

EXEGESIS OF LUKE 22:31,32

VERSE 31

ἰδοὺ

-Behold

ἐζητήσατο

-Aorist middle Ind. of ἐφατέω "I beg earnestly for; Aor.=I have procured to be given up to me. (Souter)

σινιαβαί

-sift, winnow

- (1) Simon, Simon: One can imagine how this was said with much affection and just enough distress in tone to make it solemn.

Desired: The aorist implies success in the demand.

- 7 You: Plural; "You, the whole of you;" therefore, Simon, look to yourself, and to the whole brotherhood of which you are the leading man.

Sift: Sifting points to the result of the process anticipated by Jesus. Satan aimed at ruin.

(EGT)

- (2) By addressing Peter as "Simon" (with the repetition), Jesus calls upon him to realize the seriousness of the matter which He is going to discuss. And by calling him "Simon" instead of "Peter", Jesus reminds him of his human weakness.

The Evil One has no free and unlimited right to act against the faithful, but must always submit to the overruling and permissive authority of the Lord.

Satan desires that in the sifting process no wheat shall remain, but that all (like Judas) will be blown away like chaff.

It was Satan's purpose to bring the disciples to utter ruin, but because Jesus prayed for them, these very temptations worked together for their good. The sifting of wheat, through which alien matter is separated from it, is an indispensable and wholesome process.

(NIC)

- (3) Sift: The force of the comparison is that he may toss and shake you up and down; i.e., alarm and harrass you, by threats and afflictions, until you lose your presence of mind, and your hold of the promise, and so fall from the faith, as the chaff and dust fall from the sieve and are blown away.

(American)

- (4) The warning of vs. 31 might be connected with vs. 28: "Ye are they which have continued with me." There would be a contrast: "Here is a temptation in which ye shall not continue."

The tempter is present; he has gained the mastery of Judas; he threatens the other disciples; he is preparing to attack Jesus Himself. And the danger to each is in proportion to the greater or less amount of alloy which his heart contains. This is the reason Jesus more directly addresses Peter. By the address, Simon, twice repeated, He alludes to his natural character and puts him on his guard against the presumption which is its dominant characteristic.

The ἐξ in ἐξητήσατο includes the notion: of getting him drawn out of the hands of God into his own.

Satan asks the right of putting the 12 to the proof; and he takes upon himself, over against God, as formerly in relation to Job, to prove that at bottom the best among the disciples is but a Judas.

(Godet)

- (5) This passing from the group to the individual is most impressive. Christ must have seen at once the weakness of Peter and the possibilities for good and for leadership latent within him. Hence the concentration of His prayers on him.

(Coggan)

- (6) Satan is thus seen in his malice, but he is also seen as under God's authority. He is forever considering God's saints (Cf Job--"Hast thou considered Job?")--the malignant watching eyes of Satan.

"Satan has obtained you by asking," but he had to ask.

(Morgan)

ἐπιστρέψας - aor. act. part. of ἐπιστρέφω:
I TURN BACK TO; I COME TO MYSELF

VERSE 32 ↗

ἑδέξθην

Aor. pass. of δέω, δέομαι

δέω - I bind

δέομαι - I request, I beg, I desire.

ἐκλίπτω

-Aor act subj of ἐκλείπω fail utterly; in a state of eclipse (of the sun), used in Luke 23:45.

To leave out, to leave off, cease, used of the cessation of life.

στήριξον

-aor imper act of στηρίζω : fix firmly; buttress, prop, support, strengthen, establish.

- (1) Stablish is better than Strengthen. Strengthen may denote only a temporary effect. The word implies fixedness.

(Vincent)

- (2) I have prayed, I working against Satan, and successfully.

Faith fail not: though it prove weak or inadequate for the moment. Job's faith underwent eclipse. He did not curse God, but for the time he lost faith in the reality of a divine government in human affairs. So Peter never ceased to love Jesus, but he was overpowered by fear and the instinct for self-preservation.

Converted: Have returned to thy true self.

(EGT)

- (3) The Saviour prayed for all His faithful disciples and specially prayed for Peter, who played and still had to play such a leading role, that God should preserve him from utter shipwreck of his faith. While Satan thus acts as the cunning adversary, Jesus acts as the intercessor.

(NIC)

- (4) For THEE: Peter. Why for him in particular of all the disciples? Because he was a leader in influence, whose standing or falling would largely determine that of the rest.

(American)

- (5) The core of the prayer is "that thy faith fail not." Why did Jesus fasten on faith as the crucial point in the experience of Simon, the point which above all others needed now to be watched?

Faith is trust in another, reliance upon one other than oneself. Peter was showing ominous signs of self-reliance.

Fail not: The verb is used of years coming to an end and so of death, of money giving out, of the sun being eclipsed. Indeed eclipse is the root of the word used here. What had burned brightly could so easily burn low or suffer total eclipse.

The prayer merges into a command: "Strengthen thy brethren."

"When you have come to yourself"--There is rebuke in that clause. "Simon, you are beside yourself, debating where you come in the apostolic hierarchy--as if that mattered, under the very shadow of the cross! Come to your senses--then and only then will you be of any use to your brethren.

(Coggan)

- (6) Prayed: This is a word that has as its root a thought of binding; and I have asked for you, committing Myself for you as your Bondman, your Surety.

(Morgan)

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL ON Luke 22:31,32

- (1) Wheat must be sifted simply because it is wheat.

"But I have prayed for thee." --Before the temptation I have prayed for thee. You only go where Jesus has gone before you with His intercession. Jesus has already made provision for all your future in a prayer already presented.

Notice the principal object of the prayer was "that thy faith fail not." He knows where the vital point is, and there He holds the shield. As long as the Christian's faith is safe the Christian's self is safe. If faith fails everything fails.

Strengthen Thy Brethren:

1. It is his duty
2. He is qualified for it.

(Spurgeon)

- (2) Note the discrimination of the intercession. "I have prayed for THEE." The man that was in the greatest danger was the man nearest to Christ's heart, and chiefly the object of Christ's intercession. So it is always--the tenderest of His words, the sweetest of His consolation, the strongest of His succours, the most pleading and urgent of His petitions, the mightiest gifts of His grace, are given to the weakest, the neediest, the men and women in most sorrow and stress and peril, and those who want Him most always have Him nearest. The thicker the darkness, the brighter His light; the drearer our lives, the richer His presence; the more solitary we are, the larger the gifts of His companionship. Our need is the measure of His prayer.

Two lessons: 1- Sincerest love, the truest desire to follow Jesus, the firmest faith, may be overborne, and the whole set of life contradicted for a time.

2- The deepest fall may be recovered. He came back for two reasons; (1) because Christ prayed for him, and (2) because he turned himself.

(McLaren)

Notes on the Ascension

Luke Chapter 24 verses 50 through 53

1. The Resurrection Restored Humanity in Christ. As this humanity is restored in the person of Christ by the fact of His resurrection, the Ascension raises it to its full height; it realizes its destination, which from the beginning was to serve as a free instrument for the operation of the infinite God.

Like the High Priest when, coming forth from the Temple, He blessed the people, Jesus comes forth from the invisible world once more, before altogether shutting himself up within it, and gives his own a last benediction.

John
The verb to prostrate oneself, in this context, can mean only the adoration which was paid to a divine being. The joy of the disciples caused by this elevation of their Master, which is the pledge of the victory of His cause, fulfilled the word of Jesus: "If ye love me, ye would rejoice because I go to my Father" John 14:28.

After the Ascension the disciples went away rejoicing. The disciples do here what was done at the beginning by the shepherds, chapter 2, verse 20.

Jesus regarded the Ascension as the elevation of his person, in the character of son of man to that divine state which he had renounced when he came under the conditions of human existence. Having reached the term of his earthly career, he had asked back his glory (John 17:5); the Ascension was the answer to His prayer.

According to the biblical view, the Ascension is not the exchange of one place for another; it is the change of state, and this change is precisely the emancipation from all confinement within the limits of space, exaltation to omnipresence. The cloud was, as it were, the veil which covered this transformation. The right hand of a God everywhere present cannot designate a particular place. Sitting at the right hand of God must also include omniscience, which is closely bound up with omnipresence, as well as omnipotence, of which the right hand of God is the natural symbol.

If the day of the Ascension was the most important in respect of the personal development of Jesus, the day of his appearance on the mountain showed the accomplishment of the messianic program sketched in chapter one verse one.

(The Ascension perfects in the person of the son of man God's design in regard to humanity.)

The Second Coming is that event in which the external condition of the sanctified believer is raised to the same elevation as that of our glorified Lord. First, holiness, then glory, for the body as

for the head: the baptism of Jesus, which becomes ours by Pentecost; the Ascension of Jesus, which becomes ours by the Second Coming. (Godet)

2. Everything was at last complete and ready. Christ never starts something without finishing it. The Ascension signals the fact that His work on earth is done. During the forty days after His resurrection Christ taught His disciples everything that was necessary, especially the right insight into the Holy Scriptures. But now he is to be exalted in His divine power and glory at the right hand of the Father. There upon, like the High Priest when he came forth from the Temple on great feast days, He lifts up His hands and blesses His disciples as the eternal High Priest. Through His spirit, however, He is still and remains forever with all His people on earth.

So grand and mighty was the revelation of His divine Sonship and His majestic Ascension that the disciples spontaneously worshipped Him as Lord and King. To His disciples His Ascension in divine glory was final proof that He was truly the Christ, the Son of God, and that He as the Almighty was able to fulfill His promises. In addition, the angels in Acts 1:11 gave the joyful assurance that He would return in person. By reason of all this, the disciples, although they had to say farewell to Him as regards His physical presence, returned to Jerusalem with jubilant hearts. And just as the gospel history commenced in an atmosphere of worship and joy, so it ends here in the last words of Luke on a note of unparalleled joy and fervor of divine worship. (NIC)

3. The Ascension Must Always Remain a Mystery, for it attempts to put into words what is beyond words and to describe what is beyond description. But that something such should happen was essential. It was unthinkable that the appearances of Jesus should grow fewer and fewer until finally they petered out. That would have effectively wrecked the faith of men. There had to come a day of dividing, when the Jesus of earth finally became the Christ of heaven. But to the disciples the Ascension was obviously three things -

(1) It was an ending. The day when their faith was faith in a flesh and blood person, and when it depended on the presence of that person's flesh and blood were ended.

(2) But equally it was a beginning. The disciples did not leave the scene heartbroken because now they knew they had a Master from which nothing could separate them anymore. (And they also had the promise that He would return).

The fact that the disciples left that scene of parting rejoicing is the most significant and striking note in the Ascension account.

III (3) The Ascension gave the disciples the certainty that they had a Friend, not only on earth, but in heaven. To die is not to go out into the dark; it is to go to Him. (Barkley)

II 4. ~~At~~ When the risen Lord had made it sufficiently plain to the disciples what was their commission, and only then, He disappeared from their sight.

The resurrection and ascension of Christ both together constitute His exaltation. But His exaltation to the right hand of God, which is what Ascension Day really commemorates, was not postponed to the fortieth day after His triumph over death. This was not the first occasion He vanished from before His companions eyes after His resurrection. The resurrection appearances were visitations from that exalted and eternal world to which His body of glory now belongs. What happened on the fortieth day was that this series of visitation came to an end, with a scene which impressed on the disciples their Master's heavenly glory.

The words "A cloud received Him out of their sight" are reminiscent of the words with which the gospel incident of the transfiguration comes to an end. They are reminiscent, too, of our Lord's own words when He described His coming again, both in the Olivet Discourse and in His reply to the High Priest at His trial. The transfiguration, the ascension, and the second coming are three successive manifestations of Christ's divine glory to men. The cloud in each case is probably to be interpreted as the cloud of the Shekinah - the cloud which resting above the tent of meeting in the day of Moses, was the visible token to Israel that the glory of the Lord dwelt within. So, in the last moment that the apostles saw their Lord with outward vision they were granted "a theophany: Jesus in enveloped in the cloud of the divine presence."

Verse 11 - The disciples had seen Him go in cloud and glory; in cloud and glory He would return. But an interval was to elapse between His exaltation and return, and in that interval the possession of the Spirit was to be the pledge of the coming consummation of glory.

II Christ is ascended, but His abiding presence and energy fill the whole book of Acts, and the whole succeeding story of His people on earth. His presence at God's right hand means that He is more effectively present with His

people on earth all the days even unto the consummation of the age. He ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things - Ephesians 4:10. (Bruce)

I 5. Jesus had finished the earthly ministry assigned by the Father; the work of atonement had been completed. The resurrected Christ was not prepared to ascend to the right hand of the Father. Jesus led the disciples to the Mount of Olives near Bethany, where He lifted His hand and blessed them. Perhaps this was reminiscent of the High Priest, who upon retiring from the Temple on the feast days, lifted his hands and blessed the people. The Messiah, who had now completed the work of atonement, lifted his hands as a gesture to indicate divine blessing upon His disciples. While blessing His disciples, He was carried from them into heaven.

The grandeur of God's revelation and earthly manifestation in Jesus Christ overwhelmed those who observed the scene. They worshipped Him and returned to Jerusalem with indescribable joy. The disciples, remained continually in the Temple, blessed of God.

Luke gave numerous proofs of Jesus' resurrection, but likely in the minds of the disciples none surpassed that of the Ascension. Returning with jubilant expression of joy, the disciples were preparing to begin the task assigned by Jesus. (Gidlon)

6. The last doing of Jesus as the flesh was that of vanishing. The last act was that of disappearing. He did not go away; He went out of sight as to bodily presence. The man Jesus vanished from sight, but the Christ did not depart. He had said, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age."

The body did not cease to be, but for their sakes it vanished to make way for the body in which He would continue to do and to teach, which is His church. The days of limited service were over, the days of unlimited service were about to begin.

The disciples must be trained to faith and not to sight. Therefore He vanished. The last vision is that of the vanishing, but not that of departing, not of going away. (Morgan)

7. Personal privilege in a great experience carries with it a stewardship responsibility, and the disciples were turned from that scene to the work at hand. Blessings are to be shared or lost.

The Ascension was declared necessary in order that His followers might receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:33; John 16:7; John 20:22). ~~The visible, tangible, risen Jesus withdrew that they might realize more fully His presence and power as the returning Lord, recognized as the Holy Spirit.~~ Paul and John virtually equate the risen Lord and the Spirit (Stagg)

8. The book of Acts lets us see Him ascend into heaven. His ascension signalled an era of witnessing. They were to become busy with the task of witnessing. The heavenly visitors served to shock the disciples into realizing that there was some urgent to be done on the earth when they asked them, "Why stand ye gazing up into heaven". We need them to ask us this question again. (Autrey)

9. The ascension or exaltation of Jesus Christ was a regular theme of the preaching of the primitive church. A variety of words and phrases was to used to describe this climax of the gospel history.

The phrase "at the right hand of God" meant not a place, but a participation in the sovereignty of God over all things. The exalted Jesus had entered a state and an activity which transcended the limitations of place altogether.

In a number of passages the resurrection and the ascension are not apparently distinguished as two events. But there is a clear distinction between them in theological meaning. It was one thing to assert that Jesus had been raised from death: it was another thing to assert that He now shared in the sovereignty of God over heaven and earth.

The ascension is the record of an impressive final parting. The only difference between the ascension and the previous withdrawals was that the ascension was the last of them. It was an enacted symbol to reveal to the apostles that the series of appearances to them was ending, that Jesus was entering upon a new mode of existence and activity, and that He was not only raised from death, but exalted into the glory of God - the cloud being a recognized symbol of the divine presence.

The bringing to an end of a visible intercourse between Jesus and the disciples is the prelude to a new manner of relation between Him and them, and to a new state of His activity in behalf of the human race.

