

## Ascension Life



David Wilkerson March 1, 1984

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. 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. And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him" (John 14:1-7).

This is one of the most profound revelations Christ ever shared with His disciples. He was trying to show them a new way of living, in a new dimension they did not know existed. Here in this passage He introduced the reality of Ascension Life. In essence, Jesus told them, "I am leaving you to prepare a place for you in another realm. I am going to bring you into that realm -- My ascended, resurrected realm. You are going to be united with Me in the power of ascended life."

Did it register with the Lord's disciples? Not any more than it has registered in our spiritual minds. Look at the incredible blindness of these men who had spent three years hearing about abundant, eternal life. Our Lord had tried to make them understand there was to be no break, no breach in their intimate relationship with Him. "If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be" (John 12:26).

But wasn't He going to heaven, to His Father, to be seated in the heavenlies? Yes! And He said. "Follow Me there! You can be with Me where I am going."

God help us to see what the disciples did not! Christ opened the way for us into life in a supernatural realm. He ascended to heaven -- to the right hand of the Father -- to prepare us a place there with Him. He yearns to seat every believer with Him in His heavenly place, and bring them into the full riches of His glory.

The Lord meant it when He said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." He meant He would bring us to Himself -- united with Him in glory -- right now, while on earth. When He said, "Take up your cross daily and follow me," where did He intend you follow Him to? He is no longer here on earth. He is a flesh-and-bone Man seated in heaven. If you follow Him, you must go to where He is. He is outside of all that is of this earth. He is outside of all that is fleshly. He is outside of all that is visible. He abides in the realm of spirit. And only the Holy Spirit can take us to where He is.

The disciples heard Jesus' promise: "... that where I am, there ye may be also...." But like so many of us today, they could only see it as a future blessing. "He will come someday, rapture me, and take me home to His house," they were thinking. To them, it was all future, But Christ meant it to be an immediate blessing. He longed for them to understand that by faith their eyes could be opened to see the kingdom of God within them. He wanted them to ascend with Him immediately!

The Lord's intention all along had been to go up as the firstfruit and prepare for a great ingathering of His children into kingdom life. How can we miss this intention? How clear can He make it? "I will come again, and receive you

unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also...."

I am not trying to take away anybody's blessed hope in the Lord's soon return. I am saying that there is a realm in Christ in which He does not have to come and sneak you out. It is a place of union, a place of such intimacy you can say right now, "I've been enraptured!"

My hope is not the rapture -- my hope is Christ and His complete fullness now. I am not longing for His coming at some future date. I'm not fretting whether or not I'll be ready or worthy to go. He has already come to me, and I've gone up to Him. I can't get any higher in Him than I am right now. I don't have to worry about whether or not He will take me because I'm already with Him in heaven!

My Bible tells me I am already in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus. That is my blessed hope. While multitudes of Christians sit around waiting to see Jesus face-to face -- waiting to see Him in His glory -- I am right now looking into His lovely face. I am even now seeing and touching His glory.

Do you believe we are above this world, seated right now with Christ in the heavenlies? Hear it: "But God... hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus..." (Eph. 2:6).

What did Jesus say He would do as soon as He went to the Father? Prepare a place for us! We discover we are even now seated in that place He prepared. It is said of Christ, "God ... raised him from the dead and set him at his own right hand in heavenly places..." (Eph. 1:20). Where is our blessed Lord? Seated in the heavenlies. Where are we if we are in Him? Seated in the heavenlies. If He is the vine and we are the branches, we cannot possibly abide in Him unless we are connected to Him where He is. He is in the holy of holies, a spiritual realm, a kingdom within us that is not of this world.

We are not to live in the earthly realm, conformed to the world, a victim of its lust and evil. We are to move into the glorious place He prepared for us -- in His very presence. Christ intended we live our life in His full presence at all times. We were intended to know nothing among men but Christ and Him crucified; We were to lose our earthly life and find it in His presence, to go out to meet him as a bride adorned..." (Revelation 21:2). We were not to set our affections on anything on this earth, but be captivated with our heavenly life. We were to awake from sleep, trim our lamps, and live as one always ready.

Jesus was saying to all disciples, "You need Me now -- not after an evacuation. You need My supernatural power and strength to live a full, abundant life now. I was with you -- I now give you something better. By My Spirit you will be linked to Me. I will bring you to where I am. You will ascend with Me and go back to live the ascended life in the flesh."

Incredibly, The disciples did not know where Christ was going or how to get to Him there. Jesus suggested they should have known what He was talking about: "...and whither I go, ye know, and the way ye know..." (John 14:4). It is as though He said to them, "I have made it all simple and clear. I am going back to My Father. When I get there I will prepare a place for you also, so that where I am you will also be. I am going to Ascension Life -- and so are you! You see it, don't you?"

But they did not see it! They simply could not comprehend how Christ could move into a supernatural realm, in flesh and bone, and bring them into it also, in flesh and bone. Thomas expressed their confusion: "Lord, we know not whither thou goest, and how can we know the way?..." (John 14:5).

Isn't this where the church is today? The Lord tells us to come by faith and be seated above this world with Him in the heavenlies, and we don't know that He is talking about. We keep living our lives as spiritual beggars and paupers. We allow ourselves to be swallowed up with fear, loneliness, worry, despair. We live as victims to lust, to sin, to the principalities and powers of this world. The little bit of abundant life we get comes in spurts, and soon we are again cast down into the realm of fear and emptiness.

We love the Lord, we know we are forgiven -- but we are not really enjoying fullness, completeness, total joy and satisfaction. Occasionally we will feel a pull to something deeper, something more fulfilling, but we have not dared to believe what Christ said is true -- that there is a life here on earth that can be lived in glorious fullness, united with Him where He is. Ascension Life!

This is the one great truth the Holy Spirit is now restoring to the church: The Truth of Christ's Supremacy -- The

truth that He has provided in these last days a life of glory, fullness, and victory.

No wonder Satan tries so hard to hinder this truth. Our Lord said He is coming back for a glorious, victorious, overcoming people. The devil prefers to keep victory truth from us. Everywhere you go now Christians hunger and thirst for a deeper walk with Christ. Saints of God are tired of the husks, the shallowness. The famine of God's Word is about to end. God is revealing His Son in the hearts of those who seek Him.

This generation has been in spiritual famine. There is soul emptiness, but there is also a growing appetite for truth and reality. Pastors and evangelists who do not go out to meet Him -- who get too busy to be with Him in heavenly places -- will be left out. God will pour out upon young men and women a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. Those who will sit in the pew will either run after Him to the high calling or end up in a far country, conformed to this world.

**There Is Only One Way To Get To Where Christ Is-- You Have To Die First!**

You must die to sin and the world. This is illustrated when Peter asked the Lord, "Where are you going?" and Jesus answered, "Where I am going, you cannot follow me now: but you shall follow me afterwards..." (John 13:36). Peter argued, "Why can't I go with you now? I'm ready to die for your sake!" (verse 37).

Jesus made His point! "The only way to follow Me is to die! If you want to be seated with Me in the place I have prepared for you, you must die." But Peter was not yet ready for Ascension Life. He was still too earthbound, too wrapped up in himself and his own security. He would finally come to the end of himself. He would return to the Father's house, be kissed, forgiven, and taken into the feast of the fatted calf. Then he would minister the rest of his life as a man come from God.

You cannot ascend into His holy hill until your hands are clean and your heart is pure. You must, with Paul, count all things as loss in order to win Christ where He is. There is evil to forsake, a purging to submit to, a breaking that is necessary. Many Christians won't go out to meet Him because they are not willing to drop their idols. They want relief from Christ, but not intimate relationship. They want to be saved, but not too close. They want to be loved, but only from a distance.

Not until a man calls on God, gets honest about his lust and weakness; not until he lays all down and sets his heart to live in the real presence of Christ -- will heaven open to him. Dying is not really complicated. Just get sick enough of sin, and it will happen.

Here is the glorious truth:

**Those Who Die To This World Get An Open Heaven!**

Once you see the door of heaven opened to you and know that you have access -- you will never again live the way you did before.

Stephen got Ascension Life before he died. They cast him out of the city and stoned him. "But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly onto heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened!" (Acts 7:55). Once he got a vision of the Man in glory, he was above this world. He was suddenly there, in His actual presence, by faith. The stones could not hurt him; the pain meant nothing -- he had access to an open heaven!

A few months ago I buried my 33-year-old associate. He was business manager of our ministry, and like a son to me. Before he died we spent many glorious hours talking about eternal life and the vision of Jesus Christ we were both receiving. Even though his body was swollen with cancer in the liver, he was enthralled with the presence of Christ. He had a glimpse of heavenly life and longed to be in the actual presence of the Lord.

He had been an avid fan of the Dallas Cowboy football team. But now, what mattered if they did or did not go to the Super Bowl? He was dead to all sports. It lost all meaning to him. His little blue sports car lost its value; it was a piece of junk now. He was going to the city of God on a chariot of fire! His closet full of clothes was now only rags. How could they compare with the robe he was being fitted for? His comfortable home was now nothing more than a pile of material bricks, just a fading memory with no meaning at all.

His work, as rewarding as it had been, meant absolutely nothing now. He was scanning the horizon for his Beloved. Even his devoted wife and two lovely little girls were no longer the focus of his attention. His heart was now given

over completely to the Lover of his soul. He had been weaned away from every earthly thing, and Christ alone became everything to him. All else lost its meaning.

His last words to me were, "Brother Dave, if I had to do it all over again I would live every day, all my life, just as I've lived it on the brink of death. I would live my life focused only on Jesus. My work, my home, my family, would all be secondary. Christ would be my whole life. I would not live in fear, or worried, or earthly-minded. I would enjoy the fulness of Christ as I've enjoyed Him these final days. Oh how much I've missed. My life should have been lived like this all along. Please, brother, don't waste time. Press in and live like a man from heaven. Live dead to this world and alive to Him. Enjoy Him!"

I believe the Lord when He tells me "I am begotten to a lively hope by the resurrection of Christ from the dead, to an incorruptible inheritance, and undefiled, that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for me." (1 Peter 1:3) -- now.

Think of it! A life reserved in heaven for me right now, abiding in His presence, where He is, presented right now by Christ in the presence of the Father, without spot and with exceeding great joy!

As for this world, here I have "no continuing city, but I seek one to come" (Hebrews 13:14). I have my affections set on those things in my heavenly place in Christ, and not on the things of this world. I am dead to the world, alive to Christ. My conversation is in heaven. Now "I desire a better country, that is, an heavenly... for he hath prepared for me a city..." (Hebrews 11:6).

Earthly blessings -- materialism -- are no longer to be compared with "being blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ..." (Eph. 1:3). I give up the visible for the glory of the invisible. I am above this scene down here because I am with Him, ascended.

The fact is, God never intended that His people live as victims to anybody or anything. Not to fear, nor to doubt, nor devils, nor demons, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things seen or unseen, nor any weapon formed against them. We have been promised Ascension Life. A place in Christ in the heavenlies. A life of joy and peace in the Holy Ghost. But we have settled on this side of Jordan, still on the fringes of the dreaded wilderness. We have deceived and cheated ourselves.

John, the revelator, said, "I looked and, behold, a door was opened in heaven... and a voice like a trumpet said to me, Come up hither, and I will show you things which must be hereafter. And immediately I was in the spirit" (Revelation 4:1, 2).

There is not a doubt in my mind that God has given us an open heaven and that He must gather a remnant of devoted disciples to come into the heavenly realm with Him, to discover God's mind for the future. The Holy Spirit has been outpoured to bring us all back to Christ, the head! God fully intends to raise up a holy seed, a heavenly race, who will receive a full revelation of His glory and come down to minister from the throne.

These will be ministers and lay people who have become totally detached from this world -- who have given up all desire for place or honor before men -- who have answered the high calling of God in Christ and are living in the light of His holy presence -- who are bold because they are pure -- who know how to feed the hungry -- who can pull down strongholds because they are united to Christ.

The Lord is even now setting up His eternal kingdom. He is purging His remnant. This is not a time for toys, or materialism, or foolish lust.

Not Of This World

We are not taken out of this physical world, but in our spiritual man we are not of this world: "And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world..." (John 17:11). Where was Christ when he prayed like this? He was still in the Holy Land, in an earthly garden. Yet He says, "I am no more in the world..." The disciples were still in the world because they were not comprehending -- they were asleep. But Christ had already broken through into the heavenly realm! "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of this world but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil" (verse 15).

We are not out of the physical earth, but as Jesus went on to say, "They are not of this world, even as I am not of this world..." (verse 16). Then comes the amazing prayer for Ascended Life for His children: "Father I will that they also, who, thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given to

me..." (verse 24).

Do you hear what I hear? Do you see what I see? "Not of this world, just as I am not of this world... I go to My Father ... Father, I want them to be with Me where I am so they can live in My glory." Paul saw His glory. Stephen saw it. I've seen it! Why not claim your place in heaven, now?

Jesus said, "And you shall be witnesses unto me... beginning at Jerusalem..." (Acts 1:8). How many of you went to Israel to start witnessing? How many took a tour and started in the Jerusalem of the Holy Land? You say, "That is just a figure of speech meaning "Begin where you are." No! I say it is much more than that! It is the New Jerusalem -- Zion -- where Christ is seated on His throne. You go to where He is, and come out from there! You begin from your heavenly place, as a heavenly man, coming forth from His presence in the Jerusalem which is above. "Thus saith the Lord, I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth... For the seed shall be prosperous; the vine shall give her fruit, and the ground shall give her increase, and the heavens shall give their dew; and I will cause the remnant... to possess all these things" (Zechariah 8:3, 12).

Christ has returned to the Jerusalem which is above -- Zion -- and from there the remnant shall send forth the truth. It will prosper, and His people shall possess life abundant. Isaiah 2:3 says, "And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." Again, in Galatians 4:26, we read, "Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all." We come out of this womb -- in New Jerusalem!

Christ left us with a secret for overcoming the world -- and the church is not seeing or hearing it! There is a one-verse revelation on how to be unaffected by anything Satan or the world throws at you. It is recorded in John 3:31: "He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all. And what he hath seen and heard, that he talks about, and no man will believe what he says."

You can easily discern the man who has come out from Christ in the heavenlies. He speaks only what he sees and hears: Christ, Christ Christ! He talks of abundant ascending life -- and no one will believe him. Preach the flesh... weakness... failure... prosperity -- they believe. Preach resurrection life -- they won't. Let Me Show You What Happens When You Ascend To Him And See Him In His Brightness And Glory!

Paul -- after Christ had died and ascended to heaven -- said, "Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?" (1 Corinthians 9:1). Later on he reiterates, "He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve... And last of all he was seen of me also, as one born out of season..." (1 Corinthians 15:5-8) Where did Paul see Christ in the flesh? Our Lord had already gone to heaven. So did Paul! When he was taken by the Spirit into the heavens, he saw Him where He was. And from that time on, he never left the heavenlies except to minister!

Here is the secret: "I labored more abundantly than they all..." (1 Cor 15:10). Listen to the apostle's claim: "I was born out of season, but I labored more than all those who were with Him before the resurrection." In other words, "My heavenly vision produced more love and devotion and evangelism than their earthly vision."

This should give us hope. Like Paul, we are all born out of season. We were not here when Christ walked this earth. But we have something better. We can go where He is! We can go forth laboring, evangelizing, working -- more than all the Lord's earthly disciples. Why? Because we come from the throne! Because we have been given special grace. The heavenly place is better than the earthly. It will endure. It is eternal.

The man who lives in the heavenlies with Christ does more for God because Christ supports everything he originates. The one in heaven knows the mind of God. He doesn't sweat. He knows what to do. He is simply doing what he heard was the will of God. He was in on the counsel of the Godhead. You cannot sit with Christ in the heavens and not hear divine conversation The Bible says, "Our conversation is in heaven" (Philippians 3:20). This being the case, the true servant of God would be able to say with confidence, "I have heard God speak, and I do what I heard."

A New-Name People

"Thou shalt be called by a new name..." (Isaiah 62:2). We are moving from the miraculous to the glorious. The glory of God will now be the focus -- not the blessing of God. We are moving from the supernatural to the eternal! The

natural has no place where eternal values are in bloom. This is far beyond supernatural -- it is supernal! God's fullness.

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