

He ascended TO FILL EVERYTHING

In His bold Word, God reveals one of His greatest mysteries: Jesus “ascended... TO FILL EVERYTHING,” (Ephesians 4: 10).

But, just as is true with other great mysteries of God, our Lord’s teaching that Jesus now “FILLS EVERYTHING” has been met by doubt and opposition. “How is it possible,” some ask, “that Jesus, sine His ascension, can be with us not only spiritually but also physically?”

Doubting God’s clear Word is not unusual. After Jesus spoke of other great mysteries of God, the disciples responded: “This is a difficult statement; who can listen to it?” (John 6:60).

Whether God’s great mysteries that affect us each day, are logical or reasonable is unimportant. The important thing is that God has spoken this great teaching to His church and to you for your blessing and benefit. Jesus “ascended far above all the heavens TO FILL EVERYTHING” (Ephesians 4:10).

The following questions and answers are offered to help you see how God wants this section of His Word to be a special blessing to you.

1. Why is it so difficult to accept God’s Word that Jesus ascended “TO FILL EVERYTHING”?

Answer: Human logic and reason cannot comprehend that when Jesus ascended He did not travel to some far-off location. At His ascension, Jesus specifically stated: “I am with you always,” (Matthew 28:20).

2. Is there a way we can understand this, even imperfectly?

Answer: We can use analogies or comparisons in attempting to understand this great mystery of how Jesus can be with us, even though we don’t see Him. However, we must always remember that these comparisons provide only an incomplete explanation.

3. What are some analogies that might help us comprehend, in only a slight way, this great mystery that is such a blessing from our heavenly Father?

Answer: Two analogies might be helpful in explaining how something or someone can be present even though you cannot see it/him: Early in the morning, one can see fog in low lying areas. Several hours later, when the sun heats up the atmosphere, the fog disappears. In fact, however, the moisture that is the essence of the fog does not disappear. The moisture is still present, but in a different and invisible form. This is the same with Jesus. When He ascended, He did not depart for some far-off location. Instead, He has remained with us just as He promised.

Hospital nurseries make use of one-way glass which is used to see through from one direction but not the other. This glass allows nurses to watch over new-born babies without being seen. While parents and others are not bothered by the presence of the nurse, she is just on the other side of the one-way glass and stays very close to ensure the safety of the little babies. In the same way, our Lord Jesus is close to us even though we cannot see Him.

4. Why is Jesus’ presence so important to us? Why worry about where Jesus is right now, so long as He someday returns for us?

Answer: This mystery is connected directly to Christ's bodily presence in Holy Communion. Those who believe Jesus travelled to a far-off location at His ascension also believe that, in Holy Communion, Jesus is not bodily present but only "divinely present" or "spiritually present." Therefore, they believe, when you receive the bread and wine in the Holy Supper, you are not actually receiving Jesus' body and blood. You are only communing with Jesus in your mind, so to speak.

This would be like saying that when you receive medicine from the doctor, this medicine does not actually have the power to work on and in you, to cleanse you and to heal you, but that the medicine is only something for you to think about. In the same way, if you believe Jesus is only spiritually present, but not actually bodily present, then your unbelief in His Word will prevent His blessing of cleansing and healing from working within you (1 Corinthians 11:27-29). Thus, it makes a day and night difference as to how you read and understand the above teaching, from the heart of God, that Jesus ascended... TO FILL EVERYTHING (Ephesians 4:10).

5. So where is heaven?

Answer: Heaven is where Jesus is. Heaven is not a faraway place hopelessly distant from us, but is present wherever Jesus is present. It is why the writer of Hebrews can speak of the Christians who have died and gone to heaven as "surrounding" us (Hebrews 12:1). This is also why the angels are described as being in God's presence, even when they appear here on earth, doing the things God sends them to do (Matthew 18:10 and Luke 1:19). Finally, we must also remember that there are many things about heaven and God that we will not fully understand until they are perfectly revealed on the Last Day.