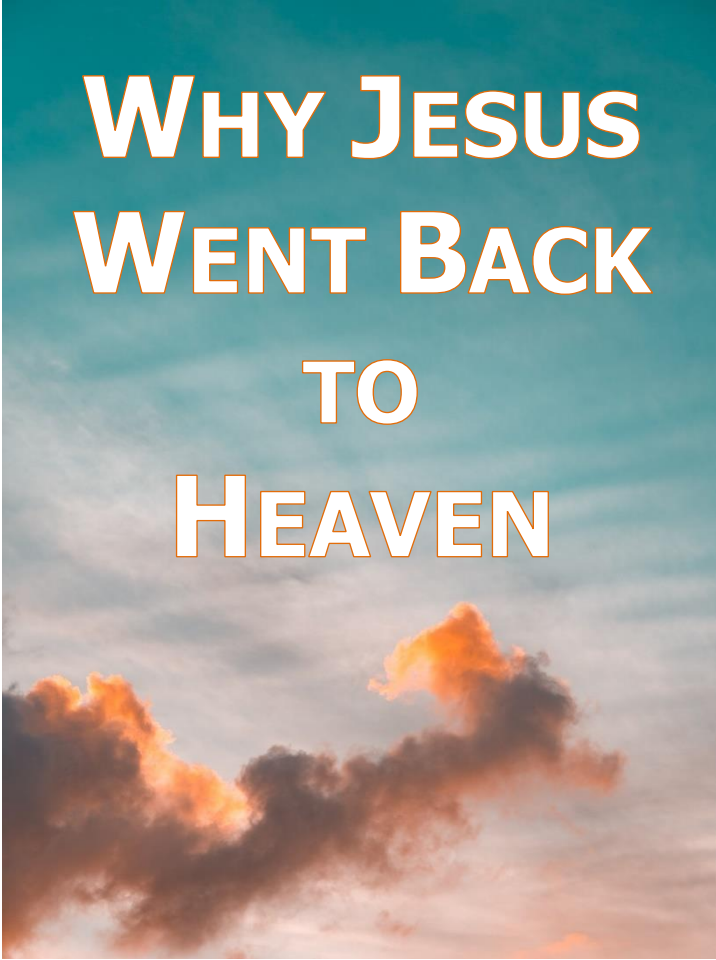


WHY JESUS WENT BACK TO HEAVEN



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LifeinJesus.net

‘Why Jesus Went Back to Heaven’
by
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WHY JESUS WENT BACK TO HEAVEN

When Jesus went back to heaven, it marked the end of His life and work on earth.

Jesus on Earth

He had been born as a baby in a humble situation. His mother was a virgin called Mary and this meant He was fully human, but He was conceived miraculously by God and this meant that He was fully God too. He wasn't half human and half God, but fully both.

When He grew up, He fulfilled all the Old Testament prophecies which had been spoken about the Messiah hundreds of years before. He healed the sick and the disabled, He brought people back to life, He delivered people, He brought them into spiritual freedom, and He taught them about the Kingdom of God, what it is like and how to become part of it.

He was put to death on a Cross. As He died, He took all the weight and shame of sin on Himself – all that everyone has done, is doing, or ever will do wrong. He suffered God's anger and all the punishment people deserve Himself, so that they wouldn't have to suffer it. He also took all the sickness and poverty of this world on Himself and won the victory over it all. He did it for everyone – He did it for you.

On the third day after His death, He came back to life and spent more time with His followers, helping them to understand all that had happened and explaining to them how they should spread His wonderful news to the rest of the world.

The Ascension

After a while, Jesus returned to His Father God in heaven, demonstrating that He had completed everything that God had sent Him to do on earth. He returned to the glory He had left behind when He was born as a humble baby on earth. This is called the Ascension.

And in heaven God restored His glory to Him and sat Him at His right hand, the place of honour. God confirmed that His name was the Name above every name - higher, more important, significant and powerful than any other. Philippians 2:9-10 says – *‘Therefore God also highly exalted him, and gave to him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, those on earth, and those under the earth.’*

Glory

There is a description of Jesus in glory in heaven in Revelation 1:12-16. It is part of a vision which God gave to John, one of Jesus’s close followers – *‘I saw seven golden lamp stands. And amongst the lamp stands was one like a son of man, clothed with a robe reaching down to his feet, and with a golden sash around his chest. His head and his hair were white as white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire. His feet were like burnished brass, as if it had been refined in a furnace. His voice was like the voice of many waters. He had seven stars in his right hand. Out of his mouth proceeded a sharp two-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining at its brightest.’* We don’t know if this is an accurate description or if it is a way of trying to express what can’t be expressed. But it speaks of glory unimaginable.

What a Contrast!

It is amazing to compare the glory of Jesus in heaven with the humility of a little baby born in a place where animals ate, and brought up in a humble family in an insignificant city. It shows how immeasurable God's love for people is, that Jesus was willing to leave all that glory behind to live humbly on earth. Philippians 2:5-8 says – *'Have this in your mind, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, existing in the form of God, didn't consider equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to the point of death.'*

This is true sacrificial love and it was all for you. It was for everyone, but also for each individual person – Jesus made that sacrifice because He loves you so much. He'd have done it for you if you were the only person on earth.

Jesus Went to Start His Work as High Priest

In the Old Testament, long before Jesus was born, God had set up a system where the people could only approach God through a priest and the High Priest would approach God on their behalf. He was a person chosen by God and set apart for this work.

But through His death, Jesus opened the way for everyone to be able to approach God personally and directly. The place where God's presence dwelt in the Jewish temple was called the Holy of Holies. It was separated from the rest of the temple by a very tall curtain. Only the High Priest was allowed to go into the Holy of Holies and only once a year. When Jesus died the curtain was miraculously ripped from top to bottom, showing dramatically that anyone and everyone could now approach God directly –

they no longer needed to go through a priest. A one-on-one relationship with God was now available to everyone who would believe. You can go straight into God's presence because Jesus has opened up the way.

Jesus became the eternal one-and-only High Priest and He had to return to heaven so He could begin this new work. Hebrews 4:14 says – *'Having then a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God.'* Jesus is not a High Priest in that you have to go to Him and tell Him what you want to say to God and He then talks to God for you. No – He has opened up the way for you personally to go directly to God as well as to Himself.

As High Priest, Jesus is interceding for you. Romans 8:34 says – *'It is Christ who died, yes rather, who was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.'* This doesn't mean He is pleading with God to be merciful to you. God has already shown you complete mercy through Jesus dying in your place. And He's not trying to persuade God that you deserve blessing - no-one does deserve it and no-one could ever earn it – it's impossible. But Jesus's presence before God in heaven, with the wounds of His torture and death on His body, stands as a continual proclamation of all He has won for you through the Cross, including your total forgiveness.

Jesus Went to Prepare a Place for You

Jesus said in John 14:2 that when He was back in heaven He would prepare a place for believers to live in after their death - *'In my Father's house are many homes. If it weren't so, I would have told you. I am going to prepare a place for you.'*

When you accept Jesus as your Lord and Saviour you become born-again. This means that when you die on earth, you will then live forever in heaven in joy and peace with God. And Jesus is getting your home ready for you. (To read about being born-again, go to the end of this booklet.)

The Bible says that born-again Christians will share in Jesus's glory. Romans 8:17 says – *'if indeed we suffer with him, that we may also be glorified with him.'* If you believe that Jesus is Lord and that He died for you and personally accept that He suffered the guilt, shame and punishment in your place, then glory will be yours! So this home isn't going to be just something functional that will do. Jesus is the ultimate architect, builder and interior designer! You're going to love your home in a way you can't even imagine now. It's going to be perfect – just right for you!

Because He's in Heaven, So are Believers!

Ephesians 2:6-7 says that God - *'raised us up with him, and made us to sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.'* Notice the verb 'made' is past tense. In some amazing way that can't really be explained, the spirits of born-again believers are already in heaven with Jesus!

Jesus Went so the Holy Spirit Could Come

Jesus also explained to His followers that He had to return to heaven so that His Holy Spirit could be sent to all believers. John 16:7 says – *"Nevertheless I tell you the truth: It is to your advantage that I go away, for if I don't go away, the Counsellor (Holy Spirit) won't come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you."*

When Jesus was here on earth, He could only be in one place at a time because He was limited physically as a human being. But once He had returned to heaven, His Spirit could be released and live in everyone who is born-again, all at the same time.

His Spirit is a person just as He is, and is called 'He' not 'It'. Christians call His Spirit the Holy Spirit or the Holy Ghost, but He isn't a ghost as we think of that term – He is the very nature and presence of Jesus. So when Jesus went back to heaven, He wasn't abandoning His followers – He'd promised that He would never leave them. But He would be with them in a different way. Through His Holy Spirit He would live in each one of them personally forever.

Jesus told His followers to wait for the Holy Spirit to give them power before they started spreading the news of Jesus to others. He said in Acts 1:4-5 – *“Don't depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which you heard from me ... you will be baptised in the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”* And in Acts 1:8 He said – *“you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you. You will be witnesses to me in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth.”*

And this is what happened following His ascension. One day, while His followers were all together, Acts 2:2-4 says – *‘Suddenly there came from the sky a sound like the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. Tongues like fire appeared and were distributed to them, and one sat on each of them. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other languages, as the Spirit gave them the ability to speak.’* Jesus's followers now had spiritual power to spread the news of Jesus to others, rather than having to do it in their own strength.

The Holy Spirit comes to live in everyone when they're born-again. But God wants you to experience the full potential of the power of the Holy Spirit to help you live your life. There won't be flames of fire on your head and probably not a rushing wind, but if you ask Him, God will release the power of His Holy Spirit in you.

Jesus Went to Show How He Would Return

Jesus's close followers saw Him go back to heaven with their own eyes. Acts 1:9 says – *'as they were looking, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight.'* It goes on to say in Acts 1:10-11 – *'While they were looking steadfastly into the sky as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white clothing, who also said, "You men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who was received up from you into the sky will come back in the same way as you saw him going into the sky."'* The ascension demonstrated the way Jesus will return one day when He will come, not as a humble baby, but coming down from heaven in all His glory to finally set up His Kingdom on earth.

Good News!

The whole of Jesus's life, teaching, miracles, death, resurrection and ascension is called the gospel which means good news. What wonderful good news it is that Jesus returned to heaven, not leaving His followers lost and abandoned, but releasing His presence, power and understanding to them and in them through His Holy Spirit. And it's all available to you too right now because He is in heaven – good news indeed!

Being Born-Again

When you acknowledge Jesus as God and decide to follow Him, you make Him your Lord. When you accept His sacrifice on the Cross for yourself personally, you make Him your Saviour. You are then born-again and have a new perfect spirit. God becomes your Father and you His child, and you can start to enjoy your personal love relationship with Him.

Romans 10:9 says – *‘If you will confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.’* Tell God you are sorry for the wrong things you do, say and think. Choose to believe that Jesus is Lord, that He died for you and is now alive. Accept Him as your Lord and Saviour. Say it with your voice and believe it in your heart.

If you’ve done that sincerely, you are now born-again and Jesus has come to live in you. Everything you’ve ever done wrong or ever will do wrong is forgiven, and after this life is over, you’ll live in peace and joy with your loving Father God for ever.

As a child of God, you now have a whole new family of brothers and sisters. Tell a trusted Christian that you are now born-again so they can help you in your new life in Jesus. And you have the Bible to help you understand and experience more of God’s love for you and all Jesus has done and won for you. It will help you to live your life in the best possible way – His way.

Life in Jesus

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and all He has done and won for us
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Christians rightly focus a lot on Jesus's death and resurrection, but not much on His ascension – when He went back to heaven. But it was a very significant event. If Jesus had not gone back to heaven Christianity would never have been possible.

Find out what it was about and what it means for you.



Katherine Hilditch has been teaching in local churches for many years. In 2013 she wrote her first booklet and since then has written many more. She created her website to make all the booklets freely available to everyone. They can be read online or printed out. Katherine's threefold purpose is to help people understand more about Jesus and all He has done and won for them, to encourage them to go deeper in their relationship with God and to provide material to help them share their faith with others. To read her story and find all the booklets go to –

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