

***The Great Sayings in the Gospels***  
***Message 148***  
***Final Theology Lesson 07***  
***The Blessing of the Ascension***  
***John:15:26, 16:7,8,13,14, 20-28***

John 15:26

26 But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:

John 16:7-8

7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.

8 And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:

John 16:13-14

13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

14 He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

John 16:20-28

20 Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.

21 A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world.

22 And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.

23 And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.

24 Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.

25 These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs: but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father.

26 At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you:

27 For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.

28 I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father.

**Introduction:**

When we speak of the Work of Christ, we often reference His suffering and death, the Cross, the

Tomb, the Resurrection, and His Second Coming. We tend to think of the Ascension as just the mechanism by which Jesus returned to heaven to get ready to come again. I, for one, have not often given much time to contemplating the fact that the Ascension is a fundamental part of His Work and that, in it, a number of things were accomplished which, in a sense, re-configured the Godhead into the alignment that we now have and with which we interact.

Jesus mentioned several things that we directly linked to His return to heaven and even though we have discussed some of this, I want you to look at it again in this perspective, asking and answering the question, “what was accomplished in, and because of, the Ascension of Jesus to heaven?”

You will notice in the verses we read that several things were linked by Him to that event:

- I. The Sending of the Holy Spirit,
- II. The Guidance of the disciples into ‘all truth,’
- III. The Turning of Sorrow into Joy, and,
- IV. Seemingly Enhanced possibilities in prayer.

Now, we are certain that the Holy Spirit was already in the world, that there was already a spiritual work of God, by His Spirit, to guide His people concerning truth, that many of them (David, for example) were well acquainted with spiritual joy, and that they prayed with the confidence that God would hear them. All of this was at least somewhat tied to the Work of God in the world through Israel as a nation and through the Worship System that God had given Moses.

But a cataclysmic event is about to occur that will forever alter the Working of God in the world with men. The Second Person of the Godhead is about to shoulder the guilt of all of those who would ever believe on Him and submit Himself to the Righteous Wrath of the Godhead against sin and so bear those sins and endure that suffering that the Trinity, in the words of Isaiah, “...shall see the travail of His soul and be satisfied...”

Although the prophets have clearly proclaimed the fact, and most Jewish believers have missed it, the Work of God is about to expand exponentially out from Israel and ultimately encompass the entire world, bringing people to faith from every racial group, language group, and tribal situation on the planet. Those blessings that seemingly were once enjoyed only by a small remnant within the small nation of Israel are going to be poured out upon multitudes. And, seemingly, there is going to be opened to the average believer the potential for walking with God that only prophets and special agents of God had known previously. No distinction is going to be made by God between Jew and Gentile, male and female, bond and free. Every soul that comes to faith is going to have the blessings of God available to Him in an extravagant way.

One need only remember the controversy that surrounded Peter’s visit to Cornelius in Acts 10 to realize what a radical change this was to the concepts and expectations even of the most faithful of Jesus’ disciples. And, here in this final theology lesson before Jesus began His great High Priestly Prayer, He connected the coming blessings with His Ascension back to heaven in a direct and organic way.

Even though we know that the Triune God has existed in perfect harmony and cooperation from Eternity Past and that one of His most profound attributes is that He is changeless, nevertheless, in the way that the story and the theology are unfolded to us it seems that the Trinity has realigned Itself with a particular focus on glorifying the Father through the Work of Jesus Christ by means of the Coming of the Holy Spirit into the world, AND..... the Ascension is an organic part of that realignment.

The Father is revealed in a more profound way than ever. The Son is doing the Most Mighty of all works that even God has ever done. And, the Holy Spirit is going to move across the planet in a way that He never has. Although this is not a change in God, it is certainly a change in the way He functions and the way that He is revealed.

So, before the Full manifestations of the Blessings of God can be poured out, the Son must suffer, be crucified, die, be buried, rise again, AND ascend back to the Father.

We understand from the writings of the apostles that also included in the Ascension is a piece of the puzzle that Jesus left out on that last night before the crucifixion. When He ascends to the Father, He is going to be enthroned in a very special way and with a very particular meaning. And, there is going to be a further spiritual work done for the saints that will grant them enhanced blessings as well.

The writer of Hebrews made several comments concerning the Ascension and Enthronement of our Lord.

Heb 1:1-4

- 1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,
- 2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;
- 3 Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;
- 4 Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

Heb 8:1-2

- 1 Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens;
- 2 A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.

Heb 9:24

- 24 For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:

Heb 10:12-14

- 12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;
- 13 From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.
- 14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

Heb 12:1-2

- 1 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,
- 2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

The writer wanted us to think about several elements of the Ascension connected with certain truths about the Lord Jesus: He is better by far than the angels, He sat down (for one reason) because He had finished the Work of Purging our sins, we have the Greatest of all High Priests, He is our immediate Representative with the Father, His Ascension and subsequent enthronement proves that He is victorious over all of His enemies, the vision of Him in heaven is to anchor us and assist us with our endurance in the 'race that is set before us.'

Paul went so far as to affirm that our union with Christ includes Union with Him in the Ascension.

Eph 2:4-6

- 4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,
- 5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)
- 6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:

Paul also affirmed, in that great apostolic prayer of Eph 1:15-23, that the Power of God that he was asking to fall upon the church was the very same power and intrinsically linked to the power of the Ascension and Enthronement.

Eph 1:18-22

- 18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,
- 19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,
- 20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,
- 21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name

that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:  
22 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,

So, I think that you can see that Jesus was not making too much of the event and you can also see that there were many things about what was about to happen that they could not possibly know nor understand.

So, let us return to the things that Jesus did say on that fateful night.

## **V. The Coming of the Holy Spirit.**

John 16:7 “...if I depart, I will send him unto you”

Just 10 days after Jesus departed, as the believers were probably gathered at one of the porches of the temple the Holy Spirit came upon them in a way that He had never done. It sounded like a wind storm but there was no wind. Something that looked like flames of fire sat upon each of the 120. They all began to proclaim the gospel in the various languages represented on the Temple Mount that feast day (Pentecost). But, most impressive and powerful of all was that those who heard them were mightily moved upon so that they forsook their sins, believed on Jesus, were baptized and joined the church.

There was, of course, no way that the disciples, on that sad night, could have evaluated properly that which Jesus was saying to them. But, months and years later they, no doubt, were profoundly affected as they remembered Jesus telling them that He would leave but then send the Holy Spirit to them in a way that the world had never known Him.

And, all these years later, you and I have a knowledge of Christ; we have been delivered from the Kingdom of Darkness and into the Kingdom of Christ. We have been brought from death to life, from unbelief to faith, from the bondage of sin to having a desire to be godly and holy. And all of that is because Jesus ascended to the Father and sent the Holy Spirit upon the world to reprove it of sin. How blessed we are that there is still the Presence of the Spirit of God in our world.

## **VI. John 16:13, “...he will guide you into all truth”**

As we discussed in a previous message, we have and hold the New Testament because Jesus went back to heaven and sent the Comforter to us. The truths that He gave the disciples were written down and that same Holy Spirit has superintended the preservation of that document so that today we have a reliable record of that which Jesus wanted to share with His followers that Last Night but could not because they were not able to bear it.

The Bible is the most published book on the planet and continues to be. It has been hidden away in prisons and homes when the church has been persecuted. It has been memorized and passed

on slips of paper between captives locked up for their faith. The Word of God is broadcast over radio, television and internet into every cranny of this world. And all because Jesus went back to the Father and sent the Spirit to guide His disciples into truth.

Who could even begin to evaluate the blessedness that the Holy Spirit has showered upon our world in the form of written and revealed truth?

**VII. John 16:20, "...ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy."**

We can only estimate the sadness that was to fall upon these men over the next three days. Everything that they had hoped for, they thought, was to be dashed to the ground and the One Whom many of them thought was to be the next King of Israel would be crushed and murdered. The 'glue' that held them together was suddenly gone and the fact that one of the Twelve had betrayed Him only added to their misery and loss.

The writer of the song 'He's Alive' captured to a great degree, I think the essence of the emotions that the disciples felt for those three days while Jesus was in the tomb. The song is presented from the viewpoint of Peter who fell so profoundly the very night that Jesus spoke these words that we are now studying. Before the rooster crowed the next morning, you recall, Peter had denied Jesus three times, the last time with an oath.

I will not read the entire song but will pick up where Peter and John went to the tomb after having been told that Jesus was not there.

Oh something strange had happened there  
Just what I did not know.  
John believed a miracle  
But I just turned to go.  
Circumstance and speculation  
Couldn't lift me very high  
'Cause I'd seen them crucify Him  
Then I saw Him die

Back inside the house again  
The guilt and anguish came.  
Everything I'd promised Him  
Just added to my shame.  
When at last it came to choices  
I denied I knew His name.  
And even if He was alive  
It wouldn't be the same.  
(Dolly Parton)

John recorded the events of the evening of that First Sunday of the Christian Era.

John 20:19-20

- 19 Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.
- 20 And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.

The word 'glad' in v.20 here is the same word as 'joy' in 16:20, so the promise of Jesus was immediately fulfilled as the disciples realized that He was risen. But this was only the beginning of their joy. With the coming of the Holy Spirit in this special way that He was given to the church, beginning at Pentecost, a whole world of joy was opened to them and to those who would believe their testimony concerning Jesus.

They will rejoice as thousands hear the gospel and come into the church on Pentecost and the days following as the gospel reached even into the priestly class and many of them were converted. They will rejoice when they recognize through Peter and his visit to Cornelius that the Gentiles are included in the Kingdom of God. The Gentiles throughout the world will rejoice that the gospel has come to them and that they might be saved.

Even though all was not going to be rainbows and roses for the disciples, they will learn to rejoice in every circumstance. Peter and John were beaten for preaching the gospel and went away rejoicing that they had been counted worthy to suffer for the cause of Christ. Paul will suffer many things but learn to be joyfully content in all things. And, this joy will be passed along to those who form the early churches.

1 John 1:3-4

- 3 That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.
- 4 And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full

**VIII. And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. (Vs. 23,24)**

I do not pretend to know all that I would like about this but Jesus clearly indicated to the disciples that upon His Ascension into heaven a world of blessing and opportunity in prayer would be opened to them, seemingly in ways not previously seen.

Did the OT saints pray? Certainly! And were their prayers heard and answered? Of course, many times! So... what is the difference that was coming to the disciples/apostles and their converts? It is really difficult to quantify but it does seem as if the enthronement of Jesus in heaven created advanced opportunities for believers to lay claim to the blessings and help of God as they asked 'In His Name.'

Eph 2:18

18 For through him we both (*Jews and Gentiles*) have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

Heb 4:14-16

14 Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.

15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

1 John 5:14

14 And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:

**IX. It truly has been to our great benefit that Jesus Ascended back to heaven, sat down at the Right Hand of the Father, and sent the Holy Spirit to the church.**

We have Him to guide us into truth.

We have Him to increase and sustain our joy.

And we have an Advocate seated right next to the Father Who is always on the side of the prosperity of our souls.

What more could we want or need?