

## **Jn. 7:28-39 (LD 18) "I Go to Him Who Sent Me"**

**For the Children:** When someone goes away overseas, it is not always easy to feel close to them – especially if they are away a long time. Of course, if you keep in regular contact, especially through “skype,” you can still feel close to them. We can’t skype with the Lord Jesus. But we become close to Him by reading His Word, with the help of the Holy Spirit. We also know that He is always with us, everywhere, because He is God. His departure for heaven also brings us many benefits: the Holy Spirit’s help to believe and be close to Jesus; spiritual gifts; Jesus’ speaking up for us in heaven; assurance we will go to be with Him; and much more. **Questions:** Why did Jesus go back to heaven? Why couldn’t the Holy Spirit be poured out until Jesus ascended to heaven? Why is Jesus’ ascension necessary for our salvation?

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### **Introduction:**

#### **First Point: The Promised Departure**

- 1) **Returning Home:** The crowds at the Temple during the Feast of Booths/Tabernacles are unsure if Jesus is the Messiah. They wonder how He could be the Messiah when they knew Him as simply an ordinary man from Nazareth. But the Lord informs them that He has come from heaven, sent by the Father. That is also why He is departing, to return from whence He came.
- 2) **Where They Cannot Go:** Those who don’t believe in Him will not be able to follow where He goes. Judaism would continue to look for their Messiah, but not find Him. However, His departure will not make Him out of reach to believers.
- 3) **Mixed Reactions:** The reactions of the hearers varied between speculation, hostility and belief. The leaders wanted to seize Him, but it was not God’s time for Him to die yet. Some wondered if His signs and wonders proved He was the Messiah. Others were confused about where He was going: to the Jews of the Dispersion, or the Greeks?
- 4) **The Gracious Offer:** The Lord graciously extends the “free offer of the Gospel” to *anyone* who wishes to come to Him for spiritual drink. Those who receive this “water,” will have such abundant spiritual (and eternal) life within them, that it will overflow in a river of blessing to others. This ties in with the Festival of Booths, where water was daily poured onto the altar of burnt-offering – a reminder of God’s deliverance and blessings in the wilderness. But Christ is the Rock to which the OT provision of water and other blessings in the Exodus pointed (1 Cor. 10:4). See Is. 12:3, 44:3, 55:1, 58:11; Ps. 46:4-5. The OT also announced that the water of life would flow from Zion to the world (Ezk. 47:1-12; Zech. 8:12-13).

#### **Second Point: How Jesus’ Departure Benefits Us**

- 1) **The Out-Pouring of the Spirit:** The promise of abundant spiritual water in the believer depends on Jesus’ ascension taking place. The promise of v. 38 is a promise of the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit (v. 39). The Spirit could only be poured out after Jesus’ ascension. That is because the Spirit’s work is to apply Christ’s completed redeeming work. This is a gift from the victorious Christ to all His subjects (Eph. 4:8-13). In addition, the Spirit is sent to continue for His people Christ’s comforting Presence on earth, once He has departed for heaven (Jn. 14:16). The Spirit’s work includes regeneration, the gift of faith, sanctification, illumination, bringing comfort and assurance; giving gifts to upbuild the church; enabling the church’s witness to the world; and results in our justification and glorification.
- 2) **Heavenly Intercession:** Jesus’ ascension also benefits us because He intercedes for us at the Father’s right hand. But that is only for those who are united to Him by faith, through the work of Word and Spirit.
- 3) **The Guarantee of a Place for Us in Heaven:** Christ’s presence in heaven also guarantees that our body and soul will join Him there – since He is our Head and Representative. We are united with Him as members by the work of Word and Spirit.
- 4) **Helped to Be Close to Him:** Jesus’ human body and soul are in heaven. But we can still be close to Him – to the whole Christ, who is both God and man – not only because His divine Nature is everywhere; but also because He is close to us through Word and Spirit.

### **Conclusion:**