



Inside Wyoming

The Newsletter of the Wyoming Ave. Baptist Church

Vol. 18, No. 4, May 11, 2003

The Ascension of Christ

by Charles Spurgeon

Our blessed Lord and Master has gone from us. From the mount of Olives, the place where in dread conflict his garments were rolled in blood, he has mounted in triumph to his throne. After having shown himself for forty days amongst his beloved disciples, giving them abundant evidence that he had really risen from the dead, and enriching them by his divine counsels, he was taken up. Slowly rising before them all, he gave them his blessing as he disappeared.

It would be very easy to have found reasons why he should not have gone. Had it been a matter of choice to us, we should have entreated him to tarry with us. Unless grace had enabled us to say: "Not as we will! but as thou wilt," we should have constrained him,

saying, "Abide with us." What a comfort to disciples to have their own beloved teacher visibly with them! What a consolation to a persecuted band to see their leader at their head; difficulties would disappear, problems would be solved, perplexities removed, trials made easy, temptations averted! Let Jesus himself, their own dear Shepherd be near, and the sheep will lie down in security. Had he been here we could have gone to him in every affliction, like those of whom it is said, "they went and told Jesus."

It seemed expedient for him to stay, to accomplish the conversion of the world. Would not his presence have had an influence to win by eloquence of gracious word and argument of loving miracle? If he put forth his power the battle would soon be over, and his rule over all hearts would be for ever established. His voice called the dead out of their graves; could we but have him still in the church his voice would awaken the spiritually dead. His personal presence would be better to us than ten thousand apostles, at least, so we dream; and we imagine that with him visibly among us the progress of the church would be like the march of a triumphant army.

Thus might flesh and blood have argued, but all such reasoning is hushed by our Lord's declaration, "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you." He has gone, and whether our weak understandings are able to perceive it or not, it is better for us that Jesus should be at the right hand of God than here corporeally in our assemblies below. Let not his sheep

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Inside Wyoming is published by and for the members and friends of the Wyoming Avenue Baptist Church.

Contributions of articles and information are most welcome! Contact the editor, Walter Rice, Jr., at 215-820-0165.

SBS Celebrates Passover and Easter

by Debby Crockett

Continuing in our study of why God's people celebrate, these last few weeks of Sunday Bible School have been quite exciting! In preparation for the Jewish feast of Passover, we learned what happened when Moses and God teamed up to try and convince the Pharaoh to let His people go. The children examined objects to help them remember each of the plagues God sent on the people of Egypt while keeping the Hebrews safe in Goshen. There was a toy jumping frog, several plastic insects, ping-pong ball "hail", and even a gummy hand with "sores" on it, to name a few.

The next week was very special, as we learned how young King Josiah commanded the people of Israel to keep the Passover after many years of neglecting God's command. To learn how Jews today celebrate Passover, we had our own Seder. We borrowed a real Seder plate and Elijah's cup from our missionary friend Tom Huckel, and set a festive table.

Everyone had a goblet for the cups of grape juice, a glass of salt water for dipping our bitter herbs, a plate with a small sampling of each of the ritual foods to be eaten, and a personal copy of the Haggadah, or order of service. The ritual foods are not something most of us normally eat. The plates containing matzo, parsley, haroset and horseradish looked pretty unusual to the children. One of them remarked that this

must be the "Jewish version of Fear Factor!" But everyone enjoyed with great fascination the raising of the glasses of grape juice, the reading of the prayers, and the tasting of the foods. And just like in the real Seder, we stopped in the middle to have the festive "dinner," which for us was grapes and cheese.

They all enjoyed the "spooky" part at the end about looking for Elijah to come, looking for the hidden matzo, and eating as much matzo and haroset (made of apples,

*Remember the wonders
he has done, his miracles,
and the judgments he pronounced,
O descendants of Israel his servant,
O sons of Jacob, his chosen ones.*

1 CHRONICLES 16:12-13 (NIV)

nuts, grape juice and cinnamon) as they could get. But the real surprise was in our lesson the next week, about how Jesus took that cup of juice and the broken matzo, and told his disciples to use these things to remind each other of His body and blood. Because we had conducted our own Seder, the children knew what Jesus meant by this, and how meaningful it was at the time. They also knew what it meant when Jesus referred to Judas' "dipping in the dish," since we had all dipped our parsley in salt water during our Seder.

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Easter Baptisms

On Easter morning, Sunday, April 20, 2003, Wyoming was blessed to have a service of believer's baptism, conducted by Pastor Allen Grover. Four people were baptized, having professed their faith in Jesus Christ as their personal Savior.

Those baptized were Marjorie Fairey, Maritza Zayas, Matthew "Barry" Busch (Maritza's fiancé), and George Wilson. A good number of their friends and family were present for the service, sharing in the joy of this very significant moment.

Pastor Grover's sermon that morning was on the truth of the resurrection, perhaps the best attested event in history. He spoke

on five specific evidences of the resurrection. The empty tomb and the inability of the religious leaders to produce Jesus' body or a witness to its removal, and witnesses who testified they had seen Jesus alive point to the truth of Jesus' resurrection from the dead.

More striking is the transforming effect of Jesus' resurrection on the lives of His disciples, who were changed from cowards to brave ambassadors for the gospel. The last evidence that Pastor Grover spoke on was the conversion of people who had hated Jesus, namely Paul who was Saul, and James the brother of Jesus.

After the sermon was the service of baptism. Entering the pool to be baptized one at a time, each candidate for baptism

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Marjorie, after the service



Barry (the tall guy) and Maritza (holding the flowers)

Easter Baptisms, *continued*

was asked for his or her personal testimony, and was asked some questions about their faith in Jesus Christ: Do you know Jesus as your Savior and Lord? Do you believe that Jesus is the virgin born Son of God? Do you believe that he died on the cross for your sins, and that he rose from the dead on the third day? By your baptism today, do you promise to live your life for the one who lived and died for you? All of the candidates affirmed these truths.

Pastor Grover had a passage of scripture chosen for each candidate, which he read to them before they were baptized. Pastor Grover then baptized the candidate in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, declaring them “buried in likeness to his death, and raised to walk in new life.”

Please pray for God’s protection and guidance for these young believers, that He



George Wilson and his dad, George Sr.

would strengthen them and mature them in their faith.
by Walter Rice, Jr.

Sunday Bible School, *cont'd from 3*

On Palm Sunday we had our own parade to praise Jesus, waving the paper palm branches and pennants we had made. But the most special time of all was Easter morning. The first special thing was that each child made his own snack, by rolling a marshmallow in butter, cinnamon, and then dough. When each roll was baked and opened, we observed the same thing that the women found when they came to Jesus’ tomb that first Easter morning it was empty!

When it was time, the children went up to the balcony in the sanctuary to watch the service of baptism. All were very interested in what was happening, and they had a good view from up above. Of course, a number of the children had a special interest in the service, as some of them were watching a parent, grandmother, or other relative proclaim their faith in Christ. Even though some of them may not have understood everything about what they were seeing, they knew it was about doing something for God and that it was very special. We all shared in their joy!

Ascension of Christ, *cont'd from page 2*

below imagine that he has injured them by his removal; unerring wisdom has declared that it is expedient for us that he is gone.

Beloved, let us reflect *how secure is our eternal inheritance* now that Jesus has entered into the heavenly places. Our heaven is secured to us, for it is in the actual possession of our legal representative, who can never be dispossessed of it. He has not merely taken possession, but he is making all ready for our reception and eternal inhabitation. He is daily preparing it for us, that where he is we may be also. Since my Lord, the King of heaven and the Master of angels, has gone thither to represent all his saints and claim their places for them, I know that my portion is secure. Rest content, beloved, and sing for joy as the apostle's heart did when he wrote "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance."

Further, if Jesus has gone into the glory, *how successful must our prayers be*. You send a petition to court, and you hope for its success, for it is drawn up in proper style, and it has been countersigned by an influential person; but when the person who has backed your plea for you is himself at court, to take the petition and present it there, you feel safer still. Today our prayers do not only receive our Savior; imprimatur, but they are presented by his own hand, as his own requests. "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God," "let us come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." No prayer which Jesus urges can ever be dismissed unheard, that case is safe for which he is advocate.

*"Look up, my soul, with cheerful eye
See where the great Redeemer stands;
The glorious Advocate on high,
With precious incense in his hands.
He sweetens every humble groan,
He recommends each broken prayer;
Recline thy hope on him alone,
Whose power and love forbid despair."*

We remark further that, as we consider Christ ascended, *he is the type of all his people*. As he was, so are we also in this world; and as he is, so shall we also be. Unless the Lord come very speedily, we shall die as he did, and the grave shall receive our bodies for awhile. Yet like our Lord we shall burst the bonds of death, for we cannot be held by them. There is a resurrection morning for us, because there was a rising again for him. When we have risen from the dead at the blast of the archangel's trumpet, we shall ascend also, for is it not written that we shall be caught up together with the Lord in the air, and so shall be for ever with the Lord?

Have courage, brother; that glittering road up to the highest heavens, which Christ has trodden, you too must tread. You, too, shall receive the "well done" of the Father, and shall sit with Jesus on his throne, even as he has overcome and sits with the Father upon his throne.

I have rather given you suggestions for meditation than the meditations themselves. May the Holy Spirit bless them to you; and as you in imagination sit down on Olivet and gaze into the pure azure, may the heavens open to you, and, like Stephen, may you see the Son of Man at the right hand of God.

This article was abridged from a sermon preached by Spurgeon on March 26, 1871.

Principles for Christian Living

Editor's note:

Over the last few months, Pastor Grover has been preaching from the book of Philippians. As we have carefully studied the book, Pastor Grover developed a list of principles that we learn from Philippians. He gave this list out two weeks ago, when as a congregation we paused to reflect on what we were learning and how the Word of God had been impacting us. I think it worth reprinting, that the seeds that were sown by the preaching of the Word may take firmer root in us. As you read these, may the Spirit encourage you to grow in holiness and faithfulness to the Word of God.

1. People become Christians by God's grace through faith.

2. Christians grow in their faith both as an individual and as a community of believers. When we recognize our weakness and walk by faith we are able to live boldly for Christ.

3. Christians are servants, aiming to please their Master, Jesus Christ. We recognize that God is working a plan no matter what circumstances we face.

4. We share about our relationship with Jesus because we are so excited that we can't hold it in. This encourages believers. It also prompts those who don't know Jesus personally to consider their need of him.

5. Suffering is God's gift to Christians. It is God's tool to work in our lives and draw out his character in us.

6. Christians pray for their fellow believers and the salvation of the lost.

7. Standing on the Bible, Christians strive for unity to overcome the natural barriers between our different nationalities, ethnic groups, political affiliations, and financial and social status. Humility binds us together. Our unity cries out that Jesus is the living Lord.

8. Christians are not to be distracted by our culture's focus on material things. Our focus is on the return of the Lord Jesus Christ when he will declare the names written in the Book of Life, transform our bodies, and complete us in his image.

9. Christians take on an apprentice. We invest ourselves in other believers and challenge them to take steps of faith.

10. Christians believe in taking the Bible's message of salvation to all peoples in the entire world. We support missionaries and honor those who risk their lives and make sacrifices for the cause of Christ.

*That I may gain Christ
and be found in Him...*

Philippians 3:9

On the Cover...

This issue's cover is a print of George Parcell's watercolor rendition of the ascension of Christ.



I admit, it is a strange to see such a colorful prayer corner in *Inside Wyoming*. But Vacation Bible School is just around the corner and it is time to start praying for the school, the teachers, and the kids who will hear the gospel and learn about Jesus. This year's theme is "Rancho Roundup" and



looks at Jesus as the Good Shepherd, and how he leads and cares for us. VBS runs from July 7 through 11.

Pray that God would be providing enough teachers and helpers for VBS, and that over the next two months, He would be preparing these volunteers to be good Kingdom servants, people of gentleness and truth, reflections of our Good Shepherd. Pray also for the children, that God would bring a group receptive to His Word, and that even now His Spirit would be working to bring them to Christ.

PRAYER CORNER

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