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Ascension Day: An Eschatology of Victory - Phil 2:9-11

Introduction – When we read the story of the history of mankind in the Bible, we might conclude that man is the great villain in God's book. However, like a well-written mystery, we come to a surprise ending. Man, whose sin brought God's curse, returns to bring blessing. Man, whose rebellion against God brought his removal from the presence of God returns to the very presence of God at His throne, seated at His right hand. Ascension Day is the celebration of that coronation, and with it the declaration to all that Jesus Christ, the new Man, is Lord of all.

"Eschatology" is a term meaning the study of the last things. It is the study of the last chapter of the story of God's redemptive history. And the story of Christ's ascension is the firstfruits of that chapter. The eschatology of this story is one of victory; it is the story of the victory of the Son of Man over all heaven and earth.

The Coronation of the Son of Man – The Word of God, the Son, did not grasp at the equality He had with His Father (Phil 2:5-8), but took on flesh knowing full well He would be treated abominably. As emphatically as man rejected Him, God exalted Him. He is now seated at the right hand of God with all authority (Matt 28:18, Acts 2:34-36, Eph 1:19-21). Every coronation of a king pales in comparison, for Jesus is given the Name above every name. And what happens when the conquering king is brought before the people? They bow the knee.

The Session of the Son of Man – A Man (do not forget this) reigns from heaven. He reigns as Savior and Intercessor (Rom 8:34, Heb 4:14-16). From this position, He intends to send messengers to every inch He has conquered, declaring His Lordship, His Salvation of the world (Rev 11:15).

The Term of the Son of Man – As Rev 11:15 declares, His reign is forever and ever. And He sits at this throne until His last enemy is put down (Psalm 110:1, 1 Cor 15:25f, 1 Pet 3:22).

Humiliation and Then Exaltation (Phil 2:9-11) – This is the story of the glory of the cross. The cross is no story of defeat or surrender. It is a story of real humiliation and real suffering. But the ascension of Jesus Christ is the outcome and the purpose – it always was. Behind this passage is the prophecy of the Suffering Servant (Isaiah 52:13-53:12). There, we are told that "Behold, My Servant...shall be exalted and extolled and be very high." The Father promised the Son that following His humiliation, His rightful exaltation would be world-wide (Ps 2:8). The promise is not universal salvation, but He is rightfully called the Savior of the world because His work will accomplish the salvation of the world (Isaiah 45:22-25).

O, Little-Faith (Heb 2:8-9) – *"You have put all things in subjection under his feet." For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we do not yet see all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.* Whenever our faith waivers on the victory of God in the world or in our life because of the lack of the manifestation of this glory to date, we are to look to Jesus.

Crown Rights – Have you been insulted? Have you been mistreated? Have you been betrayed? Have you been lied about?

Then you must remember, this is Ascension Sunday.

Have you fallen in sin again? Do the temptations continue to return? Do you struggle to forgive? Will we ever be perfected?

Then you must remember, this is Ascension Sunday.

We are following in the footsteps of our Lord Jesus Christ. Phil 2:5 instructs us, *"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus."* There is no crown before the cross. But you must look to Jesus and also remember that for His followers, there will never be a cross without a crown. And so we walk as imitators of our Lord – we will imitate His suffering and death and we will imitate His victory and ascension.

Confident Declarations – Understanding this, believing this, we are granted boldness in the Holy Spirit to declare that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow – and must bow. Subjects to the King are not invited to bow if they would like to make that decision. We do not have the authority to grant exceptions to His Lordship. Subjects of the King are commanded to submit themselves and to worship their Lord.

He is not a wicked King. He is a wounded, compassionate, healing King. He is the only Way to the Father and He is the only

ultimate ruler of the earth. Every kingdom, every institution, every power must bow the knee. He has purchased it with His blood.

Dave Hatcher – Ascension Sunday, May 28, 2006

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