

Sermon Outlines

Christ The Forerunner

Readings

Hebrews 6:20

Introduction

I am seventy-one years of age and when reviewing the achievements which I have seen accomplished in my lifetime, how often I could have said, "So in So has gone and done what no man has ever done before."

For instance:

- a) On 20th July 1969 Neil Armstrong finished the first leg of an epic journey. He arrived on the moon. Never before had any man ever walked its surface, or spoke and made decisions in that sphere.
- b) In contrast to this "first", our consideration is of a man who is the first man ever to go beyond the boundaries of space and enter Heaven, and He is the only man in Heaven.

Christ Is The Only Man In Heaven

- 1) The seeming contradiction:
 - a) When I first heard the statement, "Christ is the only man in Heaven", my immediate response was, "No, that is not correct, for what about Elijah, Enoch and Moses? In the Old Testament I read of two men who were either taken out of this world or caught up to heaven without dying. Enoch was translated when God took him without dying (Gen. 5:24; Heb. 11:5) and Elijah went up by a whirlwind to Heaven (2 Kgs. 2:11). Moses died and yet was on the Holy Mount. He was not in a body for God buried his body (Deut. 34:5-6).
- 2) What is the answer to this apparent contradiction?
 - a) I found the answer in the words of the Lord: "No man hath ascended up to heaven (Jn. 3:13), and the critical word is "man". Since the Lord is true in every word He spoke, then neither Enoch, Elijah, or Moses with human bodies could ever have entered heaven, for the spirit returned to God (Ecc. 12:7). Those who are in Heaven are in spirit, but not in their human bodies.
 - b) This is the truth Paul wrote of when speaking of those who have died. He informs those living that those saints are now in heaven in an unclothed state, awaiting the redemption of the body (2 Cor. 5:1-4; Rom. 8:23). This does not mean they are like whimsical ghost like apparitions floating in the air, for angels are spirits but they do have form.
 - i) When the Lord was risen and the women did not find the Lord's body, "two men stood by them in shining garments", they were angels (Lk. 24:4).
 - ii) When the Lord went back to heaven, "two men stood by them in white apparel", they were angels (Acts 1:10).
 - iii) When Abram was sitting at the tent door, he saw three men approaching, two of them were angels, the third was the Angel of the Lord who was the Lord. (Gen. 18:1-10; Heb. 13:2).

The Man Jesus Entered Heaven As a Forerunner

What is a "Forerunner"?

- a) In Hebrews there are two things set before the believer, the race (Heb. 12:1) of which Christ is the example, and the "hope" of which Christ is the Guarantor, or as in Hebrews, our "Forerunner".
- b) The word "forerunner" in either Greek or any language refers to an individual or group of people who go to prepare for the arrival of another, or others more prestigious.
 - i) In ancient days, whither in military or navel communications, the term always meant there were others to follow.

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- ii) John prepared the way for the Lord in what he preached (Mk. 1:3). He declared the superiority of the Lord in his answering declarations (Jn. 3:29-31).
- iii) There are two lovely titles of the Lord which start with the letter "F"
 - 1. Christ is the Firstfruits (1 Cor. 15:20, 23) from the dead, and being such, He assures us of the resurrection of all humanity.
 - 2. Christ is the "Forerunner". He is the assurance to us that just as He has entered Heaven in a body, so shall we.
- iv) It could come as a surprise to learn that the Lord is the only one called "Forerunner" in the scriptures:
 - 1. John Baptist prepared the way for the Lord in accordance with the scriptures (Isa. 40:3; Mal. 3:1) but was never called the "forerunner".
 - 2. The disciples who were sent to acquire the donkey for the Lord's ride into Jerusalem (Lk. 9:52), but they were never called "forerunners".
 - 3. There is only one person called "Forerunner" in the scriptures and that is the Lord.
 - 4. Christ can never be compared to others. Being superior and preeminent He is always set in contrast. Therefore, in contrast with all others who went before, He not only excels them but also excels the natural meaning of the word.

Why is Christ needed to be our Forerunner?

In Hebrews the Holy Spirit wanted to reveal a truth that was not true of the Priest in the Old Testament, nor was it sufficient to convey the fulness of Christ's sufficiency, even though He is a priest after the order of Melchisedec (Heb. 6:20). That truth is "Christ is the Forerunner".

- a) When the high priest went into the Holiest of all on the Day of Atonement, he went in alone (Lev. 16:17; Heb. 9:7), all others being outside the court. Neither Aaron nor any high Priest could ever bring others into the Holiest, therefore, he was never a "forerunner"!
- b) By contrast, Christ, being the Forerunner, went within the veil (Heb. 6:19-20); going into the True Tabernacle (Heb. 8:2), that is the "Temple of the Tabernacle" (Rev. 15:5), which is the immediate presence of God, but opened the way for us also to come into that sacred sphere (Heb. 10:19).
- c) The "veil" in this context is the unseen divider between this world and the realm where God rules.

There is a contrast between how Christ came down from Heaven and how He went back. At the incarnation the Lord came down to where He had been before, BUT not as He had been before. At His ascension He went back to where He had been before, BUT not as He had been before.

- a) When the Lord came down before, as when He appeared to Manoah (Jud. 13:13-21), it was a theophany. That is, He had the appearance of a man but He was not a real human being. At His incarnation the Lord added humanity to His deity and became a baby, a child, a twelve year old, and a young man about thirty years of age. He was a real human being. At His ascension He went up as "Jesus" the man, and for the first time a human being with a body which could live on earth, could be handled, eat, and indeed cook a meal. He entered within the veil.
 - i) In so doing, He passed through that invisible separator between this world and the other. At death the spirit leaves this world and enters the other. When the Lord comes we shall enter the other. When the Lord comes we shall all be changed (1 Cor. 15:51) and given a body like the Lord's. It will be a real human body and with that new body we shall enter Heaven, that spirit world.
 - 1. "What is meant by a spirit world?"
 - (a) It is a sphere of spirit beings, "God is a Spirit" (Jn. 4:24); the angels are spirits (Psa. 104:4).
 - (b) It is a sphere, a world in contrast to this sphere. Here the body dominates, we eat, hunger, sleep, fear, etc., and there is little God consciousness. In that world there is God consciousness, and all is in conformity to God.

It Is Not a World Fitted For Humans

At the minute we do not have a body fitted for that place, therefore, we need a change of physical constitution. Furthermore, we also need to be fitted spiritually for Heaven.

- a) At Calvary the Lord provided for the fitness to enter that holy sphere. This He did when He bore my “sins in His own body on the tree” (1 Pet. 2:24), and by grace, God has secured for me the righteousness of Christ (2 Cor. 5:21). The individual who receives the gift of eternal life through Christ has, “made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light” (Col. 1:12).
- b) In entering Heaven as a man, Christ opened the way. As the Forerunner, the way is opened for we humans with new bodies to enter that sphere.

The Superiority of Christ The Forerunner

How did our Forerunner enter the Holiest?

- a) Did he enter because of who He was, deity? No! Thank God for that, for that would never have opened the door for me to enter Heaven.
- b) Did he enter by virtue of His relationship to God as His Son? No! Thank God for that for that would never have opened the door for me to enter Heaven.
- c) He entered by virtue of His own blood (Heb. 9:12) and that is what has opened the door for me, a man has gone into heaven by virtue of the blood of the Lord.
 - i) He entered into heaven; within the veil; with the condemnation of sins already past; which never needed repeating; on the grounds of resurrection; and therefore separation from the old life. That is how we will enter Heaven.
 - ii) Being our Forerunner, the Lord is such in perpetuity which not only means we can approach God through the Blood of the Lord, but we stand perpetually in:
 1. The perfections of His righteousness. The holy apostle informs us: “As He is, so are we in this world” (1 Jn. 4:17). It does not say, “As He was” but “As He is”, and at this moment and eternally, He is before God in holy perfection, and we are “in Him” (Phil. 3:9); “In the Beloved” (Eph. 1:6).
 2. The efficacy of His sacrifice. We used to sing a hymn with the words, “The blood shall never lose its power, no never, no never”. The sacrifice of our Forerunner is the, “Author of eternal salvation” (Heb. 5:9); He has provided “eternal redemption for us” (Heb. 9:12); having “through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God” (Heb. 9:14). Such is its satisfaction to God that He has, “called us unto his eternal glory” (1 Pet. 5:10); and it is all, “According to the eternal purpose which He purposed In Christ Jesus our Lord” (Eph. 3:11).
- d) By being such and our association with Him we enter all the blessing he had when here on earth. In the long history of the Tabernacle no priest ever knelt in the holiest and spoke to God. The Lord spoke constantly to God, we also can do that now.

Conclusion

Who is this Forerunner effective for?

- a) When our Lord was here He told the disciples: “I go to prepare a place for you” (Jn. 14:2). At Calvary He made preparations for us to be fit to enter that place. There was never an individual who was still a human being in Heaven before. When Christ entered Heaven, His was the first human body to enter the spirit world, and by His entrance as a man, he prepared the place for us.

Thank God we have a Forerunner:

- a) Who can never die (Rev. 1:18)
- b) Who can never be superseded (Heb. 7:17)

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- c) Who can never be replaced (Heb. 7:24)
- d) Whose efficacy will never deteriorate so that we can at all times, under all circumstances, enter the Holiest to worship, give thanks, and pray (Rev. 5:8-14).

**May God grant us good understanding as He, by His Holy Spirit, deigns to guide us into all truth.
John 16:13**

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