

HC 49– Gifts from Christ’s Ascension

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: Did you get a gift for Christmas? Maybe you got a Fitbit and found out that it didn’t work exactly as you thought. Maybe you got a Recipe Book and found out that the food did not taste as good as it looked in the book. You probably wanted to return some of those gifts. As a child you probably got a gift from someone...but it didn’t last long. Maybe you ate it and it was gone...or your brother broke it. Not so with your Lord. He saved you and secured you for eternity and when he went back to heaven 40 days after his resurrection, he then gave you three incredible gifts to help you until he takes you to heaven. Today you will see the 3 meaningful and needed gifts...Gifts that deliver...

Our headings are:

An Advocate

An Assurance

An Assistant

Our goals are: That you will be 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.

An Advocate

1. The Apostle Paul taught the Ephesians that Jesus gave gifts to men.

This was a promise based on the picture of Psalm 68.

Ephesians 4:8 Therefore He says: "When He ascended 上升 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 下降 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 all 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!

The word Captivity is “Shabee.” And the word captive- is “Shabah.” So it was a play on words.

Just as the king returned home after capturing the enemy and offered spoils of war to his children, so does Jesus. He finished the work on the cross, bound the Devil, and went to heaven.

2. Because of Jesus’ ascension 上升 and his now being seated at God’s right hand, he will plead your cause in heaven – he will

be your advocate and plead for all your needs from his Father. Jesus did not save you to leave you. 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 might need the ability and confidence to trust him and obey him. So he continued to work on your behalf. The Bible repeats this:

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 代禱 for us.

And remember that 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.

3. Because Jesus is your Intercessor – the perfect one - it means that you do not need another Intercessor.

Isn’t it foolish to look for another when you have the perfect one next to you?

Isn’t it an insult to Jesus, your Redeemer, if you pray through any dead person – as good as he might have been?

Further, none of the dead or godly living can qualify to pray for you...not even the godly Virgin Mary!

But it is good for living people on earth to pray for you. 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. And even when they pray for you, 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 he can't 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." Apostle John 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. 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.

An Assurance

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

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.**

Jehovah's Witnesses talk about earth becoming Paradise, yet, in the clearest way, Jesus promised that he would go, come back, and take whoever believes in him. To give confidence to his hearers, he reassured them that he himself would come and take them to that place **he was going to prepare for them.**

2. This assurance is illustrated for you.

If you have to do a job, doesn't it give you confidence seeing 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 illustrate his assurance, Jesus confirmed to his hearers of their real place in a real heaven by calling it 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.

Of course he also defends you and keeps you safe.

An Assistant

1. Gift 3. Jesus sent his Holy Spirit into the hearts of his people. So his Holy Spirit is 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.**

The word translated as "helper" is the word "parakleetos." This means, **like Jesus, the Holy Spirit is at your "side help" as in a court of law.** The Holy Spirit is God, yet he is your 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 and say) 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定罪 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 in the heart!

3. The Helper, the 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 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涂油于 us is God, 22 who also has sealed us and given us the **Spirit in our hearts 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恳求 with his Father** on your behalf. He went to heaven to **give you assurance** that you too will be there one day. He went to heaven to send **you his much needed Holy Spirit** who is in you on earth to help. **These things comfort you!** These are gifts you need, gifts you will never return.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: How vast the benefits that we in Christ possess!

1. Praise him for all his wonderful gifts. Sing his praises day and night. Don't care if someone gets offended. It doesn't matter if they think you are crazy. Praise him.

2. Don't be obsessed with gifts of this world, temporary shiny things, because you are rich. Your gifts, in addition to your salvation, are priceless!

3. Share these great gifts that you possess in Christ with others. Give people what they truly really need. 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...