

WHY DID JESUS ASCEND TO HEAVEN?

INTRO: I started a number of messages for this Ascension day service and finally settled on this one. One of the reasons I chose it was because I had a call from Mexico asking for a certain message I had done there. I used an illustration that I want to use in this message and then it will be available on SermonAudio. The title of this message is, "Why Did Jesus Ascend To Heaven?" Not too many churches commemorate the day Jesus ascended to heaven, but we still do. Now there are a number of reasons why Jesus ascended to heaven and did not remain on earth, and I have spoken to you on numerous occasions about things related to ascension day. But this morning I want to give you only one reason and we want to dwell on that reason for the rest of this service under two points.

Go with me to John 16 (read verse 7-11). One of the reasons Jesus ascended to heaven was so He could send the Comforter, and tell me, who is the Comforter? Well, He is the Holy Spirit. Seven times He is called the Holy Spirit. And Jesus said, "Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you."

Jesus said that it would be for man's advantage if He went away because if He did not go, the Holy Spirit would not come to us. Now, why they could not both be here, I do not know. But if either One or the Other were to be here, Jesus said it would be best for mankind if it was the Holy Spirit who would be here. Let me just mention that the Holy Spirit is a Person. He is the third Person of the Triune God. And if Christ was here, and not the Holy Spirit, Christ, being limited now by a body, can only bodily be in one place at one time. But the Holy Spirit, who is a spirit and a divine Spirit can be everywhere at one time. So, it was for our advantage that Christ ascended to heaven. He did it for our benefit.

But what I want to stress this morning is that Christ ascended to heaven in order to be able to send the Holy Spirit to us. And I want to say this, it was not that the Holy Spirit was not here when Christ was here. But the Holy Spirit would come in a whole new way. You see, a whole new thing was about to be established on earth and it was a

very important thing. That happened 10 days later, on the feast of Pentecost.

We are here at ascension day. I have preached a lot of messages on the importance of this day. You see, from the Jewish Feast of First-fruits to the Feast of Pentecost were 50 days. But from First-fruits to the day Christ ascended was 40 days. Turn to Acts 1 (read 1:1-3). Forty is the number of testing, and He showed Himself alive for 40 days after He was resurrected. His death burial and resurrection had been conclusively proved. And now He would ascend to heaven and send the Holy Spirit. That happened 10 days later, on Pentecost, and that day is the birth of the Church.

Now, this morning I want to show us two benefits believers derive from the Holy Spirit because Christ ascended to heaven. These two benefits are the baptism and filling of the Holy Spirit.

I. THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

We begin this morning with the subject of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Just what is the baptism of the Holy Spirit? Not long ago I was sitting in a waiting room in a hospital and there was a very outspoken woman about her Christianity, and I think she truly was a Christian. And when we talked she asked if I had been baptized by the Holy Spirit and I said yes, and so she asked if I spoke in tongues and so we discussed just what she meant by speaking in tongues and I found she meant ecstatic utterances. And so I asked her if she was edified when she spoke in tongues, seeing she did not know herself what she was saying. And she said, "Oh, yes; I feel so good when I speak in tongues." So I ask, how can you be edified when you yourself do not know what you are saying?

But the conclusion by many charismatics is that if you speak in tongues, you have been baptized by the Holy Ghost, as they usually say. Now, I want to tell you that speaking in tongues as ecstatic utterances does not prove anything. Mormons have done so. Other cults have done so.

And where does the idea come from that if one is baptized with the Holy Spirit, the evidence is

speaking in tongues? Turn to Matthew 3:11 (read). John the Baptist said that when the Messiah came, He would not only baptize with the Holy Spirit, but with the Holy Spirit and with fire. I don't want to take much time for it, but the baptism with fire, I believe is hell fire. To be baptized is to be dipped in or submersed in. And if you study the verse following the one that speaks of Jesus baptizing with the Holy Spirit and fire, it says of this One who will baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire, "His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; speaking of the righteous who are baptized by the Holy Spirit. And He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire. These are the lost who are baptized, submersed in hell.

Now we go to Acts 1. Ten days before Pentecost, on the day Jesus ascended into heaven He was gathered with His disciples. Look at verses 3-5 (read). Here we find that the baptism of the Holy Spirit would happen not many days from then. It was ten days to be exact. But notice here that Jesus does not mention the baptism with fire. Why not? Because that was not something that would happen just a few days from then.

But go now to chapter 2 (Read 1-13). Now, somebody will say, "Well, look at verse 2. Here is the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the baptism of fire." No, they were not baptized with fire. To be baptized is to be submersed. Here the fire sat on each of them. If that is baptism, then baptism by pouring is much more so a baptism. If that is baptism, even sprinkling is more of a baptism.

But I want you to notice this. Jesus said they would be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from when He ascended. And here, in Acts 2 is the only place that could have been fulfilled, and it was fulfilled here. But notice now verse 4. It says they were 'filled' with the Holy Spirit. Now, were they baptized or were they filled? Both! This is the initial reception of the Holy Spirit. Jesus had said they would be baptized by the Holy Spirit not many days from then, and this is the only place that could have been meant. But there were also, initially filled with the Holy Spirit here. Jesus said He had to leave

so the Holy Spirit could come. That is, in this special way.

And from this time forward, whenever a person repented of his or her sins and surrendered themselves to Christ by faith, they were baptized and initially filled right there. Listen to Romans 8:9, "But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His." Anyone who does not have the Spirit of God is unsaved. You receive the Holy Spirit when you are saved, and if you don't have the Holy Spirit, you don't belong to Him.

"So", you say, "Do you have any other evidence for this? This looks a little flimsy." Well, go to Acts 10. The Gospel has gone to the Gentiles for the very first time. Peter had just finished preaching to these Gentiles and look at verses 44-38 (read). The Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. Now you know as well as I do that you are not saved as soon as you hear the sound waves of the preaching of truth. It is when you hear, as in obedience, that you are saved. And that is what happened here. Listen to Acts 5:32, "And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him." You see, these new believers did not spend time praying and asking for the Holy Spirit. As soon as they heard they received the Holy Spirit. We won't deal with the speaking of tongues here. I will soon be making available on sermonaudio.com/mecl some messages I did on that some years ago. But, the point is that the Holy Spirit fell on them just as soon as they believed.

Now let me point out a very important thing here. When John the Baptist spoke of the baptism Christ would baptize with, he said He will baptize you with the HOLY Spirit. Notice he did not say they would be baptized with the gift giving Spirit, or the Spirit of wisdom or the spirit of grace etc... He said it would be with the Holy Spirit. Now, let me ask you, what is the evidence of having been baptized by the HOLY Spirit? Spiritual gifts? Tongues? Healings? No! Holiness!

I was asked just recently about a young couple, where the young lady apparently just got saved. And I was

asked if they could be living together in an unmarried state and still be Christians, because she was such a young Christian. Let me ask you, if they indeed were or live together, do you think they have the HOLY Spirit? Here we have a major sin. Young unbeliever or old unbelievers know that is sin! Never mind a young man who grew up in church!

Listen. Jesus said that when the Comforter has come, that is the Holy Spirit, "He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment..." If they became believers and they were not convicted about living together, the Holy Spirit was not there either, neither were they saved!

Now let me explain something here. All unbelievers and all professing believers know the moral law. It is written on their hearts. You do not have to be told that fornication or adultery or stealing, lying or cheating is wrong. You know it. And when one truly gets saved, those things must be repented of on the spot. The Scriptures list such major sins in Romand 1; 1 Corinthians 6 and Galatians 5.

Now, I want to illustrate for you what happens when a person gets saved. When a person is saved, sin and especially major sins must be repented of. Am I right? (illustration; show repentance, throw out

-lying	-adultery	-fornication
-stealing	-pride	-Backbiters
-Slanderers	-drunkenness	-Agreement breakers
-Causing divisions etc...		

Then pull plug and show how the baptism of Holy Spirit and filling take place. A person who is baptized by the Holy Spirit is also initially filled).

I want to make one more point on the baptism of the Holy Spirit. We are not baptized by the Holy Spirit. We are baptized by Jesus Christ into the Holy Spirit. Go to Matthew 3:11 (read). Notice John says that it is "He", Jesus Christ, that will baptize you. And when it says He will baptize you 'with' the Holy Spirit, the original word is 'en', usually meaning 'in'.

**But, when a person gets saved and is baptized by the Holy Spirit there are many things we are not so aware of, and the HOLY Spirit will go to work on many other areas; videos, music, bad attitudes, unclean language, lawlessness and on and on. You see, He is the HOLY Spirit and the HOLY Spirit will go to work, not to gift us primarily, but to make us holy. After this, He will use our gifts. Now, how much we read the Bible; how much we attend church; what kind of church we attend will all have an effect on what we learn is wrong and what we deal with.

In most of our churches around here, there are many professing Christians; they drink alcohol, they smoke, they swear, they do bad business and all those things get hardly any, if any preaching.

II. THE FILLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

So, you might ask, if one is filled and baptized by the Holy Spirit at the same time, are they then not one and the same thing? No, though they both happen at the same time when we initially get saved, the baptism of the Holy Spirit happens only once. It is never to be repeated. It can never be repeated. When Paul said, "One Lord, one faith and one baptism" that is the baptism I believe he was talking about.

The filling of the Spirit, on the other hand, is not a one time event. It should happen again and again. Let me give evidence for that. In Acts 2, the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit. In Acts 4, they preached the resurrection from the dead, and they were put in jail (Acts 4:1-3). The next day they brought them out and made a decision about them (read Acts 4:4-22). Well, look at what happened after they were let go (read 23-31). Now go to Acts 13 (read 13:48-52).

Go now to Ephesians 5 (read verse 18). The command is to be filled with the Holy Spirit. We are never commanded to be baptized with the Holy Spirit. Why not? Because when we get saved, it happens and if we don't get saved, it doesn't happen. But here we are commanded to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Now, the mood of the verb 'to be filled' is an imperative, that is, it is a command. We can be filled or be empty.

Then it is a present tense. That is very important. We must be continually filled. Someone has said we have leaky buckets. Another has said it should read like this, "be being filled with the Holy Spirit." And last, the verb is passive. That means that we cannot fill ourselves. Someone else must do it for us.

Let me explain that. Let us say the doctor finds you have a cancerous tumor and he says, "You need to have that removed." You see, you cannot do it yourself. So someone has to do it. So, to have it removed, you must meet the conditions. And the conditions are that you must go see the doctor and ask him to take the tumor out. And then you'll have to sign a paper giving him permission to do that. And if you do not meet the conditions, it won't happen.

Here we are commanded to be filled with the Spirit. We cannot fill ourselves, but we can meet the conditions. What are those conditions? Well, when the disciples were persecuted, they rejoiced and they prayed and they were filled. In Acts 13:48-52, it says they were filled with joy and the Holy Spirit. They had obeyed the Lord and had shaken the dust from their feet. Obedience is a very key thing to being filled with the Holy Spirit.

Now, I must mention again, it is to be filled with the HOLY Spirit. How do you know you are filled with the HOLY Spirit? Why, it will reveal itself in a holy life. And that is the main thrust I want to give this morning. Jesus ascended to heaven that He might send the HOLY Spirit. He sent the Holy Spirit to make us Holy. If we have spiritual gifts, they must all lead to holiness.

Now, when we first become Christians, there are some things we all know need to change immediately, and they change by repentance. We all have the moral law written on our hearts. No preacher needs to tell us that if we are living in fornication, it must stop when we become Christians. Nobody needs to tell us to quit lying. We know this by our very conscience itself, even before we are saved.

So, before we can be initially baptized and then filled with the Holy Spirit, such sins must be confessed and forsaken. There is adultery; habitual lying; stealing; fornication and so on. Nobody has to tell us those things are wrong. We all know it.

But, after we become Christians, we begin to see things that we before thought were very small, as sin. And if we do not deal with them, we can never be as full as if they were removed. (USE ILLUSTRATION NOW WITH PAGE OF SINS. Stress repentance needed to get rid of these sins.)

-Jealousy	-envy	-love of money
-sharp tongue	-bad vidios	-bad music
-bad words	-useless words	-course jokes
-jesting	-Disobedience to parents/law	
-bad friends	-evil eye, thoughts	-extortion
-love of money	-filthiness	-craftiness
-boasting	-vanity of dress	-showing off
-little lies	-internet	-radio
-Face Book	-bitterness	-anger
-argumentative	-desire praise	-dishonesty
-foolish talking	-greed	-guile, deceit
-hating God	-highminded	-lustful
-living for pleasure	-malice	-self lovers
-murmuring	-slander	-stealing
-overindulgence	-seditions	-magic
-strife	-traitors	-uncleanness
-trust in riches	-unmerciful	-witchcraft
-morally unrestrained	-smoking	-alcohol

(After container is empty) And then, after we are Christians, and we lie, or steal, or swear, or don't deal right with others in business, or we date a non-believer and on and on, then we will need to be filled again. Put something back in container. Such things are unholiness.

Now let me remind you how we remove such sins. We remove them when we repent of them. No talking or self convincing or no amount of good deeds will remove these sins. When we repent, we change our minds about them. And when we have changed our minds about them, then confession is due. When we have sinned against God, we say, "That is sin. I acknowledge it. I forsake it." And when we have sinned against man; mom or dad;

spouse; brother or sister or coworker or any other person, then we confess to them.

Let me tell you this; if repentance is hard, confession to other people is harder yet. But if we don't, those sins are there and that area is not filled with the Holy Spirit.

David, Psalm 51: 1-12. Ill. Of lying to my boss.

When I repent of these things I have met the conditions and the water automatically comes back in. To be filled with the Spirit means to deal with life sin issues! Let us say I lied to someone and the joy of the Holy Spirit is gone. So I ask God for the Holy Spirit and believe by faith He has filled me will I be filled? No. So I read the Bible and pray and go to church. Will I be filled? No. But when I go and confess my wrong and take care of it, in that moment the Holy Spirit comes rushing in and the joy is restored.

CONCL: Why did Jesus ascend to heaven? That He might send to us the Holy Spirit. And that was so that all those who repent of their sins and receive Christ as their personal Savior, would be baptized into the Holy Spirit. And then He would fill them with His Holy Spirit so that they would live holy lives.

I know He gave gifts, but He did not primarily send the Holy Spirit to give us gifts. He sent the Holy Spirit to make us Holy. Holiness will manifest itself in a holy life. And to achieve this holiness, He gave gifts to believers. All gifts are for the purpose of edification, and edification requires understanding of God's truths.