

Christ's Ascension: Our King and Head **Ephesians 1:18-23; 4:1-16**

Some weeks ago, we saw that Christ ascension was the completion of His earthly ministry, and we began our consideration of his present heavenly ministry. We saw that when He ascended, he was ascending to His coronation at the King of kings and the Lord of lords. With this coronation, he was seated at the right hand of the Father, where the Father gave him all authority over all things. His was the majesty, power, dominion, authority, and might to rule over all things.

With this authority, he also continued His ministry of intercession. We saw last week that his presence near the Father was His intercession for our salvation. His prayers for the apostles and us found in John 17 would be done by the Father because of His Son's atoning presence before the Him.

This brings us to another aspect of His being crowned the King: Christ rules over His own people, and all the universe.

This means He has a spiritual kingship and a universal kingship. He is both the head of the church and the Father rules all things through Him.

Today, we will briefly consider the spiritual kingship of Christ. He is the head of the church by virtue of his sitting at the right hand of God, and because of this, we benefit

I. What is the Spiritual Kingship of Christ?

Ephesians 1 Here we see Christ's spiritual kingship, His royal rule, over His people the church.

1. It is the rule of Christ in the hearts and lives of His people.
2. The goal of this rule of Christ is the salvation (perseverance) of His people.
3. And, this rule is visible wherever we see the church gathering, Christ governing her, Christ protecting her, and Christ perfecting her.

II. The Benefits of His Kingship

Christ's seating at the right hand of His Father and His coronation of King indicates the Father's acceptance of his work. Our exalted Mediator now fills the entire universe with blessings or gifts. These gifts include many things, but here in Ephesians, the "gifts" are those who proclaim the Word of God.

III. What His Kingship Does Not Mean

1. You and I are not head of the Church
2. You and I do not own the Church; the Church belongs to Christ; He owns it.
3. You and I do not manage the church according to our will; the church is managed according to the will of Christ
 - a. She must preach the pure doctrine of the Gospel of Christ both to those within and without her walls.
 - b. She must conduct the sacraments as they were instituted by Christ.
 - c. As Jesus commands, she must exercise church discipline in the punishment of sin.
 - d. The church must be faithful and persistent in outreach, evangelism, and missions.

IV. The Benefits of Christ in Detail

According to Ephesians 4, He gives “gifts” to his people: Officers of the church: Leadership - Those who proclaim the Word of God. A “gift” is something given to show friendship, affection, support, etc.

A. Leadership gifts – As Head of the church, Christ pours out his gifts upon us through His Holy Spirit Whom He sent once He was seated at God's right hand. The Spirit calls individuals into service - pours into the churches midst those who proclaim the word of God. Ephesians 4 These “gifts” are also called “Officers” of the church. Elders and deacons are in view also.

B. General Observations

1. Emphasis on “gifts” and not offices.
2. Emphasis on spiritual growth not numerical growth.
3. Emphasis on good leaders and good follower.
4. Emphasis on love for the “gifts.”
5. Emphasis on the church's good, not the leader's self-interest.

C. Why the gifts? Ephesians 4:12-13

...to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

1. The immediate task or purpose of the gifts is to equip its members for service. The entire church should be engaged in spiritual labor. Each should have their own ministry.

a. At Bethel this is the task of the pastor and the Consistory: to help each member find their ministry. This individual ministry is twofold: Church attendance and weekly service to others especially in the church.

b. Yet every individual in the church is responsible to seek God and discover the ministry He has for them. A large part of your discovering what God has for you is what you do in those moments away from ministry: devotional and prayer time and fleeing sin.

2. The ultimate purpose of the gifts is to build the church, the body of Christ. This is done through (a). faithful service to God and (b). faithful service to individual members of the church.

When individual members are involved in worship and service on a weekly bases, then unity will take place and we all will have a clearer knowledge of who Jesus Christ is - He is the self-sacrificing one.

Besides unity and a clear knowledge of who Jesus is, we grow in Christlikeness - we come a little closer to being who Jesus is. We become more like him.

As head of His church, Christ is calling you to be involved in the kingdom. To be involved in service to God through worship and in service to others. The gifts or officers of the church are to lead you in discovering your ministry, yet you are to also seek the face of God. When these things are happening - watch out - you and I will never be the same again.