

**** JULY 2017 ****

RECEIVED UP IN GLORY

This teaching has been developed from a message
given by Rhoda Jackson on our Community Sunday, 23rd July, 2017

"For without controversy great is the mystery of godliness:

God was manifested in the flesh

God was justified in the Spirit

Seen by angels

Preached among the nations [Gentiles]

Believed on in the world

Received up in glory" 1 Timothy 3:16

This great mystery is outlined for us in the context of **verse 15**, which says, *"that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."* This great mystery is presented in six powerful statements, revealing to us 'who Jesus is'. He is God *"manifested in the flesh"*; He is Immanuel, *"God with us"* (Matt.1:23b).

In this study we want to come to a greater understanding of Jesus being *"received up into glory."* What does it mean to say that God [Jesus] was received up into glory?

JESUS WAS RECEIVED UP IN GLORY

After Jesus had told His disciples to go into all the world and preach the gospel, He was received up into heaven, and He sat down at the right hand of God (**Mark 16:19**).

Jesus being received into heaven and sitting at the right hand of God, equals being received up into glory. The glory is described by two key things: heaven is glorious, and there is a throne in heaven.

In Luke's account the Scripture says, *"While He blessed them, He was parted from them and carried up into heaven. And they worshiped Him"* Luke 24:51-52a. Remember this is the resurrected Jesus who had been appearing to His disciples for forty days after the resurrection. *"He presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs ... speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God"* Acts 1:3.

There came a time when Jesus was to be taken up (**Acts 1:2**). The disciples unashamedly worshiped Jesus after He had been carried up into heaven (**Lu.24:52**). This is confirming the mystery of godliness: that *"God was manifested in the flesh"*. Jesus as God was worthy of worship, and only God can be worshiped.

The cloud of glory

"While they watched, He was taken up and a cloud received Him out of their sight" (Acts 1:9). As Jesus *"went up"*, the disciples were looking steadfastly toward heaven (v.10). Then *"two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven'"* (Acts 1:11).

Clearly to be taken up into heaven is to be received into glory. The glory refers to the heavenly realm (**Eph 1:20**). Jesus was taken up or received into that heavenly realm. *"A cloud received Him out of their sight"* (**v.9b**). This is not the only time that a cloud is associated with the glory. In **Exodus 40:34** when the Tabernacle had been completed, *"Then the cloud covered the tabernacle of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle."*

On the Mount of Transfiguration *"a bright cloud overshadowed them [the three disciples]; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud"* (**Matt.17:5**). In that experience Jesus *"was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light"* (**v.2**). Peter says of that occasion that he saw *"the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ"* and that he was an eyewitness *"of His majesty"* (**2Peter 1:16**).

WHAT IS HEAVEN?

- **It is God's throne:** *"Heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool"* (**Isa.66:1**). John saw *"a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne"* (**Rev.4:2**). John had to be *"in the Spirit"* to be able to see into heaven (**v.2**).
- **Jesus sat down at the right hand of God.** Jesus said, *"Hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting of the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven"* (**Matt.26:64**). **The Power** is a reference to the Almighty God. **The right hand** is the place of all authority. Jesus said even before He ascended, *"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth"* (**Matt.28:18**).
- **It is the realm of the Spirit of God - where God lives.** When the apostle John looked and behold a door set in heaven, *"immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne"* Heaven, the Throne of God is in the Spirit. Jesus told us in **John 4:24** that *"God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth."* Paul said that the kingdom of God is *"righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit"* (**Rom.14:17**).
- **Heaven is where the Father dwells.** Jesus said *"I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God"* **John 20:17**.

Jesus was raised and seated

Paul tells us in Ephesians that Christ was *"raised from the dead and seated at His right hand in the heavenlies"* (**Eph.1:20**). This is a governmental position: *"far above all principality and power and might and dominion"* (**v.21**).

Christ was raised from the dead by the power of God and seated at the right hand in the heavenly places. God *"put all things under His feet and gave Him to be head over all things to the church"* (**Eph.1:22**).

Pentecost is the proof that Jesus has ascended into the glory

Peter says of Jesus *"being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear"* **Acts 2:33**. As the ascended Lord, who is called the Lord of glory (**1 Cor 2:8**), Jesus poured out the Holy Spirit which God had promised, even in the Old Testament. The Holy Spirit could

only be poured out in the believers when Jesus had been **glorified (John7:39)** When we receive the Holy Spirit we carry the witness and proof in us that Jesus has ascended to Glory.

I am ascending to My Father

Jesus told Mary *"I am ascending to My Father"* (**Jn.20:17**). Jesus knew He was to ascend. He identifies that His Father is our Father, that His God is our God. Jesus was inviting Mary to come into the *"fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ"* (**1John 1:3**). Jesus invites all of us to come into this fellowship and relationship with God. This is very important: we only know who God is through Jesus. Jesus reveals the Father to us.

Jesus declared in **John 10:30** *"I and My Father are one"*. Jesus declared in **John 14:6** *"No one comes to the Father except through Me."* The only begotten Son, *"who is in the bosom of the Father"* (**Jn.1:18**), He has declared the Father to us. Jesus came from the Father; Jesus declared the Father to us; Jesus returned to the Father and is now seated on the Father's throne (**Rev 3:21**).

Jesus completed the work the Father gave Him to do on the earth as the Apostle of God (**Jn.17:4-19**). Jesus acknowledged that He was with the Father before the world was and that He shared in the glory with the Father (**Jn.17:5**).

That they may be one

Because Jesus and the Father are one, and because Jesus has ascended to the Father, now the believing ones can become one with Him: *"That they all may be one as you Father, in Me, and I in you; that they may also be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me"* **Jn.17:21**. Then Jesus said that He had given the glory that the Father gave Him to the disciples. The glory would make the disciples one in the Father and the Son (**v.22**).

This is the only way that the world can finally know who Jesus is: by the glory of God revealed in the Son and the glory of the Son, which is the glory of the Father, revealed in the church! Great is the mystery of godliness. Jesus was received up in glory so that we can partake of His glory and have the *"hope of glory"* formed in us (**Col 1:27**).

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR US?

The gospel is to bring us into the glory of God; the gospel is to bring us into this place of oneness with God.

We are to sit with Jesus on the throne

Jesus promised the overcomers in the church of Laodicea that *"to him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne"* (**Rev.3:21**). Jesus makes it clear that there is only one throne: it is the Father's throne, but Jesus has been given that throne, and our destiny is to sit with Jesus on that throne. How awesome is that!

We have been raised *"up together, and made to sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus"* (**Eph.2:6**). This is our placement in Christ if we have received Jesus and have been baptised into Christ, then He makes us to sit in the heavenly places in Him.

We need to be in this place with Jesus if we are to fulfil the commission and make disciples of all nations (**Matt.28:18-20**).

We are to be with Him where He is

Jesus prayed in **John 7:24**, "*Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I Am*". Jesus was praying this for all those who would believe in Him through the apostles Word (v **20**). **John 17** is in the context of Jesus being in the Father and Father being in Jesus (v **23**). Jesus being received up to glory is being received up to the Father and He invites us to *be with Him where He is*. Jesus has prepared a place for you in the Father's House (**John 14:2**), this is a place in the Father. "*I shall be a Father to you and you shall be my sons and daughters*" (**2 Cor 6:17-18**).

Remember that the mystery of Godliness is in the context of knowing how to conduct ourselves in the House of God, which is the Church of the living God; which is the Father's House. Jesus was received up in glory and He said He would "*receive us to Himself that where I am you may be also*" (**John 14:3**).

We are to behold His glory

The desire of Jesus for His disciples is for them to be one with Him so that "*they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world*" (**Jn.17:24**). This would lead to them being filled with the love of God (v**26**).

When Jesus became a man, the Bible says "*the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth*" (**Jn.1:14**). It is only in Jesus that we can see the glory of God. The Scripture says that God "*who commanded light to shine out of darkness has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*" **2Cor.4:6**.

We shall appear with Him in glory

"*When Christ our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory*" **Colossians 3:4**. We are to live our lives in preparation for His appearing (please read **Titus 2:1-14**). We are to "*seek those things which are above where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God*" (**Col 3:1**). We are to "*set our minds on things above, not on things on the earth*" (**Col 3:2**). We are to live a life which is "*hidden with Christ in God*" (**Col 3:3**).

Our bodies will be changed

Our mortal bodies will be changed when we are "*caught up together with them* [the dead in Christ] *in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air*" when He comes (**1Thess.4:17**).

1 Corinthians 15 tells us that when the Lord comes there is going to be amazing changes and "*we shall be changed in the twinkling of an eye, and the dead will be raised incorruptible*" (**1Cor.15:52**). Both the living and the dead in Christ will receive resurrection bodies which are glorious bodies like unto His body. "*We shall bear the image of the heavenly man*" (**1Cor.15:49**).

We receive a glorious body

When Jesus Christ appears from heaven, He will "*transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself*" (**Phil.3:20-21**).

**Jesus was received up in glory
When we come into Christ,
we are raised up to be seated with Jesus in the heavenly places
(far above every other authority and power).**

**We are positioned in Christ
and empowered to do His work
(the work is making disciples).**

**Christ is our life
When He appears, we will appear with Him in glory
We are invited to be with Him where He is now!**