

5/4/2008

THE PSALM AND PROCLAMATION OF JESUS AS LORD Psalm 110:1-2, 4-5

Lay Minister: 1 The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet."

People: 2 The LORD will extend your mighty scepter from Zion; you will rule in the midst of your enemies. . .

Lay Minister: 4 The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind: "You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek."

People: 5 The Lord is at your right hand; he will crush kings on the day of his wrath.

Lay Minister: Let us pray.

People: (Unison) We thank You, Lord Jesus, for suffering, dying, and rising for us.

When you "ascended on high---higher than all the heavens, to fill the whole universe---You led captives in Your train and gave gifts to men" (*Ephesians 4:8,10*). We ardently await Your return, accompanied by the angels. As we wait, help us use the gifts You have carefully entrusted to us, to serve You and to serve Your people. For You reign with the Father and the Spirit, ever one God. Amen.

THE EPISTLE LESSON Ephesians 1:15-23

(Jesus has dominion over all things for all time.)

15 For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, 16 I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. 17 I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. 18 I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, 19 and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength,

20 which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, 21 far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.

22 And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be **head over everything for the church,** 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

THE GOSPEL LESSON Luke 24:44-53

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(Luke tells us in his Gospel of Jesus' ascension, "He lifted up His hands and blessed them. While He was blessing them, He left them and was taken up into heaven. ... And the disciples had great joy.")

44 He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the

Psalms." 45 Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. 46 He told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, 47 and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. 48 You are witnesses of these things. 49 I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."

50 When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. 51 **While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven.**

52 Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. 53 And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God.

THE FIRST LESSON

Acts 1:1-11

(Jesus is taken up to heaven, witnessed by astonished apostles and attending angels.)

1 In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach 2 until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. 3 After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.

4 On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: **"Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. 5 For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."**

6 So when they met together, they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"

7 He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. 8 But **you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.**"

9 After he said this, **he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.** 10 They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. 11 "Men of Galilee," they said, **"why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."**

1 To.n me.n prw/ton lo,gon evpoihsa,mhn peri. pa,ntwn(w= Qeo,file(w-n h;rxato o` Vlhsou/j poiei/n te kai. dida,skein(

The first word which I made concerning many things, O Theophilus, what Jesus began to do and to teach

2 a;cri h-j h`me,raj evnteila,menoj toi/j avposto,loij dia. pneu,matoj a`gi,ou oujj evxele,xato avnelh,mfqhÅ

until the day he commanded the apostles concerning the Holy Spirit

3 oi-j kai. pare,sthse n e`auto.n zw/nta meta. to. paqei/n auvto.n evn polloi/j tekmhri,oi(j diV h`merw/n tessera,konta ovptano,menoj auvtoi/j kai. le,gwn ta. peri. th/j basilei,aj tou/ qeou/\

And he appeared lived to them after his suffering in mny was,

through 40 days . And speaking to them concerning the kingdom of God.

4 kai. sunalizo,menoj parh,ggeilen auvtoi/j avpo. ~lerosolu,mwn mh. cwri,zesqai avlla. perime,nein th.n evpaggeli,an tou/ patro.j h]n hvkou,sate, mou(

he led them from Jerusalem

5 o[ti Vlw,nnhj me.n evba,ptisen u[dati(u`mei/j de. evn pneu,mati baptisqh,sesqe a`gi,w| ouv meta. polla.j tau,taj h`me,rajÅ

because John he baptist baptized you with water, but with the Holy Spirit you will be baptized after not many days

6 Oi` me.n ou=n sunelqo,ntej hvrw,twn auvto.n le,gontej\ ku,rie(eiv evn tw/| cro,nw| tou,tw| avpokaqista,nej th.n basilei,an tw/| Vlsrah,IÉ

Lord, if this is the time for the kingdom of Israel to be revealed.

7 ei=pen de. pro.j auvtou,j\ ouvc u`mw/n evstin gnw/nai cro,nouj h' kairou.j ou]j o` path.r e;qeto evn th/| ivdi,a| evxousi,a|(

And he said to them, it is not for you to know times or seasons which the father has appointed in His own authority.

8 avlla. lh,myesqe du,namin evpelqo,ntoj tou/ a`gi,ou pneu,matoj evfV u`ma/j kai. e;sesqe, mou ma,rturej e;n te Vlerousalh.m kai. ÍevnÐ pa,sh| th/| Vludai,a| kai. Samarei,a| kai. e[wj evsca,tou th/j gh/jÅ

But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and Samaria, and until the ends of the earth.

9 Kai. tau/ta eivpw.n blepo,ntwn auvtw/n evph,rqh kai. nefe,lh u`pe,laben auvto.n avpo. tw/n ovfqalmw/n auvtw/nÅ

And after saying these things, looking at them, he was raised and a cloud hid him from their eyes.

10 kai. w`j avteni,zontej h=san eivj to.n ouvrano.n poreuome,nou avvtou/(kai. ivdou. a;ndrej du,o pareisth,keisan avvtou/j evn evsqh,sesi leukai/j(

And as they were watching/looking at the heavens of his going, behold two men stood/appear to them in white clothing

11 oi] kai. ei=pan\ a;ndrej Galilai/oi(ti, e`sth,kate ÎevmÐble,pontej eivj to.n ouvrano,nÈ ou-toj o` Vlhsou/j o` avnalhmfqei.j avfV u`mw/n eivj to.n ouvrano.n ou[twj evleu,setai o]n tro,pon evqea,sasqe avvtou.n poreuo,menon eivj to.n ouvrano,nÂ

And they said, men of Galilee, **why do you stand looking (up) into the heavens?** This Jesus who was taken up from you into heaven, thus shall come as you saw him going into heaven.

INTRO - So, at least once this year . . . or more . . . there has been a morning when my alarm went off, and I didn't get up right away. But our son needed to go to school, and my wife said, "Why are you still here, not up and getting ready?" By the way, my answer is, I get ready fast. But, the question was still asked, "Why are you here, not out doing what you need to be doing?"

I. The disciples got that question today.

A. **"why do you stand here looking into the sky?** Or into heaven.

1. Jesus had just left them, risen into heaven, been taken away in a cloud. You might stand looking too.

2. But Jesus had given them some instructions.

A. First in verse 4 Jesus told the disciples - **"Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised,**

1. But here they are in Bethany.

2. What are you standing here for, disciples?

B. Secondly in verse 8 Jesus instructs them, **you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."**

1. You'll be going to the whole world to witness to me.

2. What are you standing here for?

3. When my wife asks that question I really don't have a good answer. Neither did the disciples.

B. Why do you think they were standing there, not just looking at a spectacle, but standing, looking at something so the angels asked the question? They had a number of good reasons, or excuses.

1. Jesus was gone. What do we do now? Who will lead us, teach us, protect us? What else is there to do but stand around?

2. Jerusalem? That's where Jesus was arrested and killed, and you want us to stay there?

3. Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth. But, this is home?

4. There were plenty of reasons for standing around. There was danger out there. These reasons even seemed good to the disciples, even if they weren't

C. The day of Ascension, which was really last Thursday, is actually the answer to all the disciples' concerns.

1. They may have thought they were alone, but Jesus left so that the Holy Spirit would come. Jesus says of this event, **You will receive POWER, when the Holy Spirit comes on you.** And they did.

2. Yes, there may be danger, but, nothing can hurt you. You see, Jesus left, but in verse 11 we're told, **here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, WILL COME BACK in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."** When Jesus comes, he is taking his people to heaven. Not gas prices, or food shortages, or wars, or earthquakes, or cancer, or death, can hurt us when Jesus comes again.

3. And, maybe you didn't catch what it says about the reason for Jesus' resurrection in Ephesians. Look at verse 20, **20 which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in**

the heavenly realms, and verse 22, **20 which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms**, and look at **22 And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church**, Jesus is ruling over all creation, for the church. He's in charge, even when it does not seem like.

D. Guess what, the disciples had NO excuse.

II. So, where would God say to you, "Why are you standing here?"

A. Is there something you need to do?

1. Do you need to be more faithful in bible reading, do you need to spend more time with your children, or your parents, do you need to help out in school, in the community, in the church? Do you need to get rid of something?

2.. Is there something you need to right? Do you need to confess a sin, or offer forgiveness, or help heal a rift that others have?

3. Is there some sin you are letting live in your life, Greed, lust, dishonesty, a foul mouth?

B. Doing God's work can seem difficult, time consuming, dangerous, but . . .

1. He ascended to send the Spirit so we could have the power, the help to do God's will, and we have that Spirit.

2. There may be dangers, but we know who wins, we have heaven waiting.

3. And, no matter how bad things get, or confused we are, Jesus is the one in charge.

CONCLUSION - What has God called you to do? Is he asking you today, **Why are you standing here?** All the help you need is right here, waiting for you.

Thanks - Nate

Ill Paul
Dave M
Al K
Roseanne
Mom
Kristin

Ruling over all - protect our men and women.

Katie

St. John - why are you standing. Help us to be your witnesses.

Amen.