



Provided by the Church of the Lutheran Confession - Board of Missions

## **A Systematic Study of Bible Teachings (Dogmatics)**

### **Lesson 6.6.2.4 – The Doctrine of Jesus, Son of God, Messiah (Christology)**

#### **Jesus' Sitting at the Right Hand of God and His Future Return**

Mark's account of Jesus' ascension says that **"He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God"** (Mark 16:19). What is meant by Jesus' sitting at the right hand of God? To answer this question, we have to examine the ways that the Bible explains the right hand of God. The letter to the Hebrews uses this expression several times. We read in Hebrews 1:3-4: **"When He had by Himself purged our sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become so much better than the angels, as He had by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they."** Sitting at God's right hand certainly indicates glory and honor. With reference to Psalm 8, we read in Hebrews 2:9: **"We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor."**

Hebrews 4:14 says that Jesus is **"a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens"** – not being contained in a certain spot in the heavens. In Hebrews 7:26 Jesus is described as **"holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens."** Again, in Hebrews 8:1 Jesus is called **"a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens."** We read: **"But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool"** (Hebrews 10:12-13). **"Jesus...for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God"** (Hebrews 12:2). It is clear that sitting at the right hand of God indicates victory, completion of His assignment, glory, honor, majesty, and power – without restrictions of any kind, higher than the heavens.

Perhaps the clearest explanation of what sitting at the right hand of God means is found in Paul's letter to the Ephesians, where we read that God **"raised Him (Christ) from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all"** (Ephesians 1:20-23). We also read in Ephesians 4:10 that He **"ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things."** In this same way the apostle Peter says: **"Jesus Christ...has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him"** (1 Peter 3:21-22).

It is comforting for us Christians still on earth to consider that our Lord Jesus, who died for our sins and rose again, is sitting at the right hand of God, willing to use His power and authority for the good of those who believe in Him. For example, we read this in Paul's letter to the Romans: **"If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us"** (Romans 8:31-34). A similar statement is made in Hebrews 7:25: **"He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them."** The fact that Christ is praying (interceding) for us at this very moment surely should help us resist temptations to sin. The fact that Christ is at this very moment ruling all things for the benefit of His Church should encourage us to keep preaching the Gospel even though our efforts often seem to be without fruit.

On the basis of passages like these one of our Lutheran confessions, *The Formula of Concord: Solid Declaration*, says: “Christ can be and is present wherever He wills, and in particular...He is present with His Church and community on earth as Mediator, King, Head, and High Priest... He is present not only according to His deity, but also according to and with His assumed human nature, according to which He is our Brother and we flesh of His flesh and bone of His bone (Ephesians 5:30)” (*Book of Concord*, Kolb-Wengert Edition, p. 631).

After Jesus ascended to heaven at the Mount of Olives, two angels appeared to announce that Jesus would return just as they had seen Him go. Jesus’ return is the phase of Jesus’ exaltation that remains to be fulfilled in the future. We shall consider what the Bible says about Jesus’ return in Chapter 15 – Eschatology or The Last Things.

### Questions

---

1. Which phase of Jesus’ exaltation is taking place at this very moment?
2. What is meant by the statement: “God’s right hand is everywhere”?
3. What concepts are associated with sitting at God’s right hand?
4. What comfort is there for us that Jesus is at God’s right hand?