

HC 49– Your Benefits from Christ’s Ascension

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: The Heidelberg Catechism begins by telling you that your only true comfort in life and death is that your body and soul belong to Jesus Christ. The rest of the catechism shows you how and why you get that true comfort. You get that true comfort from the fact that Jesus lived for you. You get that true comfort that Jesus died for you. You get that true comfort that he rose again from the dead for you. But you also get comfort- that necessary true comfort- from the fact that Jesus ascended into heaven for you...Jesus Christ’s ascension 升天 is one of the most comforting doctrines of all.

But in what way is the Lord’s ascension into heaven comforting? Today you will see that it is comforting by the fact that from Christ’s ascension **you get 3 meaningful and needed gifts**...Gifts that deliver...not that like those which people take back on Boxing Day because it is not suitable for them.

Our headings are: Gift 1:**A Perfect pleader for you**, Gift 2: **A Guaranteed 保证 Place in heaven for you**, and Gift 3:**God’s Holy Spirit while you on earth**.

Our goals are: **That you will comforted by the fact that Jesus saves, secures, and encourages his covenant people by the gifts he sends from heaven**.

49 Q. HOW DOES CHRIST’S ASCENSION INTO HEAVEN BENEFIT US? A. First, he pleads our cause in heaven in the presence of his Father. Second, we have our own flesh in heaven– a guarantee that Christ our head will take us, his members, to himself in heaven. Third, he sends his Spirit to us on earth as a further guarantee. By the Spirit’s power we make the goal of our lives, not earthly things, but the things above where Christ is, sitting at God’s right hand.

Gift 1:A Perfect Pleader for you

1. When we looked at the general work of Christ’s ascension, I mentioned at that time that Jesus gave gifts to men. I emphasized this based on the promises in Psalm 68, which were repeated and explained by the Apostle Paul in Eph 4. Ephesians 4:8 Therefore He says: "When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And gave gifts to men." 9 (Now this, "He ascended" —what does it mean but that He also first descended 降到 into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.)
Notice Verse 10. Jesus had to fill the things (or fulfill) the things which were spoken about him.
Psalm 68:18 You have ascended on high, You have led captivity captive; You have received gifts among men, Even from the rebellious, That the LORD God might dwell there. 19 Blessed be the Lord, Who daily loads us with benefits, The God of our salvation! Selah 20 Our God is the God of salvation; And to GOD the Lord belong escapes from death. 21 But God will wound the head of His enemies, The hairy scalp 脑袋 of the one who still goes on in His trespasses.
2. Because of Jesus’ ascension and his now being seated at God’s right hand, a place where he was welcomed by his Father, **he will plead your cause in heaven** – he will be your advocate 代求者 and plead for all your needs in heaven from his Father. Jesus did not save you to leave you. He did not raise you up to let you down. He knows that you need much help to live as a Christian in a non-Christian world. What kinds of needs might you have? You need to get your thoughts right. You need the right words to speak. You need the ability and confidence to trust him and obey him. So after his ascension he continued to work on your behalf. The Bible repeats this often:
Romans 8:34 Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession 祈求 for us.
Remember, the **right hand person** is the one with power...and access...and Jesus Christ uses that power and access for you. Therefore you find comfort knowing the power of your Pleader 辩护人.
3. Since Jesus is your Intercessor – the perfect one - it means that you do not need another Intercessor. No one in his right mind who has a perfect thing and looks for another. It is an insult to Jesus Christ, your Redeemer, if you attempt to pray through any dead person – as good as he might have been. Even the godly Virgin Mary cannot not pray for you. Those who are dead are not qualified to pray for you. What about living people on earth, might they pray for you? Absolutely. But get this, they are on earth. Their prayers do not have the same weight. They are sinful and don’t know how to perfectly pray. They have limited authority. They don’t know God’s will perfectly. They must pray for you, but realize that if they are praying, they are praying through Jesus Christ.
4. And notice the implication of the fact that Jesus Christ is praying for you in heaven. In his prayer he

reminds his Father that you have been justified, so no one can condemn you anymore - ever. Even when you daily sin, or when the Accuser 指控人 says: "Mitchell is guilty," Jesus Christ reminds his Father: "I've paid for that sin." The Apostle John explained this. He said that God is your Father and you are his children. So when your loving Redeemer asks for things for you – little children... you can be confident that the Father will give you what he asks.

1John 2:1 My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an **Advocate with the Father**, Jesus Christ the righteous.

Hebrews 9:24 For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, **but into heaven itself**, now to appear in the presence of God for us;

5. Your sins will never be held against you because Jesus is your Intercessor. Indeed, Jesus is the voice of the elect. The Greek word of "Advocate" is "parakleetos" which means "one at your side" as in a court of law 法庭. You see the nature of Christ work? On one hand he is at God's right hand, and on the other hand, he is at your side! Beautiful.

Gift 2: A Guaranteed Place in Heaven for you

1. Now the 2nd gift. Because of his ascension, Jesus Christ guaranteed that you his child will have a place in heaven. Jesus always spoke the truth and he unequivocally 明确 stated that he is going to prepare a place for those who believe in him.

John 14:1 "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. 2 "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.

3 "And if I go and prepare a place for you, **I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.**

By the way, look at the foolishness of the Jehovah's Witnesses... they talk about earth becoming Paradise. Yet, in the clearest way, Jesus promised that he would go... come back... and take... whoever believes in him. And to give confidence to his hearers, he reassured 再保证 them that he himself would come and take them to that place he was going to prepare for them. He didn't leave this for servants to do!

2. Illustration: If you have do something, doesn't it give you confidence when you see someone who has done it before? If someone heavier than you walked on a frozen pond it gives you some confidence that you can do it too. How much more won't it give you confidence if your Lord who knows you, and whom you trust, and the one who is your Redeemer, and who will come back for you personally, says that you he will take you to be in heaven – where he has gone? This is a guarantee on which you can count!

3. To further confirm to his hearers of their real place in a real heaven, Jesus confirmed that that was his home. And we know Jesus Christ was referring to heaven because that is the only place where we may see his glory. No human in his natural face can see God's glory and live.

John 17: 24 "Father, I desire that they also whom **You gave Me may be with Me where I am**, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world 创立世界以前

Gift 3: God's Holy Spirit while you wait on earth

1. Jesus sent his Holy Spirit into the hearts of the people. So his Holy Spirit is therefore not distant. No one would have uncertainty about his presence.

John 14: 16 "And I will pray the Father, and He will give you **another** Helper, that He may abide with **you forever**—17 "the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, **for He dwells with you and will be in you.**

By the way, the word translated as "helper" is the word "parakleetos." This means, **like Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit is your "side help" as in a court of law.** Jesus is the "other" helper.

2. Specifically, how will the **Holy Spirit help the children of God**...children of the Redeemed?

- a. **He will teach you things you need to know** about God from his Word.
- b. **He will help you to remember (to do) all things** God taught you from his Word.
- c. **He will remove fear and uncertainty from your heart** and give you courage to speak, even before kings. Christians have to speak truth before ordinary men or before judges or before kings. This can be quite intimidating 恐吓 But with the Holy Spirit at your side, whom shall you fear?
John 14:25 "These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. 26 "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, **He will teach you all things**, and bring to your **remembrance all things** that I said to you. 27 "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. **Let not your heart be troubled**, neither let it be afraid.
- d. **He will also equip you for the work that he assigned** to you. The biggest task you have is to bring the world under the submission of Jesus Christ (so that the world becomes his footstool).
John 16:7 "Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. 8 "And when He has come, **He will convict** 指证 **the world of sin**, and of righteousness, and of judgment:
It makes much sense that the Holy Spirit is rightly called the Helper and the Comforter. Mohamed is not the comforter, as Muslims argue. He absolutely can't do what the Comforter does.

3. And Christ's Holy Spirit was not a temporary arrangement. He will be with his church to the end of the age. He is a **guarantee** – a monetary 金融 term – as in **collateral** 抵押品 That is what Jesus said Matthew 28...and confirmed through other writers.

2Corinthians 1: 21 Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, 22 who also has sealed 凭据 us and given us the **Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.**

2Corinthians 5: 5 Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit **as a guarantee.**

Note how the work of the Holy Spirit is often repeated in the Bible. God knew that it is easy for man to get intimidated by the enemy...and to be overwhelmed by the greatness of his work, so he repeated the reminder of help from his Holy Spirit.

4. Jesus' Holy Spirit is not just for **company in loneliness** and **confidence in hard times**. His Holy Spirit **guarantees that the Lord will come again** for you...he guarantees you that God's Word is true...he guarantees you that you are children of God...and he gives you all of these guarantees for eternity...till Jesus Christ comes to take you home.

Conclusion:

Jesus Christ went back to heaven to plead with his Father on your behalf. He went to heaven to give you the guarantee that you too will be there one day. He went to heaven to send you his much needed Holy Spirit who is everywhere present to help. These things comfort you!

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: How vast 巨大 the benefits that we in Christ possess! I know this is the season of giving and receiving gifts. And what wonderful gifts you have received. Don't get carried away with minor gifts of this world...you are rich. And on the other side, share these great gifts with others that you in Christ possess. In addition, give people what they really need. Don't you want to make others really rich? May it be that you give this gift of Christ's Gospel to others! May it be that the world sees their sin and the need for the cross. May it be that they receive it...as you take it to them.

Finally, these gifts that we Christians have from the Lord are most critical for our lives. We don't get these gifts because we are good, but we only get them because we are God's children through Jesus Christ. If you want these gifts you have to become Christ's child first. Ask him to make you his child – to count your sins as his...and his righteousness as yours...