

2008

What You Need to Know About The Present Ministry of Jesus Christ

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Recommended Citation

Willmington, Harold, "What You Need to Know About The Present Ministry of Jesus Christ" (2008). *What You Need to Know About...* Paper 14.
http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/will_know/14

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WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE PRESENT MINISTRY OF JESUS CHRIST

The heavenly activities performed by our resurrected and ascended Lord are seven-fold:

HIS HIGH PRIESTLY WORK

- Functioning as our forerunner

"And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec" (Heb. 6:19, 20).

Jesus is described here as our forerunner. This word has been associated with a small boat called a forerunner. In the ancient world large ocean vessels often experienced difficulty when approaching the shallow Greek harbors. To counteract this, a small forerunner boat would often be sent out to help secure the vessel's anchor within the harbor itself. Dr. Kenneth Wuest writes:

The anchor of the believer is therefore, fastened within the veil of the Holy of Holies of heaven. We have some rich figures here. This present life is the sea; the soul ... of the believer, as a tempest-tossed ship, is held by the anchor within the veil, fastened by faith to the blessed reality within the veil.

(Hebrews in the Greek New Testament, p. 125)

Daniel B. Towner's wonderful gospel song beautifully describes this ministry in graphic fashion. His song is titled,

My Anchor Holds

Though the angry surges roll on my tempest driven soul,
I am peaceful, for I know, Wildly though the winds may blow,
I've an anchor safe and sure That can evermore endure.

Mighty tides about me sweep, Perils lurk within the deep,
Angry clouds o'er shade the sky, And the tempest rises high:
Still I stand the tempest's shock, For my anchor grips the Rock.

I can feel the anchor fast As I meet each sudden blast,
And the cable, though unseen, Bears the heavy strain between;
Through the storm I safely ride, Til the turning of the tide.

Troubles almost `whelm the soul; Griefs like billows o'er me roll;
Tempters seek to lure astray; Storms obscure the light of day:
But in Christ I can be bold, I've an anchor that shall hold.

Chorus:

And it holds, my anchor holds; Blow your wildest, then, O gale,
On my bark so small and frail; By His grace I shall not fail,
For my anchor holds, my anchor holds.
And it holds, my anchor holds; Blow your wildest then, O gale,
For my anchor holds, it firmly holds.

- Preparing a place for us

1. This place (actually, a city) is promised by Jesus in John 14.

"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"(John 14:2).

2. This place (city) is described in Rev. 21.

"And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband ... And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal ... And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof"(Rev. 21:2, 10, 11, 23).

- Giving spiritual gifts to his people

"But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men ... And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ"(Eph. 4:7, 8, 11-13).

A spiritual gift is a supernatural ability given by Christ through the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:7-11) to the believer at the moment of salvation to accomplish a two-fold purpose:

1. To glorify God (Rev. 4:11)
2. To edify the church (Eph. 4:12)

- Offering encouragement to his people

"Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need"(Heb. 4:14-16).

"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds"(Heb. 12:1-3).

- Making high priestly prayers for us

"Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us"(Rom. 8:34).

"Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them"(Heb. 7:25).

"For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us"(Heb. 9:24).

"My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous"
(1 John 2:1).

Many believers feel the apostle Paul was the greatest and most spiritual Christian who ever lived. Certainly he was a powerful and effective prayer warrior. When Paul talked with God, prisons were shaken, doors were opened, chains were loosed, and people were saved (Acts 16:25-34)! With all this in mind let us suppose that in the midst of your darkest hour of pain and grief the phone rings and the apostle Paul is on the other side of the line.

"Fellow Christian", he begins, "I just wanted you to know I am very much aware concerning your terrible sufferings, and therefore plan to spend the next 24 hours on my knees crying out in prayer just for you!"

What an incredible reassurance and comfort that would be! Think of it—the great apostle Paul, writer of half the New Testament is praying for you! But wait! Amidst your tears and travail you now hear another voice.

“My dear child, you need to know I am fully acquainted with all your sad grief and despair. Therefore, I plan to do today that which I have previously done since the time of your salvation and will continue to do as long as you live, and that is to spend every single second of every single minute of every single hour of every single day at my Father’s right hand, **PRAYING FOR YOU!**”

Would not this serve as a blessed balm to soothe one’s wounded soul? Would it not heal the raw hurt of the human heart? Indeed it would and should, for this is exactly what the Savior is doing at this very moment for each believer reading these words.

Note:

“Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us”(Rom. 8:34).

“Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others”(Heb. 9:25).

Here He functions in a two-fold manner:

1. Acting as our intercessor (due to the weakness and frailties of the believer)

While on earth, our Lord once told Peter:

“Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not”
(Luke 22:31, 32).

According to many New Testament passages, the Savior continues to perform this blessed ministry for His people from heaven.

“Wherefore he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them”(Heb. 7:25).

2. Acting as our advocate (due to the sins of the believer)

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”(1 John 1:9).

"My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous"(1 John 2:1).

"And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night"(Rev. 12:10).

Perhaps the famed musician Charles Wesley had this particular ministry of Christ in mind when he wrote the words to his great hymn, *Arise My Soul Arise*. Millions have been thrilled at his wondrous phrases:

Arise, my soul, arise. Shake off thy guilty fears.
The bleeding Sacrifice In my behalf appears.
Before the throne my Surety stands—My name is written
On His hands, My name is written on His hands.

He ever lives above, For me to intercede,
His all redeeming love, His precious blood to plead.
His blood atoned for all our race, And sprinkles now the
Throne of grace, And sprinkles now the throne of grace.

Five bleeding wounds He bears, Received on Calvary;
They pour effectual prayers, They strongly plead for me:
"Forgive him, O forgive," they cry, "Nor let that ransomed
Sinner die! Nor let that ransomed sinner die!"

The Father hears Him pray, His dear anointed one;
He cannot turn away The presence of His Son.
His Spirit answers to the blood, And tells me I am
Born of God, And tells me I am born of God.

My God is reconciled; His pard'ning voice I hear.
He owns me for His child; I can no longer fear.
With confidence I now draw nigh, And "Father, Abba,
Father!" cry, And "Father, Abba, Father" cry.

- Caring for His churches

"I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea. And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed

with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death. Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter; The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches...Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks” (Rev. 1:10-20; 2:1).

1. In this amazing passage the apostle John, on the Isle of Patmos, sees the resurrected and glorified Christ standing among seven golden lampstands, dressed in the garb of a high priest. He is told that the lampstands symbolize local churches on earth.
2. This marvelous passage describes the final of three “stances,” as it were, of the resurrected Christ in heaven. He is seen:
 - a. Sitting (Heb. 10:12)
 - b. Standing (Acts 7:56)
 - c. Walking (Rev. 2:1)

- Working through His people

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father” (John 14:12).

1. It is to be understood here of course that the word “greater” refers to quantity and not quality. This is simply to say Jesus, acting through the Holy Spirit, would assign His people to perform those things He Himself did not do while on earth.
2. These tasks would include:
 - a. Writing Christian books, articles, tracts, etc.
 - b. Worldwide preaching and teaching by way of television, radio, the internet, etc.
 - c. Translating God’s Word in many languages.
 - d. Constructing buildings for local churches.

- e. Organizing Bible institutes, colleges, and seminaries to train workers for the ministry.

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