the sign of the son of man will appear in the sky, and all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the son of man *coming in the clouds of the sky* with power and great glory.” Also Matthew 26:63-65: “And the high priest said to him, ‘I adjure you by the living God, that you tell us whether you are the Christ, the son of the living God.’ Jesus said to him ‘You have said it yourself, nevertheless I tell you, hereafter you will see *the son of man sitting on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven*.’” Revelation 1:7 “Behold, he is coming with *the clouds*, and every eye shall see him, even those who pierced him.” Ordinarily we think of this in terms of his second appearing. Whenever clouds are mentioned in Scripture, our first thoughts are the physical, material clouds indicating God’s presence or when Jesus appears at his second coming. We do not dispute the truth of that. However, in other Scriptural passages clouds are used symbolically to indicate something other than his second appearing. Daniel 7:13: “I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven one like the son of man was coming.” If we stopped here, we would think Daniel is speaking of Jesus’ “second coming.” But note. Daniel does not say Jesus came down to earth, rather “*he came up* to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him (Christ’s ascension), where he received dominion, glory and a kingdom.”

The New Testament’s quote of an Old Testament passage (Psalm 110) in relation to the ascension echoes the crucial significance of Jesus *coming up to the Ancient of Days*. This Psalm is quoted by three of the Gospels, Matthew 22:44; Mark 12:36; and Luke 20: 42, 43; also in Acts 2:34, 35; and Hebrews 1:13. Peter grasped the importance of this Psalm when he preached the first recorded sermon after the ascension of Jesus (Acts 2:14-36). The Apostle Paul’s quotation of Psalm 68:18 in Ephesians 4:8: “When he ascended on high, he led captive a host of captives, and gave gifts to men” and his statement in verse 10: “He who descended is also He who ascended far above the heavens” corroborates Ephesians 1:20, 21: God exerted his strength “when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him on his right hand in the heavenlies, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but in the one to come.”

An important, but generally overlooked Psalm on the ascension is Psalm 24:7-10: “Lift up your heads, O gates, and be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the king of glory may come in! Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O gates, and lift them up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in! Who is this King of glory? The Lord of Hosts, He is the king of Glory.” This Psalm pictures Jesus, the king of Glory being challenged as he enters Heaven’s gates at his ascension. We do not know just why the host of Heaven would

make such a challenge, but we do know, in spite of the majority of religious thinking, Jesus is the only *man* to ever enter the very presence of God. (The Apostle Paul declares the man Jesus Christ, is still a man: “There is one God and mediator between God and men the *man* Christ Jesus.” (I Tim. 1:5).

In this article we will consider two of the many aspects of his ascension: his receiving all power and authority to rule both heaven and earth (Matt. 28:18), and his taking his seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens as our minister and high priest in the true tabernacle, heaven itself (Heb. 8:1, 2).

Now back to his *coming in the clouds*. In Isaiah 19:1, 2, Isaiah is speaking a message to Egypt: “The oracle concerning Egypt. Behold, the Lord is riding on a *swift cloud*, and about to come to Egypt.” This did not mean God was going to ride a cloud to Egypt. It meant the Lord was coming to bring judgment upon Egypt. “The idols of Egypt will tremble at His presence, and the heart of the Egyptians will melt within them. So I will incite Egyptians against his brother, and each against his neighbor, city against city, and kingdom against kingdom.” He comes in judgment upon Egypt. He is coming in symbolic form, riding upon a cloud. In his book *He Shall Have Dominion* Kenneth Gentry Jr. writes: “The New Testament picks up on this apocalyptic judgment imagery when it speaks of Christ *coming in the clouds* of judgment during history. Matthew 26:64 must be understood as some form of first century ‘coming to judge.’ Christ says this will be witnessed by his accusers in the Sanhedrin (the Jewish rulers): ‘Nevertheless, I say *to you*, hereafter *you* will see the son of man sitting on the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven’ (Matt. 26:64). According to Matt. 24:34 the Jews of *this generation* would see a sign that the son is in heaven: ‘And then shall appear the sign of the son of man in heaven’ (Matt. 24:30). The sign that the son of man is in heaven was the smoking rubble of Jerusalem, which he had prophesied beforehand (Matt. 24:2, 15-21).”

Let’s note again Matthew 26:24 the words of Jesus to the High Priest: “You have said it yourself; nevertheless I tell you, hereafter you shall see *the son of man sitting at the right hand of power and coming on the clouds of Heaven*.” Jesus is referring to Daniel 7:13. He is *coming in the clouds of Heaven* while he is *sitting on the right hand of Power*. This shows this cannot be his second coming to earth, rather he is coming in judgment. The high priest could not see this if the event takes place thousands of years in the future. According to Jesus, the high priest will see it at his ascension when he receives dominion and glory and a kingdom, begins his rule, and begins judging the nations with a rod of iron (Psalm 2:9; Rev. 12:5). Revelation 1:7: “Behold *he is coming in the clouds*, and every eye shall see him, *even those who pierced him*, and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over him, so it is to be, Amen.” John is writing concerning the time when Christ begins to rule and reign over everything in the heavens and on the earth. The picture John saw of Jesus coming in the clouds of heaven was his ascension when he came up to the Ancient of Days. The church needs to see the

emphasis God has placed upon the ascension. It was at the ascension God gave Christ control of the universe as the son of man. "He must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy that will be abolished is death" (I Cor. 15:25, 26).

The other of the many aspects of his ascension, his *coming up to the Ancient of Days*, we will now discuss in Hebrews 8:1, 2: "Now the main point in what has been said (in the first seven chapters of Hebrews) is this: 1. We have a high priest, 2. Who has taken his seat at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, 3. A minister in the sanctuary and the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man."

"We have a High Priest." What having a high priest is all about is that Jesus is adequately and sufficiently qualified to be a high priest. In the later part of chapter 7:24 says: Christ "abides forever (and so) he holds his priesthood permanently." He holds the priesthood as long as he lives and he is going to live forever, so that means we will always have a high priest...we will always have the help we need from our priest. He doesn't need daily to offer up sacrifices because he has been appointed forever, and when God appointed him, He appointed him with an oath; when God could swear by no greater, He swore by Himself. That is important. God not only makes a statement about it in His word. He swears and takes an oath about it. It has taken the Hebrew writer seven chapters to try to get his readers to understand the importance of what he is saying...that when Jesus "*came up to the Ancient of Days*," he was made a high priest and began his ministry from the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens (Heb. 8:1). Why is so hard to get Believers to see just who they are in Christ and what they have because of his ascension? Paul is concerned with this very question when he prays for the Ephesians, Eph. 1:18-23: "I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of his power toward us who believe. This is in accordance with the working of the strength of His might which He brought about in Christ when He raised him from the dead and seated him on His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but in the one to come. And He put all things in subjection under his feet."

Now, what does all this have to do with Hebrews 8? It has taken him seven chapters to show we have a high priest. This is the greatest thing that has ever happened to mankind...and we don't even know anything about the priesthood, much less that we have a high priest. We have a *man* in heaven representing us. This doesn't make much of an impression on those who believe that their dad and granddad, and great granddad are already up there waiting and watching for them to join them. But, as we said above, and contrary to most religious belief, there is only one *man* in heaven, and that man is Jesus Christ. Peter said David did not ascend into heaven (Acts 2:34), So David is not in heaven, nor is Enoch nor Elijah in heaven because "these *all* died in faith without receiving the promises, because God had provided something better for us, so that *apart from us they would not be made perfect*" (Heb. 11:13, 29, 30). When Christ *came up to the Ancient of Days* heaven itself was opened up to a man and that man represents us as our high priest and we have access to heaven, and it is not something we enter whenever we die...it is ours right now, "therefore since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by

the new and living way which he inaugurated for us through the veil, that is his flesh, and since we have a great high priest over the house of God, let us draw near in full assurance of faith" (Heb.10:19-22).

The second point is: "He has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.: Psalm 110:1.2: "The Lord says to my lord: 'Sit at My right hand until I make your enemies the footstool of your feet.' The Lord will stretch forth your strong scepter from Zion, saying 'Rule in the midst of your enemies.'" When we cited this Psalm above it was to show the significance of the ascension. Here we cite it again to emphasize the fact that Jesus took his place at the right hand of the throne of God. This Psalm is the most quoted Psalm in the New Testament. So when things begin to crumble around us, when the worldly system seems to have gone crazy, when the government has taken the place of God, and immorality is the accepted norm of conduct even in many church circles, when the Bible is an outdated book, when the assaults of the new humanism demands sympathy and support of the gay agenda and the church and her religious leaders cave into their demands, and new age communism rules our schools, and we could finish this page with this dark picture...but when we can see no answer, then remember...Christ is on the righthand of the Majesty on High and *he is there for us!*

If Christ, sitting on the right hand of the Father, can come on a cloud and destroy those who would have destroyed him...if he can fulfill the prophesy that he gave the high priest and destroy the entire nation and send them into oblivion (which he did), and if he can destroy death...he can certainly handle our puny problems and have dominion over them. Sadly so many believers are so wrapped up in the world they depend on the world's system to help in the time of trouble. It is no wonder the modern church has such a weak witness; they know nothing about the high priest sitting on the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens.

The third point: He is a minister in the sanctuary, which the Lord pitched, not man." The three and a half years upon the earth in his ministry was simply preparatory to his heavenly ministry. His real ministry began when he ascended. That's when he began to minister on our behalf. How does he minister on behalf of the believer? Hebrews 9:11-14: "When Christ appeared as high priest of good things to come, He entered through a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation, and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through his own blood he entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption...the blood of Christ, who offered himself without blemish to God cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God." He took upon himself more sin than any one man had individually. 11 Corinthians 5:21: "He made him who knew no sin to become sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in him." When Christ *came up to the Ancient of Days* and was presented before Him, his sacrifice was accepted, meaning all our sins are forgiven.

When the writer states that Christ, seated on the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, is a "minister of the sanctuary" shows this is not a sedentary position. He is not just "seated" on God's right hand, he is administering all the position entails. Although God's throne is in heaven (Rev. 4:2), He is, along with Christ, dwelling in his people (John 14:18, 23); Col 1:27). As we have noted, Christ is a man in heaven, but is in the earth spiritually in his people.