

Nuggets and Gems from the Bible

THE
ASCENDED CHRIST—
THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH
AND THE HIGH PRIEST
IN THE HEAVENS

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Living Stream Ministry

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THE ASCENDED CHRIST— THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH AND THE HIGH PRIEST IN THE HEAVENS

THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH, HIS BODY, TO EXPRESS GOD IN HIS FULLNESS

In His ascension Christ was made the Head of the church, His Body, to express God in His fullness. [Colossians 1:18](#) says, “He is the Head of the Body, the church.” According to [Ephesians 1:23](#), His Body is the fullness of the One who fills all in all. In [Ephesians 3:19](#) Paul speaks of our being “filled unto all the fullness of God.” All this fullness dwells in Christ ([Col. 1:19](#); [2:9](#)). Through His dwelling in us, Christ imparts His unsearchable riches into our being, so that eventually we shall be filled unto all the fullness of God. This makes us the expression of God, which is what the church should be.

THE ONENESS OF THE HEAD AND THE BODY

As the Head of the church, His Body, Christ

certainly is joined to the Body. Just as in one's physical body the head and the body are one, so Christ, the Head, and the church, His Body, are joined and therefore are one. It would be absurd to think that one's head is not related to one's body. Likewise, it would also be a mistake to think that as the Head Christ is far away from the Body. However, some think that Christ is far away from us, the members of His Body. According to this concept, the Head is in the heavens, and the Body is on earth.

We need to realize that the connection between the Head and the Body does not involve the elements of space and time. With material things there are these elements. But with divine things there is neither the element of space nor the element of time. For Christ to be the Head of the church, His Body, is certainly not a material thing; this is altogether a divine matter. With this divine matter there is not the element of space nor the element of time. Therefore, we need to see that in the divine life and in the divine Spirit, we, the believers, are one with Christ.

The Body is one with the Head in the divine life and in the divine Spirit. Regarding the Head and the Body, we should not consider space and

time, for here these elements do not apply. As members of the Body in the divine life and the divine Spirit, we are not separated by space or time. We all are now in the Body.

We would emphasize the fact that with material matters we have the elements of space and time, but we do not have these elements with divine things. For example, the Lord Jesus said, “No one has ascended into heaven, but He who descended out of heaven, the Son of Man who is in heaven” ([John 3:13](#)). Here the Lord says that although He came down from heaven, He was still in heaven. This means that while He was on earth, He was still in heaven. According to His physical body, He was on earth when He spoke these words. But according to His divine being, which does not involve the elements of space and time, He was in heaven.

According to the divine viewpoint, we are one with the ascended Christ, and His ascension is also ours ([Eph. 2:6](#)). Here in the ascension we express Him in His fullness.

THE FULLNESS OF CHRIST FOR HIS EXPRESSION

[Ephesians 3:19](#) speaks of our being filled unto all the fullness of God, and [1:23](#) says that the

church, His Body, is the fullness of the One who fills all in all. This fullness is the result, the issue, of the enjoyment of the riches of Christ ([Eph. 3:8](#)). Through the enjoyment of Christ's riches we become His fullness to express Him. When we enjoy Christ, there will be a result of this enjoyment. The result of enjoying Christ is the fullness, and this fullness is the proper church life. In the church life, which is the fullness of Christ, the church expresses Christ. This expression of Christ in the church is in the divine nature and the divine sphere.

We can see from this that Christ's ascension has much to do with us. It is in His ascension that we are one with Him. Furthermore, in His ascension, not merely in His resurrection, He is our Head and we are His Body. The New Testament does not say that it was in Christ's resurrection that God made Him Head of the church. Rather, the Bible reveals that it was in His ascension that God made Christ the Head of the church, His Body.

THE HIGH PRIEST IN THE HEAVENS

In His ascension Christ was also made the High Priest in the heavens. [Hebrews 4:14](#) says that we have a "great High Priest who has passed

through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God.” The Lord came from God to us through incarnation, and then He went back from us to God through resurrection and ascension to be our High Priest to bear us in the presence of God and to care for all our needs ([Heb. 2:17-18; 4:15](#)). Therefore, [Hebrews 7:26](#) says, “For such a High Priest befits us, holy, guileless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and become higher than the heavens.” In His ascension Christ passed through the heavens; now He is not only in heaven ([Heb. 9:24](#)), but is also higher than the heavens, far above all heavens ([Eph. 4:10](#)). In His ascension He was inaugurated into His priestly office. When He was on earth, He did not carry on His priestly ministry as He is now doing in the heavens.

CARING FOR THE CHURCHES

It is significant that in the book of Revelation Christ is unveiled first not as the Administrator, but as the Priest. [Revelation 1:13](#) says, “In the midst of the lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment reaching to the feet.” On the one hand, Christ is the High Priest interceding in the heavens for the churches ([Heb. 7:25-26; Rom. 8:34](#)); on the other hand, He is

the High Priest moving in the churches to care for them. In [Revelation 1:13](#) Christ is depicted as the High Priest, as shown by His garment, a garment reaching to the feet, that is, a priestly robe ([Exo. 28:33-35](#)).

The first vision of Christ in Revelation, recorded in [chapter one](#), is that of the High Priest clothed with a priestly garment. As the High Priest, Christ is walking among the lampstands and taking care of them, especially of their shining by trimming the lamps. Then in [chapter eight](#) Christ is revealed as the Priest offering the incense at the golden altar: “And another Angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer, and much incense was given to Him that He should add it to the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne” ([v. 3](#)). Therefore, in [chapter one](#) Christ is revealed as the Priest taking care of the lampstands, and in [chapter eight](#) He is unveiled as the Priest offering incense to God. Then, in [chapter five](#) He is revealed as the Administrator over the whole universe. To the universe Christ is not the Priest; He is the Administrator. But to the church Christ is the High Priest. As the ascended One in the heavens, He is now living, working, and ministering as a Priest.

BEARING US AND HOLDING US

In the Old Testament the high priest typifies Christ as our High Priest. According to the book of Exodus, the high priest bore the names of the twelve tribes of Israel on his shoulders and on his heart ([Exo. 28:9-10, 12](#)). The names of the twelve tribes were also engraved on the twelve stones set in the breastplate of gold worn by the high priest ([Exo. 28:21, 29](#)). The names engraved on the onyx stones and on the stones of the breastplate signify that the high priest always bore the names of God's chosen people before God. Today Christ is our High Priest, and we are on His shoulders and on His breast. He is in the heavens as the High Priest bearing us and holding us.

As our High Priest, Christ is also taking care of us. He is a “merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God” ([Heb. 2:17](#)), a High Priest who is able to sympathize with our weaknesses ([Heb. 4:15](#)).

Although Christ as the High Priest is taking care of us, we all have our own thought and feeling as to how He should care for us. For example, we all want to be healthy and have a long life. However, often the Lord's way of caring for us is different from what we desire. Therefore,

we may complain and say, “Lord, why do You not seem to care about my health? I’m sick, and I pray for healing. Lord, where is Your power? Where is Your healing? Lord, why don’t You hear me?” The Lord may not answer a prayer for healing. In His care for a certain one, He may allow that one to die of his illness. We do not know what is good for us, but the Lord knows. He knows what is needed for our life on earth.

We all have our preferences concerning our living. We may desire to be wealthy and have many material things. But the Lord may allow us to be poor and deprive us of many things. Likewise, we may desire to have children who love the Lord and serve Him. However, the situation concerning our children may turn out to be much different from what we desire. If we ask the Lord about this, He may say, “You do not know what is best for you. I know that this is the way it should be.”

Perhaps you are thinking that matters such as these have nothing to do with the ascension of Christ. However, the ascension of Christ certainly is related to these things. The Lord’s ascension includes His priesthood. As the ascended One, He is the High Priest bearing us, holding us, and taking care of us. However, what is good

for us is a matter not of our interpretation but of His. For example, you may buy a new car, hoping that it will last many years. But the Lord's opinion of the matter is that your car should last a very short time. If you were to come to me and say, "I bought a new car, and after a few weeks it was wrecked. Why did this happen? Didn't the Lord know that I would have an accident and that the car would be wrecked? Since He knew this, why did He allow me to buy it? Why didn't He stop me?" I, of course, cannot explain why. Only the Lord knows the reason; He is the High Priest.

Nevertheless, I can say this: the Lord's care for us is always positive. One day we shall see Him and worship Him. Some of us may say to Him, "Lord Jesus, forgive me for complaining to You about my situation. Now I know that God's will for me is good." Our High Priest is taking good care of us all.

CARING FOR GOD'S DESIRE

The ascended Christ cares not only for us and our welfare; He cares for God's desires. This High Priest cares more for God's need than for our need. God wants lampstands. Therefore, the Lord establishes lampstands and trims the lamps

for the expression of God ([Rev. 1:13; 2:1](#)). This work includes His edifying of the saints and His building up of the church. The Lord is now building up a living testimony of Jesus.

THE EXECUTOR OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

As the High Priest in the heavens, the Lord is the surety and Mediator of the better covenant and the Executor of the New Testament. [Hebrews 7:22](#) says, “Jesus has become the surety of a better covenant.” That Christ has become the surety of a better covenant is based on the fact that He is the High Priest. [Hebrews 8:6](#) tells us, “He is also the Mediator of a better covenant.” Furthermore, [Hebrews 9:15 and 16](#) say, “And because of this He is Mediator of a new covenant, so that, death having taken place for redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, those who have been called might receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. For where there is a testament there must of necessity be the death of him who made it.”

In [verse 15](#) we have the word “covenant,” and in [verse 16](#), the word “testament.” In Greek the same word is used for both covenant and testament. A covenant is an agreement with some

promises to accomplish certain things for the covenanted people, while a testament is a will with certain accomplished things bequeathed to the inheritor. The new covenant consummated with the blood of Christ is not merely a covenant but a testament with all the things which have been accomplished by the death of Christ bequeathed to us. First God gave the promise that He would make a new covenant ([Jer. 31:31-34](#)). Then Christ shed His blood to enact the covenant ([Luke 22:20](#)). Since there are accomplished facts promised in this covenant, it is also a testament. This testament, this will, has been confirmed and validated by Christ's death, and it is now being executed by Christ in His ascension.

In the Bible the word “testament” is equal to the modern word “will.” The New Testament, therefore, is a new will for our inheritance. This new will is for the bequeathing of the divine blessings, including the Person of Christ and His all-inclusive redemptive work. The One who enacted this new will is Jesus Christ, who died for its enactment. Now whatever He enacted has been bequeathed to us and is available to us.

The enactment of a will and all that is bequeathed in it requires the death of the one who

makes the will. Once the maker of the will dies, the bequests in the will become available to the heirs. Praise the Lord that Christ died to enact the will and that He is now in the heavens as the living Executor of the will He has bequeathed to us! How does He execute this will? He executes the new will by establishing the churches as the lampstands and by trimming all the lamps.

By doing this He is executing, carrying out, the New Testament in a real way. Every blessing in the New Testament is a bequest applied to us by the living, resurrected, and ascended Christ. This is Christ in His ascension. Praise Him that we may enjoy Him in this way.

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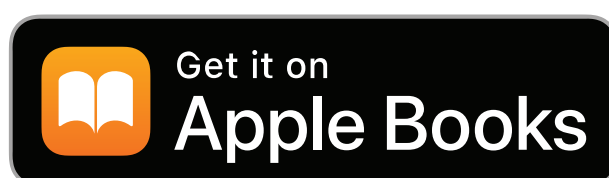
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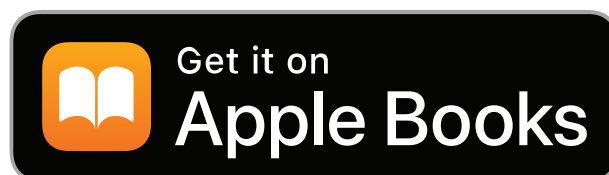
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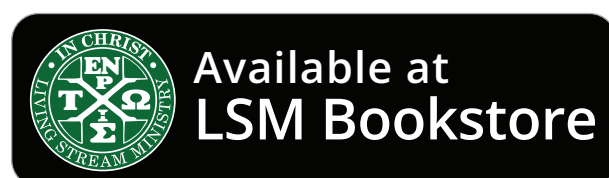
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