

Name: \_\_\_\_\_



## **Advanced Bible Correspondence Course**

### **Lesson 19: The Exaltation of Christ**

#### **LORD'S DAY 19**

**Q.50. WHY IS IT ADDED, "AND SITTETH AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD"?**

**ANSWER: BECAUSE CHRIST IS ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN FOR THIS END, THAT HE MIGHT APPEAR AS HEAD OF HIS CHURCH (A), BY WHOM THE FATHER GOVERNS ALL THINGS (B).**

**(A)EPHESIANS 1:20-23, COLOSSIANS 1:18 (B)MATTHEW 28:18, JOHN 5:22**

#### **Christ's sitting at the right hand of the Father**

In the Apostles' Creed the fact of Christ's ascension is confessed. To this is added that He now sits at the right hand of God. However, God the Father is a Spirit, said Jesus to the Samaritan woman (John 4:24), and He cannot be thought of as being in a particular place in heaven. Sitting at His right hand cannot be spoken of in a literal sense. Why is it put this way? This is said in a figurative sense. In the past a person to whom the king wanted to give the highest honour received a place at his right hand. In this way the king indicated that such a person was the most important person in his kingdom below the king. Sometimes such a person was allowed to reign with him in his kingdom. It was in this way that Joseph was governor under Pharaoh. In like manner Solomon had his mother Bathsheba be seated at his right hand (I Kings 2:19). It had been foretold that the Messiah would sit at the right hand of God (Psalm 110:1).

And so Christ, figuratively speaking, sits at the right hand of His Father in heaven. He Himself has said, "*All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth*" (Matthew 28:18). By sitting there He proves that He is, under His Father, King of His Church, but not only of His Church, for it is by Him that the Father governs all things.

**Q.51. WHAT PROFIT IS THIS GLORY OF CHRIST, OUR HEAD, UNTO US?**

**ANSWER: FIRST, THAT BY HIS HOLY SPIRIT HE POURS OUT HEAVENLY GRACES UPON US HIS MEMBERS (A); AND THEN THAT BY HIS POWER HE DEFENDS AND PRESERVES US AGAINST ALL ENEMIES (B).**

**(A)ACTS 2:33, EPHESIANS 4:8; (B)PSALM 2:9, 110:1-2, JOHN 10:28, EPHESIANS 4:8**

### **The exalted Christ gives graces**

Christ does not sit at the right hand of His Father only to be honoured. As a king who returns from the victory on the battlefield distributes the spoils, this King may distribute the graces He has acquired. He has received them through His sufferings and death *and* through His perfect obedience to His Father's law. He gives these gifts to all His children. Christ continues His work in heaven. He performs this through the Holy Spirit. What does the Holy Spirit do? He pours out heavenly graces. These graces are the charismata, the extraordinary gifts. The principal ones are now no longer the gifts of tongues, faith healing and such like. No, first of all the gifts of repentance and faith (Acts 5:31). Through His Spirit, God's children are called unto His grace. They are, in a spiritual sense, begotten again unto a lively hope. They are justified and sanctified: the Holy Spirit applies the merits of Christ's sufferings and death and perfect obedience unto His children. They therefore stand again before the Father like people without any sin. The Holy Spirit works faith, hope and charity in their hearts. However, they also receive all the graces which they need in order to be able to live as Christians in this world to the honour of God. Paul calls these the fruit of the Spirit, "*Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance*" (Galatians 5:22).

### **The exalted Christ protects His Church**

Their heavenly King, to whom is given all power in heaven and in earth, also protects His people against all enemies, against the devil, but also against all the people who persecute them or spiritually oppress them because of their faith and their new walk of life. Sometimes they appear to succumb to the strife: many of God's children have been burned and killed. However, then this King carries them through death into eternal life.

**Q.52. WHAT COMFORT IS IT TO THEE THAT "CHRIST SHALL COME AGAIN TO JUDGE THE QUICK AND THE DEAD"?**

**ANSWER: THAT IN ALL MY SORROWS AND PERSECUTIONS, WITH UPLIFTED HEAD I LOOK FOR THE SAME PERSON, WHO BEFORE OFFERED HIMSELF FOR MY SAKE TO THE TRIBUNAL OF GOD, AND HAS REMOVED ALL CURSE FROM ME, TO COME AS JUDGE FROM HEAVEN (A); WHO SHALL CAST ALL HIS AND MY ENEMIES INTO EVERLASTING CONDEMNATION (B), BUT SHALL TRANSLATE ME WITH ALL HIS CHOSEN ONES TO HIMSELF, INTO HEAVENLY JOYS AND GLORY (C).**

**(A)PHILIPPIANS 3:20, LUKE 21:28, ROMANS 8:23, TITUS 2:13,  
I THESSALONIANS 4:16; (B)MATTHEW 25:41, II THESSALONIANS 1:6;  
(C)MATTHEW 25:34, II THESSALONIANS 1:7**

## **Christ the Judge of the quick and the dead**

The Second Coming of Christ will be an awesome event. Then the last judgment will be pronounced upon all people. This can fill us with alarm. And yet the Catechism speaks here of comfort! For God's children do not have to be afraid of that day. Why not? It is because the Judge who will pronounce the last judgment is *their* King, who has delivered them from sin, death, devil, and hell. Paul said, "*Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that He will yet deliver us*" (II Corinthians 1:10).

## **Deliverance is coming!**

As long as believers live on earth, they often become dismayed. From without, it is because of ridicule, misunderstanding, and opposition. From within, it is by the assaults of the devil, who tells them that God is still angry with them. Satan says, "You are a cursed one." They also become distressed because of the many sinful lusts which live in them against their will, and because of the sins which they still commit. Time and again, there are periods when they are actually persecuted. However, when through faith they look unto Christ, their King, they may raise their heads. Then there can be peace and joy in their heart all the same, for they expect the coming of their King. And He will certainly come, for He has gained the victory over all His and their enemies. As a condemned one in their place, He once submitted Himself to God's judgment because of sin. In their place He bore the curse of God's wrath. The curse was removed from them because He bore the punishment. He, who loved them *so* much, will soon come to deliver them forever from all those who mocked, hated, and persecuted them because of their faith.

## **Eternal damnation**

What will Jesus do when He returns? He will cast all His enemies into everlasting damnation. "All His and my enemies" says the catechism. This does not concern my *personal* enemies, for, according to the commandment of Christ, I must love them so that they may be won over for Christ and His blessed service. First and foremost it concerns the enemies of Christ, those who do not love Christ, but hate Him, and who *therefore* are also enemies of the believers. They are *therefore those who* also hate, mock, oppose, persecute and kill all those who belong to Christ unto the end of the ages. Christ will judge them in the last day and cast them into everlasting damnation. Everlasting damnation! Dreadful words and a terrible reality! The word "damnation" means "condemnation". It is the condemnation to eternal punishment. They will for ever be under the curse of the wrath of God. In plain but solemn words the Saviour spoke about this several times: "*Outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth*" (Matthew 8:12); "*Where their worm (remorse) dieth not, and the fire (the wrath of God) is not quenched*" (Mark 9:44).

## **Everlasting glory**

All those who have loved Christ will one day receive heavenly joys and glory forever. Christ will take them unto Himself. For this is the most important thing for them in heaven: they will be forever with Christ.

The believers are here called the elect, for they did not choose for Christ and love Him by themselves, but had been elected by God from eternity and therefore brought to faith and repentance. They are also called the chosen ones because they did not merit it above others. Of themselves they were just as sinful as all other people. It is only free, that is undeserved grace, which has brought them to salvation.

### ***Questions:***

*1. Through Whom does He pour out His graces upon His children?*

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*2. Paul mentions in Colossians 3 the fruit which are definitely from the Spirit as opposed to qualities and behaviours which are not from the Spirit. Name three of each.*

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*3. Why are God's children here on earth often dismayed and why can they have peace and joy at the same time?*

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*4. What does the word 'condemnation' signify? How did Christ speak about it?*

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*5. When only can we look forward to the return of Christ without fear?*

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*6. What does heaven mean to God's children?*

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*Evaluator: \_\_\_\_\_*