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The Significance Of The Ascension

Okay, we've introduced the Ascension and Session of the Lord Jesus Christ and the key background we wanted to grab out of the Gospels is the theme that He came to His own and His own received Him not. So He very definitely is talking about the nation Israel. He came to the nation Israel as their King and they didn't receive Him as their King; they rejected Him and that was the means through which God brought about the cross work of the Lord Jesus Christ. It was not a straight line to the cross. The historical means by which God brought about the cross was the nation Israel's rejection of their Messiah. History is important and we have to keep saying this lest we float off in a pagan imagery of God's sovereignty over history, the idea that everything has to work out in a straight line if God is going to be glorified. No it doesn't. It doesn't have to work out the way we would have worked it out. God can use the negative choices of responsible men to bring about His-story and that doesn't deprecate God's sovereignty or God's glory one bit. It actual amplifies it because it says even if you go negative God is still going to use that to carry out His plan and His glory. So we can rebel and yet He's sovereign even over our rebellion.

Now out of that rejection is introduced this mystery age known as the Church, not mysterious in the spooky sense, mystery in the sense that the Church was totally unknown in the OT. The Jew at the time of Christ, as he looked at the OT Scriptures, saw history coming to a head in the Jewish-Gentile conflict and then the Messiah would come and defeat her enemies and restore the kingdom to Israel, restore the Davidic throne, that kind of thing. But they rejected Him and so this parenthetical age is ushered in, this interadvent period called the Church.

Let's see how it was brought in. We want to go to about three verses that comment on the significance of the ascension. One of these verses is found in Heb 4. Remember this has several steps or parts to it. First the Lord Jesus Christ went to the Mt of Olives. This is where the ascension took place. Jerusalem and the Temple Mount are to the west. He walked from Jerusalem down into the Kidron Valley, followed the road up the Mt of Olives and ended up on the other side of the Mt at Bethany. Well, it's on top of this Mt where the Lord Jesus Christ ascended. His disciples watched it; three of the Gospel writers mention the disciples watching, watching, watching for some time. We don't know how long they were watching, whether it was three minutes or five minutes. Two angels appeared after the Lord Jesus Christ was taken up in a cloud, and it's passive voice in the original text, meaning that He was taken, meaning that a cloud sort of enveloped Him, and then He went up in it like an elevator. And they're standing there with their mouths open and two angels say hey guys, He's going to come back the same way.

That little remark by those angels is very important in the interpretation of this whole thing. That means that Pentecost is not the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, because what did the angels say? He will come back in the same way. Was Jesus in His physical body then? Yes, He was; the resurrection body is a physical body. He physically ascended off the top of that Mt. And the angels both insist to the apostles that He's going to descend in exactly the same way He ascended. Therefore can Pentecost be the Second Coming? I ask this because liberals in the early 20's kept arguing that the real meaning of Jesus coming again was the coming of the Holy Spirit, and Pentecost was the fulfillment of the Second Coming. So that obviously doesn't fit. Now there are people in evangelical circles that are doing a similar thing but instead of making Pentecost the fulfillment of the Second Coming of Christ they're trying to make it the Fall of Jerusalem in AD70. There's a whole group of evangelicals that got on the bandwagon, AD70, that's the fulfillment of the Second Coming of Christ. Really? Did Jesus descend in AD70 like He ascended? I don't think so; there are no reports of that. Does anybody have any historical report that Jesus came back physically in AD70? There's not one report, so how does AD70 fulfill the requirements of this text? How's that the Second Coming?

We want to be careful to watch the text. We're studying the bodily ascension up to this point; we don't know if He's up 500 feet, 1,000 feet or what before He disappears in the cloud, but whatever it was there was a finite interval, both in time and space, and Jesus disappeared. At that point all the resurrection appearances of Christ stopped. And from that point on every other time you see Jesus appear to anybody it's always appearing to them from heaven. He never walks around any more, He never appears in rooms any more, He never reaches out and says touch Me, feel that I am not a spirit, I have flesh and bones. None of that any more. Stephen, while he's being stoned sees Him standing up off the Father's throne in His heavenly session. Paul, on the Damascus road, sees Him as a great light and hears His voice.

So you have the ascension. The ascension was physically watched. What happened next no man has watched other than in a vision form. What happened then? The Bible goes on to add a whole new picture called the session. This session is not reported as an eyewitness event. The apostles are not saying I saw Jesus take a seat at the Father's right hand. What they're doing is using OT images, but in order to go from the ascension to the session, the Bible in at least three places insists that something strange went on between the time of the ascension and the time of the session and the seating at the Father's right hand.

In Heb 4:14, "Since then we have a great high priest," and I ask you to observe something in that verse, "who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. ¹⁵For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin." Then he goes on to apply these truths. What truths? The truths of verse 14 and 15. The hypostatic union and the kenosis are all rolled into those verses. This is doctrinally rich but it's that doctrinal richness that stands behind the wonderful encouragement to prayer in verse 16. "Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace," you're not going to draw near to a non-hypostatic, non-kenotic Christ, someone who knows nothing about what we have to go through. You're going to draw near to a Christ who knows what it's like to be a human being, who knows what it is to be tempted to sin, who knows what it's like to be down here and have to go through the things we go through. All that doctrinal richness stands behind this call to draw near to

Him in prayer. But in verse 14 do you see something strange about that verse? Look carefully; see if you don't see a notice about something that happened as Jesus ascended from the Mt of Olives and now sits in session on the Father's throne of grace?

He "passed through the heavens," an interesting observation. He passed through multiple heavens, and Bible scholars over the years have interpreted that to mean it wasn't just the atmosphere, the physical atmosphere of planet earth, it included that, but in the ancient world, if you look at Paul's writings and some of the 1st century writings they would refer to things like the second heaven, and the third heaven. It's kind of loose in one sense because you have to draw the meaning from the usage, but it seems that they thought of the first heaven as the heavens that we see, the atmospheric heavens where the clouds and the birds are. And the second heaven was the starry heaven, where the sun, the moon and stars are, outer space. Then the question is, what's the third heaven? The third heaven is pictured as Paul..., as something beyond that, remember, he says, I don't know whether I was in the body or out of the body but I went to the third heaven, apparently that's where God's throne is and where the Lord Jesus Christ sits in session.

What am I driving at? I'm driving at a geometry problem, and this is a challenge. Here's a case where God's incomprehensibility plays a role, because I don't know whether it's happened to you yet, but you will run across some skeptic that will sit there and laugh at you and say ha-ha, people in the northern hemisphere look up and pray to God, people in the southern hemisphere look up and pray to God, and they're both looking in opposite directions, so how can they be looking at the same point? We don't know how they can look at the same point. But we do know that there's a geometry that's implied by this. What do I mean a geometry that's implied by this?

The geometry that most of us learned in school was Euclid's geometry, and it had axioms, and you had to use the axioms to prove theorems. I don't even know if they teach geometry any more; it probably got pushed out of the curriculum by some of the more urgent, life-changing courses. In Euclidean geometry there were a set of axioms. One of the axioms was this one: if you have a line, and you have a point not on the line, how many parallel lines can you draw through that point? And Euclid said only one because the axiom is supposedly intuitively obvious. Well, it was intuitively obvious up until the

early 20th century when some mathematicians got to saying, now wait a minute, how do we know that there's only one parallel line that can be drawn through that point? They realized that there's no way to check that because we can't go out far enough to see. And if you want to look at it, look at the globe, if you have a globe at home and you can see on the globe because of spherical geometry, it's not true, Euclid doesn't work on spherical surfaces.

And as mathematicians continued to think about different surfaces two non-Euclidean schools of geometry arose. One school said there are an infinite number of lines that can be drawn through the point that turn out to be parallel. Another school said there are no lines that you can draw through the point. And both of these can be completely and rigorously proved. So the problem is you can build at least three geometries that all contradict one another but which are internally consistent and can be proven rigorously. It just depends on what axioms you start with.

So, taking this and applying it to the problem we're discussing of a person in the southern hemisphere praying, he looks up, the person in the northern hemisphere, he looks up, how can they both be looking up if they're looking in opposite directions? How can they both be looking at the throne of God? In effect can't the line of sight be bent so that no matter where you are, if you look up and you follow the line of sight all the way to the end, all of us, whether standing in the northern or southern hemisphere would be looking at a point that converges on the throne of God? There's some sort of weird geometry that goes on here because we know scripturally that whenever God appears people are looking up. He doesn't say go pray looking down, He says look to Me, look up. So this is just another little thing about don't laugh at Scripture prematurely and don't buy into people that are skeptic. It just means that the universe isn't Euclidean, so tell me something more. Try that and see what happens with people.

Eph 1:20-21 is another text of Scripture. Let's observe this text. We're looking at what happened between the moment Christ ascended and disappeared and when He took His seat at the right hand of the Father in His session, We have Heb 4, now we have Eph 1:20, "which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead," there's resurrection. By the way, now that we've studied the cross of Christ and the resurrection, and now we're studying the ascension and session, do you see how slowly you need to read

the NT text. You can't speed read this stuff, there is so much packed in every one of these verses. That's why when we exegete books it goes so slow. It's like walking through sludge, it's thick, you can't move any faster, and if you do you miss critical points. Paul, in verse 20 is packing a lot in his teaching. After you listen to Paul I can't imagine not having to listen to this guy four or five times without a Bible, this wasn't Scripture before he wrote this. You're sitting there and if you were literate and had a very expensive parchment you might be able to take shorthand, you didn't have any tape recorder and this guy starts packing one truth after another in a single sentence. It's why I think God had Paul write most of the NT epistles. It's kept the church busy for 2000 years trying to figure out what the guy said. This is thick stuff. He says the Father raised the Son "from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand" in some place, called "the heavenlies," some spiritual arena. Verse 21 qualifies what those "heavenlies" are, so here we go again, this strange arena. In verse 20 when it says "He raised Him from the dead" are we talking about Jesus deity or His humanity? His humanity, we're talking about a physical body. What's the implication then about His location? He has to be located somewhere. Jesus' body has to be located at some point; it's not an infinitely big body. Jesus was probably 5 ½-6 feet tall, that's all we're talking about here, a body that may be 5 ½ feet tall and it's located some place and it's still 5 ½ feet tall, it's not 10,000 feet tall, it's the same body He walked around here as resurrected, and it's located somewhere.

That's the problem, we can't see where it's located, but Paul describes the scene, he says it's "at His right hand," so wherever this is, it's in the very throne room of God, the place surrounded by the rainbow signature for the Noahic Covenant, He's at the Father's right hand, verse 21, "far above," wherever this place is, notice its locus, "far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come." Isn't that pretty encompassing? What is that saying? It's saying that above all powers and principalities and angels and everything, above all the creation Jesus Christ is now seated on the high ground.

In the military one of the objectives always in a battle is to take the high ground. In the War Between the States when the Confederates wanted to go into Gettysburg to get some shoes and as they were going in they spied some Union troops. They had a little skirmish and then Lee sent 25,000 troops and

they forced the Union troops out of the town and to where? Cemetery Ridge. Why did they dig in there? Because it was the high ground. A perfect place from which to wage a conflict. And as the Confederates tried time and again to charge that ridge they suffered more and more casualties. They put up a good fight, remarkable actually, but in the end the Union troops were too dug in, they had too many advantages because they held the high ground and it broke the back of the Confederate Army.

It's the same thing in the space race. When the Russians sent up Sputnik that was seen in America as a military defeat. Why? They had taken the high ground. It's always that, again and again, who has the high ground? Keep that in mind because it's the picture of what Jesus Christ took at His ascension. Here in verse 21, who has the high ground? Jesus Christ has the high ground and this is what the Church age is all about, there's a battle raging and I'm trying to get you to see what the purpose of the Church is. What are we doing here? What's our reason for being in existence? So that's why I'm taking you through this slowly because I'm laying the foundation for this Church thing, this parenthetical time between the First and Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

And to get that we've got to get the cosmic setting, there's something new about the strategy of verse 21 that was not true in the OT. We have a human being at the Father's right hand; we never had a human being at the throne of the universe, ever before! Jesus Christ, in His humanity, sits at the helm of the universe. What an exalted, cosmic view of the Lord Jesus Christ. He sits "far above all rule and authority,". Yes Satan is here, yes there are evil powers, yes Daniel saw them as the spirits that control Persia and the spirits that would control Greek and Rome and all the great empires, the principalities and the powers of darkness. But the high ground has already been taken by a member, not of the angelic creation, but a member of the human race that was made lower than the angels and has now passed through them and taken the high ground.

Are you starting to see there was a revolutionary thing being proclaimed here? This is the first time in history that a creature, made a little lower than the angels, is now above the angels, a power shift has happened. Verse 21 goes so far as to say "not only in this age," not only in this time, but for all time Jesus Christ has the high ground. He has the high ground once for all; it

can never be taken from Him. He's not just above; He's far above all His enemies forever.

Verse 22, "And He put all things in subjection under His feet," now we're going to see that's not quite experientially true yet, He put all things positionally under Jesus Christ's feet. This gets into the rationale of why things happen in our lives in the Church Age, there's something going on in the Church Age that's related to the ascension and session. So that's why we're making a big deal with this. That's Ephesians and it describes Jesus, after He ascended He went to a place called "the heavenlies." And wherever that place is, geometrically it's the high ground; he has power and authority over all evil forces.

One of the things that you'll notice happening to you if you follow through these Scriptures that we're going through as we go through this event, I think what you're going to find as you meditate on this, pray about it and think about it and read Scripture, is that you will find your vision is less of what the Spirit is doing in your own heart and you think more outwardly as to what is going on in the big scheme of things. We'll come back to the individual Christian life but at this point you want to be thinking on a cosmic scale what's going on here. There's a battle raging for who rules the universe, and in a battle there are winners and there are losers, there are tactics, there are means used by armies to fight battles and there is a fight for this high ground. It's already been taken, that's what this verse is saying, just like Gettysburg, Gettysburg wasn't the last battle fought in the War Between the States but it was the decisive turning point in the war. And this verse is saying the decisive battle has been fought by the Lord Jesus Christ; He has taken the high ground and now we're involved in fighting the rest of the war. This is greater than the solar system; this is greater than our galaxy. This is for the entire universe. Talk about thinking big! The most brilliant astrophysicist of our time hasn't got anything compared to this concept. Big Bang, all the rest of the cosmological speculation that is being funded by tax paying Christians so that they can get non-Christian theories propagated in the education system, that whole schema is peanuts compared to what the Bible is saying is going on.

Let's go to 1 Pet 3:22, here's Peter's version. We've had the writer to Hebrews tell us He passed through the heavens; we've had Paul tell us He has taken

the high ground, now Peter joins in. This was not some Pauline thing, this permeates the NT. He describes it, he says “who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him.” There He is exalted at the right hand of the Father, having passed through the heavens, and who is subject to who? The angels are subject to the Lord Jesus Christ. They’re at war with Him but who has the high ground in the war? The Lord Jesus Christ.

Does this give you some inkling of what the first century Christians must have been thinking when they were faced with the dilemma of are you going to worship *Caesar* or are you going to be one of those stubborn right-wing fundamentalists and refuse to bow the knee? They could say, now look, Jesus Christ is *Kurios*, that’s the Greek word for Lord. Jesus Christ is Lord. So when they were faced with the command to bow the knee and burn incense to Caesar they had all this data about the Lord Jesus Christ. Think what kind of steel that puts in your bones. Bow to Caesar, little bitty Caesar, I don’t think so. Jesus Christ sits above all angels and authorities. How do you think the Romans liked that? Not so much. A Roman sits there and they have their Caesar, he was the greatest human ruler on earth, he was a god, and you’re not going to bow the knee to him? Gee, we can’t have this group of people running around rebelling against Caesar. These people are a threat, they’re dangerous, and they’re not going along with our program. Ultimately what’s going to happen? A clash. That’s the clash that was brewing as early as the Book of Acts. A clash between who really is LORD? Caesar sitting in Rome or Jesus sitting above the heavens? We worship Jesus who sits at the right hand of the Father above all, there’s no comparison. Therefore we are not going to be intimidated by some goon squad that Caesar sends down here to our neighborhood. See what this does for you? It settles your loyalties. It puts steel in your backbone, to have this vision of the universe because nothing can stop you if you are in union with the Lord Jesus Christ who is in the heavenlies, far above principalities and powers; ultimately they already lost the decisive battle. Satan would have you think he’s fierce and he can destroy you. And there is a ferocity to Satan, but his going around roaring like a lion is largely a façade. It’s a last gasp attempt to distract our attention from the risen, ascended and seated Lord Jesus Christ, trying to make us think that he has all this wonderful great power and we ought to be afraid, we ought to do what he wants, and we have to walk around fearful that something might happen and it’s all out of control, when our Savior, who died on the cross, is

sitting victorious at the Father's right hand. This sets up the basis for the Church.

We want to go to Eph 4 and spend the rest of our time looking at Eph 4 and Psalm 68; we'll go back and forth between these two passages. In Eph 4 this is a passage on the church, here again is one of those neat things you read in Paul, he's dealing with a real church, real people, real situation. And he's trying to deal with the problem of lack of unity in the congregation. So he comes to what we would call a sociological problem, and instead of taking three courses in sociology at the University of Athens Paul invokes OT doctrine, and the way he does that, in a most marvelous way, is to introduce the issue of spiritual gifts. We're not going to go into spiritual gifts right now, but in verse 7 he makes the point that every believer has been distributed a gift by God's grace, and that gift isn't for you, that gift is for other people. You may have the gift of mercy, the gift of discernment, the gift of wisdom, the gift of teaching, but they are all service gifts. They're where you fit in the overall body of Christ. But what we're interested in here is how these gifts were acquired. Essentially they are described as war booty from this battle the Lord Jesus Christ won.

Eph 4:7 says "But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift," now he stops. He doesn't go any further and for the next verse, verses 8, 9, 10, he stops and he deals with what is Christ's gift. This is amazing. That's why I say Paul must have been the kind of guy that you couldn't discuss how you brush your teeth without getting involved into the Trinity. He gets into deep theology at every point. We're talking about relationships in the body of Christ. And instead of going the sociological, psychological route, all of a sudden he pulls up this passage out of the OT with some weird thing about Yahweh and says now you do understand about the gifts, right?? What? Let's see if we can follow his logic. Christ's gift, and that gift is grace, given to a believer; he's saying every believer has been given grace. Verse 8, "Therefore, it says," the Scripture says, "When He ascended on high, He led captive a host of captives, and He gave gifts to men."⁹(Now this expression, 'He ascended,' what does it mean except that He also descended into the lower parts of the earth? ¹⁰He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above" there's the phrase, remember we went to these previous three verses, Eph 1, Heb 4, 1 Pet 3, and we read the language, we've seen that language before, it's language that describes this ascension

and session thing. Is everybody convinced of that, you see that in the text, there's a standard way of referring to this. So here it comes, "He ascended far above all the heavens," there's that plural heavens again, "that He might fill all things." That is, distribute grace to each one of us...

In verse 11 he goes right back to the Church at Ephesus and says "And He gave some apostles, prophets" these are gifted people that have been given. When we read in our margin where that quote came from we read it came from Psalm 68 so now we've got to go back to Ps 68 and get a drift of what is going on in Ps 68. Hold your place in Eph. This is difficult. It involves quite a bit of OT imagery. So if you have a study Bible notice the marginal reference back to Ps 68:18, so let's go back and read that verse. I want you to observe as we read that verse that Paul made some changes when he wrote it to the Ephesians. It's not an exact quote. There are differences

Ps 68:18, "You have ascended on high, You have led captive Your captives, You have received gifts among men," those first two clauses are basically what he picks up and applies in Eph 4 - except with some changes. Ephesians says, "WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH, HE LED CAPTIVE A HOST OF CAPTIVES, AND HE GAVE GIFTS TO MEN." Anybody see something different the way Paul quotes it. Check the last clause. What's the verb in Psalm 68:18, it's "receive." But when he quotes it in Eph. 4 what does he do? He changes the verb, "He gave gifts to men." When you see that kind of thing going on, it's what we call an application. What the apostle is doing is citing an OT text because he sees a truth there that he wants to pull out and apply to another situation. So he's pulling it out and making some changes under inspiration.

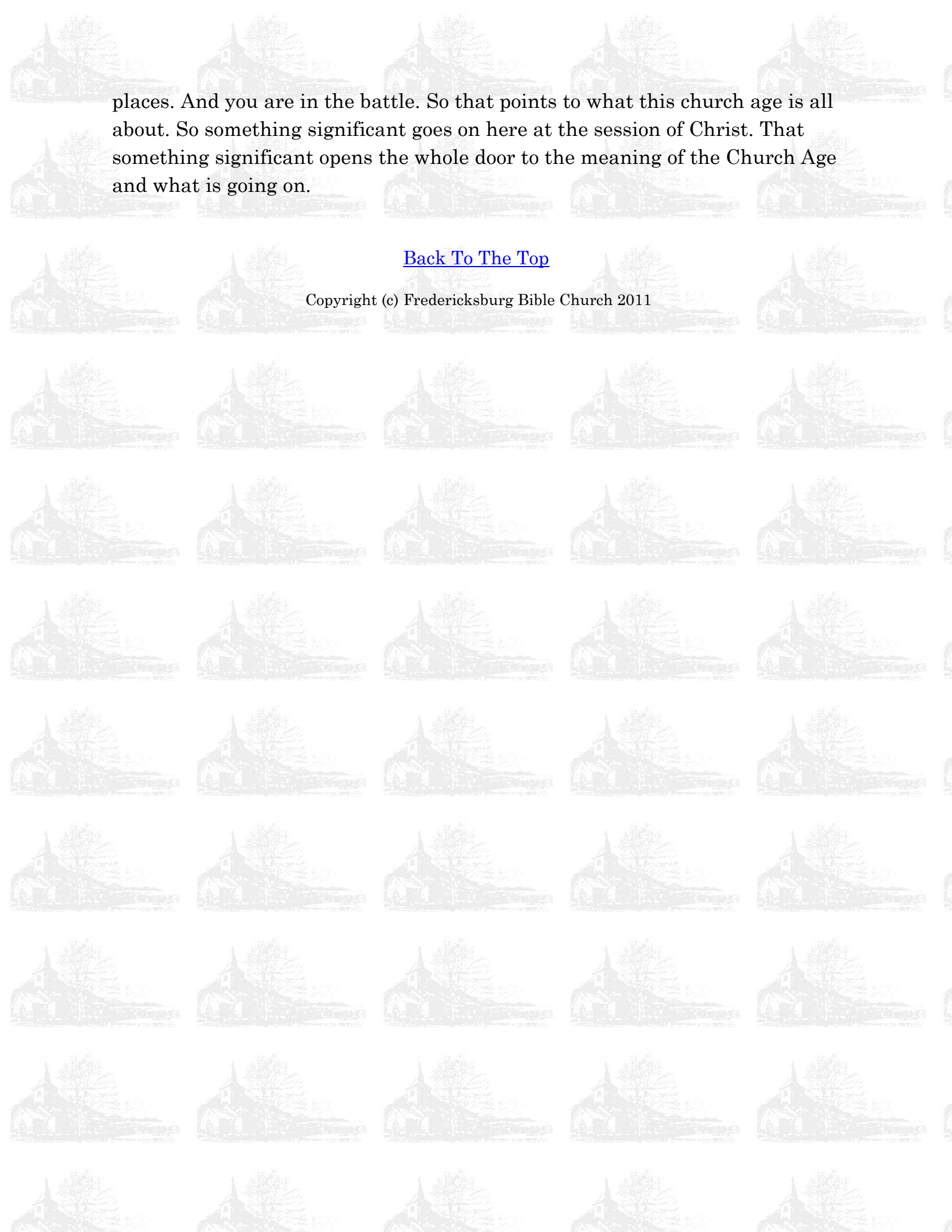
So now we've got to figure out, before we figure out what's going on with the shift from "receive" to "give" we've got to go to what's the context of Ps 68:18. The safe thing to do is look at the first verse. Who wrote the Psalm? It is "A Psalm of David." Now that you know Psalm 68 is a Davidic Psalm, you go back to the frame of reference, and where does that place it in OT history? During the rise and reign of King David. How would you characterize Israel's history at the time of the rise and reign of David? Think about the events that have led up to David. When was the nation born? Out of Egypt, the Exodus. Where did God take the nation? Through the desert to Mt Sinai. Then they wander around in disobedience for 40 years until a new generation arises under Joshua. The nation goes into the land at the Conquest. Do they

complete it? No. They only learned partial obedience. God pronounces doom at Bochim. That generation would not complete the Conquest. Tribal factions develop. Has the nation really been settled? No, it's been in upheaval and things have gone wrong, God gave them judges to solve these problems. It ends in a time of chaos. The people ask for a king. Then we come to David. So if Psalm 68 is the time of David what is going on when David writes this Psalm and hands it to the chorale leader to sing, "Let God arise, let His enemies be scattered; and let those who hate Him flee before Him. ²As smoke is driven away, so drive them away; as wax melts before the fire, so let the wicked perish before God." They had powerful, bloody hymns. What is David singing about? Conquest. I want Conquest. Verse 3, "But let the righteous be glad; let them exult before God; yes, let them rejoice with gladness." And it goes on, in verse 6, "God makes a home for the lonely; He leads out the prisoners into prosperity, only the rebellious dwell in a parched land." Verse 7, "O God, when You went forth before Your people, When You marched through the wilderness," what event is that; He's looking back at the Conquest and Settlement under Joshua and he's linking it up. Verse 8, "The earth quaked; the heavens also dropped rain at the presence of God; Sinai itself quaked at the presence of God, the God of Israel. ⁹You shed abroad a plentiful rain, O God; You confirmed Your inheritance..." so on and so forth. Verse 12, "Kings of armies flee, they flee, and she who remains at home will divide the spoil!" Verse 14, "When the Almighty scattered the kings there, it was snowing in Zalmon." This is all a review of the prior Conquest. ¹⁵"A mountain of God is the mountain of Bashan; a mountain of many peaks is the mountain of Bashan. ¹⁶Why do you look with envy, O mountains with many peaks, at the mountain which God has desired for His abode? Surely, the LORD will dwell there forever. ¹⁷The chariots of God are myriads, thousands upon thousands; The Lord is among them as at Sinai, in holiness." Then verse 18. "You have ascended on high, You have led captive your captives; You have received gifts among men," What has David just done? Try to put yourself in David's shoes, you haven't conquered all the land, you're the new king, what do you want? You want verse 1 don't you? "Rise up O God." You want God to rise up and finish the Conquest. Joshua started the Conquest, Rise up O God and finish it in my day. By verse 18 what has God done? He has ascended on high; we wouldn't say He has finished it. But what could we say? He's taken the high ground. He's made the decisive military maneuver. This leads into Paul's purpose of the church in Eph 4 and why he quotes Ps 68.

Let's come back to Ephesians and see if we can understand what it hints at. We'll come back to this theme a lot before we're finished with the ascension and session. Eph 4:8; one of the things that's obvious right from the start is what? Look at verse 8, think of what we've just said, think of what Psalm 68 is talking about, and what stunning thing, without getting into all the details, what do you notice immediately by way of implication? If Paul in verse 8 is citing Psalm 68:18, God ascending to reign, what does that imply about how he viewed Jesus Christ? If I had a dime for every cult that says Jesus isn't God I'd be rich. What do you think this says? The Psalm says God will ascend on high and who takes God's place when the Apostle Paul quotes Psalm 68? Who does he replace Jehovah with? Jesus Christ.

In verse 9 he expounds this and he begins to interpret the application of what's going on at Jehovah Jesus' session. "Now this expression, "He ascended," what does it mean except that He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth?" We don't have time to go into all of it. It relates to His death and burial. Then what does He do in verse 10? He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above the heavens." We've seen that terminology before. What happened? Christ won a decisive battle at the cross and He ascended on high. Now He sits where? On the high ground. Jesus Christ sits at the helm of the universe, far above all authorities. He sits at an impregnable position over the entire universe.

So what's this age all about? It's about Jesus Christ winning captives of Satan to Himself. One by one what is Christ doing in the Church age? He has the high ground and He's calling out a people from Satan's kingdom into His own kingdom. Every time Jesus Christ does that He's winning an enemy to Himself. Do you think it angers Satan, He's losing soldier after soldier. Every person that comes to Christ has changed sides, they've defected and that threatens Satan's kingdom building program because he's being defeated. One by one he faces another defeat. And it must be troubling. But this points to what this Church age is all about. We're in a war, which is why two chapters later what does Paul tell us to put on? The armor of God. God is calling out a people for Himself during this age; He's giving gifted people to the Church to function as soldiers for Christ. And what does it point to? Where is it all headed? To a total conquest, not of physical enemies, but of spiritual enemies. We are in a spiritual conflict that rages in the heavenly



places. And you are in the battle. So that points to what this church age is all about. So something significant goes on here at the session of Christ. That something significant opens the whole door to the meaning of the Church Age and what is going on.

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