

THE HOLY GHOST, THE HEAVENLY GIFT

Heaven Manifested, Heaven Tasted & Heaven Reproduced

Let us look more closely at how the Holy Ghost brings heaven down to earth.

Jesus: Heaven brought nigh & Heaven Embodied

Jesus came to bring heaven and earth, separated by the fall, back into contact:

- Jn 1.51) Jesus is the ladder re-establishing communication
- Gen 28.12) between earth and heaven

The Nearness of the Kingdom of Heaven Proclaimed

He not only taught His disciples **to pray for** the coming of heaven to earth:

- Matt 6.9-10 thy kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven

He also **proclaimed the nearness of** the kingdom of heaven in time:

- Mt 4.17 Jesus began to preach ... the kingdom of heaven is at hand

The Kingdom of Heaven Brought Near

But He did more than this.

- He not only **proclaimed** that the heavenly Kingdom was potentially **near in time**.
- He also **manifested** it, bringing it **near in space**.

In what way did He manifest the Kingdom?

Consider His instructions when sending forth the 12 and the 70 with authority to do what He Himself was already doing, to heal, exorcise and raise the dead.

- The 12 were not only to **proclaim** the nearness of the Kingdom. They were also to **manifest** the powers and **impart** the peace of that Kingdom (Matt 10.7-8,13).
- This is even clearer with the 70. As they healed the sick, they were to say not simply that the Kingdom was **at hand** (i.e. in the near future) but that it had been **brought near** (i.e. into the present) (Lk 10.9-11).

The Kingdom of Heaven Embodied

But Jesus was not simply endued with power **to manifest** the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. He **embodied** heaven. Wherever He was, the attributes of heaven were. He embodied in Himself the powers already present in heaven.

When asked when the Kingdom would come, Jesus replied that (at that time) it would not come with outward display. "The kingdom of God is within you." (Lk 17.20-21) What did He mean? There are two possible interpretations, both equally beautiful.

- Firstly, that all that the Kingdom is may be embodied **within** a true believer.
- Secondly, that the Kingdom was standing there **among** them at that very moment, embodied in Himself.

Whichever applies in this specific context, in the wider sense both are true.

Wherever Jesus was, the Kingdom was standing in the midst. He embodied and manifested in flesh the powers to be revealed on earth when the rule of heaven is established here.

Let us illustrate from the resurrection of Lazarus (Jn 11.23-25).

- When Jesus told Martha her brother would rise, she expressed her faith in the future resurrection on the last day.
- His reply was blessed. “**I am** the Resurrection”. What did He mean? All the powers that will raise the dead on that future last day were standing there in the present.

And the experience of heaven brought down to earth did not end with Jesus’ earthly ministry.

The Spirit: Heaven outpoured

This ministry did not end when Jesus ascended. In fact, it had only begun:

- Acts 1.1 all that Jesus **began** both to do and teach
- Mk 1.1 the **beginning** of the Gospel of Jesus Christ

But how could Jesus continue His ministry of bringing heaven nigh **after** He had ended His earthly ministry?

How did Jesus bring the atmosphere and attributes of heaven to earth? By the Holy Ghost.

- Mt 12.28 if I cast out devils **by the Spirit of God**, then **the kingdom of God** is come unto you

By sending back the same Spirit by which He Himself brought the powers of the Kingdom of heaven to earth, that ministry could be continued.

And that is exactly what happened on the day of Pentecost.

- Acts 2.2 suddenly there came a sound from heaven.

Why a sound from heaven? Because,

- 1 P 1.12 **Not only** is the Holy Ghost **sent down from heaven**.
- Heb 6.4 **But also** the Holy Ghost is **heaven sent down**.

(The term “the heavenly gift” refers not only to the **origin** of the gift but also to its **nature**.)

The powers to be manifested in the future, in the last days and in the world to come, already now operate in the Kingdom of Heaven. Like Jesus, through the outpoured Spirit the Church also is able to manifest on earth those same heavenly powers and to bring them nigh in the present, before that future day.

- Acts 1.6-8 The Kingdom would not be restored to Israel in the Church age. But the powers of that future Kingdom would come now upon the Church.

So, through the Spirit the Church can continue the ministry of Jesus of manifesting heaven here and now on earth. As well as **a future hope**, she can offer heaven as **a present experience** here and now on earth.

The Spirit: Heaven tasted

Even more, the Church can not only **manifest** heaven but **taste** heaven.

How? Because she has the earnest of the Spirit.

- 2 Cor 1.22 God has given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.

What is an earnest?

- It is a deposit or down payment, a promise or guarantee of a future full payment or fulfilment of the promise.
- But as well as a promise of a future benefit, it is a present foretaste of that benefit.

How does this apply to the Spirit?

- Jas 2.5 We are **heirs of the future kingdom**.
- Eph 1.13-14 As an earnest of that promised inheritance, not only is the Spirit **a promise** of that **future** inheritance but also **a present foretaste** of it.

So, then, we may taste even now, here on earth, the powers already in operation in heaven and which will be manifested on earth at the last day.

- 2 Cor 5.4-5 To taste the Spirit is to experience a foretaste of the day when mortality will be swallowed up by life.
- 1 P 1.8; 4.14 To experience the Spirit of glory is to taste even in present trials something of the unspeakable joy of our future glorification.

Through the Spirit we not only **learn of** heaven, but **experience** on earth the atmosphere and attributes of heaven:

- 1 Cor 2.9-10,12 Not only are heavenly things **revealed** to us by the Spirit.
- Eph 1.3 But we also **experience** now heavenly blessings given by the Spirit.

When the Spirit comes, He imparts heaven. He not only **comes down from** heaven, He **is** heaven come down. The more we taste the heavenly gift, the more we taste the attributes of heaven.

For example,

- Power Lk 24.49 power **from on high** (i.e. from the Spirit)
- Wisdom Jas 3.15,17 this wisdom **descendeth** not **from above** ... the wisdom **that is from above** (i.e. the wisdom of the Spirit, Ex 28.3; 31.3; Isa 11.2; Acts 6.3,10; Eph 1.17)
- Peace Ro14.17 **the kingdom of God** is peace in the Holy Ghost
- Joy Ro14.17 **the kingdom of God** is joy in the Holy Ghost

In fact,

- All things Jas 1.17 every good gift **is from above and cometh down**

In short we may be present partakers of the Kingdom of Heaven even before its outward manifestation.

Born of the Spirit: Heaven Reproduced & the Firstfruits of the New Creation

But it does not end here. There is even more.

- We may not only **receive** of heaven, we may also **reveal** it.
- We may not only **taste** of heaven, we may **reproduce** it.

Born from above: a Heavenly People

In the wilderness, some tasted bread from heaven (Ex 16.4; Ps 78.24). Yet their lives did not reveal heaven. They did not become heavenly.

But this is how the true believer is described.

- 1 Cor 15.48 they that are heavenly

What exactly does this mean?

- It is not speaking of their citizenship or final destination.
- It is describing what they are.

How can this be?

- Because true believers do not simply **experience** the attributes, blessings and gifts of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.
- Those attributes are **in** them. They are what they are!

How? Because they are **born** of the Spirit. His seed, life and heavenly nature are in them.

- Jn 3.5; Ti 3.5 born of the Spirit
- Phil 3:20 Not only is our conversation (= **citizenship**) **in heaven**
- Jn 3:3 (Marg) But also our **birth**, our seed, is from above, **of heaven**

A seed must reproduce after its own kind (Gen 1.11). So, they who are born of the Spirit must reveal the life of heaven. This is why Paul said,

- 1 Cor 15.49 we shall bear the image of the heavenly

The Firstfruits of the New Creation

So, through the Spirit we not merely **taste** heaven, but **reproduce/incarnate** it.

Let us look at this from another angle.

We not only **taste/partake of** the firstfruits of our future redemption through the Spirit. We actually **become** the firstfruits of the future.

- Ro 8.23 **Not only** do we **have** the firstfruits of the Spirit, a foretaste of our future full inheritance
- Jas 1.18 **But also** we ourselves **are** a kind of firstfruits of his creatures

In fact, true believers are the firstfruits of the future new creation of earth and heaven:

- Ti 3.5 Even now, in this present world, through the Spirit, we experience our personal regeneration, the new birth.
- Matt 19.28 That personal regeneration is a firstfruits, a foreglimpse of the coming future Regeneration, the rebirth of the whole earth.
- 2 Cor 5.17 Even in this present world, a man in Christ (the work of the heavenly gift, 1Cor 12.13; Gal 3.28) is already a new creation. Old things have passed away and all things become new.
- Rev 21.4-5 Our personal recreation is a firstfruits of the future new heaven and earth when former things pass away and all things are made new.

So, through the Spirit, the Church not only **has** a foretaste of heaven. She **is** a foretaste of heaven. She is an earnest and a firstfruits of the future, an incarnate revelation of the world to come.

Seeing we have this hope, we faint not.