

Peace be with you. We greet you in the name of God, the Lord of peace, who wants everyone to understand and submit to the way of righteousness that He has established, and have true peace with Him forever. We are happy to be able to return today to present your program *The Way of Righteousness*.

For a long time, we have been looking into the holy Gospel – or *Injil* - the book which contains the story of the Almighty Savior, Jesus Christ. As we have seen already, **Jesus** means *God saves*. **Christ** is a Greek word for *Messiah* meaning *Whom God has appointed*. Jesus Christ is the One whom God appointed **to save** the children of Adam from the dominion of sin.

However, as we have seen, **most people did not recognize who Jesus really was**. Some considered Him a prophet, but they did not understand that He was the very Word of God – or *Kalimat Allah* - who came from heaven and appeared on earth as a man. Some, like the chief priests and the rulers of the Jews, were very jealous of Him and in the end they killed Him by having Him hung on a cross. However, God planned and knew about all these events beforehand. The Messiah's death on the cross was in perfect agreement with the plan God had announced long beforehand through His prophets.

In our previous program, we heard that God raised Jesus back to life on the third day. The resurrection of Jesus proves that God accepted the blood which Jesus shed as a full payment to redeem the children of Adam from the power of sin, the fear of death and the punishment of hell.

After Jesus came back to life, we saw that He appeared to His disciples, showing them the scars where the soldiers had pounded nails through His hands and feet. We also read that Jesus ate with His disciples to prove to them that He really was alive. The book of the Gospel, the *Injil*, relates how Jesus appeared to His disciples over a forty-

day period and spoke with them about the Kingdom of God. On one occasion, Jesus appeared to more than five hundred of His disciples at the same time. (1 Cor. 15:6) However, the greatest proof that Jesus is alive today is in the fact that He lives (by His Holy Spirit) within the hearts of those who believe in Him and submit themselves to His authority.

Today, with the help of God, we will hear about **the great authority God has given to the Lord Jesus** and we will see **how Jesus parted with His disciples and ascended up to heaven**. We begin our study today in the last chapter of the Gospel of Matthew.

The Scripture says:

*Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, "**All authority** in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

Did you hear what Jesus said to His disciples? He said to them, "**All authority** in heaven and on earth has been given **to me**. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations." Why did Jesus say that He had all authority in heaven and on earth?

In our studies in the Torah of Moses, we learnt about how God created the first man, Adam. We read that God gave Adam authority to rule over everything God had created. God wanted Adam to live with Him and rule with Him forever. But Adam forfeited that authority on the day he disobeyed God's command and ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Since Adam is our forefather, and as the old African saying goes "an epidemic is not confined to the one from whom it originates!", we too have lost the

privilege of living and ruling with God. Like Adam, we are all sinners, born into the kingdom of sin, far from God and His majestic glory.

However, we praise God, because the Writings of the Prophets show that God designed a plan to open for the children of Adam **a door** through which they could return to God and have a share in His glory and kingdom. That "Door" is **the holy Messiah** who came from heaven to pour out His blood as a sacrifice to cleanse people from their sins and to bring them to God. Jesus the Messiah was tested like Adam, but Jesus did not sin. He was perfect and holy, just as God is perfect and holy. That was the reason that God was not ashamed to call him **His Son**. Thus after Jesus gave His life as a sacrifice to take away sin, God raised Him from the dead, made Him the Lord of all and committed to Him *"all authority in heaven and on earth."*

Perhaps some might ask the question, "If Jesus is Lord of everything, why is our world still so full of trouble and sin?" The Holy Scripture gives the answer when it says:

*"For as **in Adam** all die, so **in Christ** all will be made alive. **But each in his own turn: Christ, the first fruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power.**" **He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.**"*

From those verses, and from many other verses in the Word of God, we learn that God has committed all authority to Jesus so that He might take control of everything, and judge everyone. However, He has not yet taken actual control of everything, nor has He yet judged the people of the world. One day Jesus will return to earth. When He returns, He will take control of this world and make all things new again.

Therefore, whoever you are and wherever you are, God is commanding you to **repent** of your sins, turn to Him and **believe** the Good News of salvation based on the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. If you truly believe, God will forgive all your sins in Jesus' name, make your heart new by the power of the Holy Spirit, and give you peace with God forever. If you believe in Christ, He will come to you by His Holy Spirit and establish **His kingdom in your heart**. Jesus Christ will not change the world until He returns in person to judge it. But He can change you today! Will you allow Him to establish His kingdom in your heart?

God has sent you a Savior who can take away your sins and give you a heart that is new and clean. You can **know** that you will spend eternity with God in the glory of Paradise, **if you believe** the truth about Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world!

However, **if you ignore** the Savior whom God sent, He will finally become your Judge!

That is what the Scripture speaks of when it says:

"The Lord Jesus [will be] revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed!"

The Word of God is clear. It tells us that whoever truly **believes** the Good News about Jesus Christ's death on the cross and His resurrection from the dead will be **saved!**

However, whoever does **not believe** it will be **condemned!** Jesus shed His blood as a sacrifice which can erase your debt of sin forever. But the blood which Jesus shed for you is of no value to you if you do not believe in it in your heart. Because the Scripture says:

*"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that **whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life...but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.**"*

Yes, if you believe the Good News of Jesus Christ, you will be **saved**, but if you do not believe it, you will **perish** in your sins. That is the word of salvation which God sent down to the children of Adam. That is the reason Jesus commanded His disciples, saying: *"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations!"*

Now let us continue the story. Jesus appeared to His disciples for forty days after He had risen from the dead. The Scripture says:

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

Did you hear what Jesus said? We have already read (in the Gospel of John 14-16) how Jesus promised His disciples that His Father in heaven would send to them the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, who would live in their hearts, cleansing them, renewing them, strengthening them, and guiding them into all truth. Now we hear how He commanded His disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the Holy Spirit who was soon to come. In our next lesson, God willing, we will see how the Holy Spirit descended to fill the hearts of all the disciples of Jesus, just as He had promised.

Let us now read how Jesus departed from His disciples and ascended to heaven. The Scripture says:

So when [the disciples of Jesus] met together, they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. 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."

*After he said this, **he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.** They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. "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."*

In this way, Jesus ascended into heaven, returning to His Father's house from where He had come some thirty-three years earlier. How majestic His departure was as He ascended into heaven before the eyes of His small band of disciples! There was no doubt--this Jesus whom they had been following over the past three years was truly the Messiah about whom all the prophets had spoken! In His birth, life, death, burial, resurrection and ascension-Jesus of Nazareth had **fulfilled everything** the prophets predicted concerning Him, even ascending into heaven as the prophet David had prophesied in the Psalms.

Do you know where the Lord Jesus is today? The Scriptures tell us that *"Jesus Christ...has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand-with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him."* Yes, Jesus is in heaven, at God's right hand, where all created beings are in submission to Him. **All of God's true subjects are submitted to the Lord Jesus Christ.** How about you? Have you submitted yourself to Jesus the Messiah, the One chosen by God as the Savior and Judge of the world?

As we just read, after the Lord Jesus ascended back up to heaven, two angels appeared to His disciples and said to them, "*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.***" Yes, one day Jesus Christ will return in the clouds. Are you ready for His return? **On that day everyone will behold Him, and everyone will know that He is the One whom God appointed as the Savior and as the Judge of the world!** That is what the Scriptures declare when they say:

*Christ Jesus ...being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to **the highest place** and gave him the name that is **above every name**, that at the name of Jesus **every knee should bow**, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and **every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord**, to the glory of God the Father!"*

This is where we must stop today, but we hope you will join us in the next programme to discover how God sent down the Holy Spirit to live in the heart of every person who receives Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior...

God bless you as you remember what the two angels told the disciples, saying,

"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."