

The Post-Ascension Ministries of Christ a brief overview from Basic Theology – Ryrie

“The resurrection and ascension of our Lord provided His entrance into heaven and the beginning of additional ministries for Him. One, at least, He has already done; others He is doing throughout the entire period between His ascension and His second coming; others are yet to begin in the future.” Charles C Ryrie

I. Past Ministry – The Sending of the Holy Spirit

“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.” John 16:7; Acts 2:32-33

Peter reiterated the fact on the Day of Pentecost, it was Christ who sent the Holy Spirit and accompanying proofs that the people were witnessing on that day. The resurrection and ascension had to take place before the Holy Spirit would come.

Let's take some time look at the work of the Holy Spirit.

Holy Spirit Ministry within the Church Age Saint:

- Indwelling – Gift of God to All believers The Holy Spirit is not a reward based on merit, but a gift to all believers! Rom. 5:5; I Cor. 2:12-13 Without a Holy Spirit in one's life, indicates an unsaved condition. Clearly the Holy Spirit lives within sinning believers, for all Christians still have the sinful nature. I Cor. 6:19-20
- Sealing – Guarantees the complete fulfillment of God's promises to us All believer's are sealed by God in the Holy Spirit. 2 Cor. 1:21-22; Eph. 4:30 The concept of sealing includes the ideas of ownership, authority, responsibility, but above all security.
- Baptizing – Places those who believe into the body of Christ This occurs at salvation and joins us to the body of Christ. Holy Spirit power can then be experienced. I Cor. 12:12-14; Eph. 1:13-14
- Gifting – God-given ability for service These gifts are given to benefit the body particularly. I Cor. 12:7-11, 27-31 We are given gifts at birth (natural abilities), acquired abilities (learned skills), and the spiritual gifts given by the Holy Spirit.
- Filling – Influence and control of the Spirit The Spirit within the life of a believer provides specific characteristics. Christlike character (Gal. 5:22-23); Evangelism (When the filling of the Spirit is mentioned in Acts, conversions are always recorded!); Praise, Worship, Thanksgiving, Submissiveness (Eph. 5:18-21) Yielding to the Spirit allows Him to fill and use each of us!
- Teaching – Result is that Christ is glorified John 16:12-15; I John 2:27 The Holy Spirit's favorite subject is Jesus!

- Guiding – Receive direction Rom. 8:14 “The child of God never needs to walk in the dark; he is always free to ask and receive directions from the Spirit Himself.”
- Assuring – Assurance of position in Christ Rom. 8:16 The Spirit is the One who assures the Christian that he is a child of God! Eph. 1:13-14
- Praying – Guides and directs our prayers Rom. 8:26-27 Because of our weakness and lack of understanding of what to pray, the Holy Spirit assists us. We need guidance in particularly in prayer! Eph. 6:18
- Sanctifying – Prominent agent of our growth The Holy Spirit work in our sanctification begins at our salvation and continues during the whole of our lives. “Carnality exhibits the characteristics of the unsaved life because of being controlled by the flesh (Gal. 5:16-21). Thus yieldedness, Spirit filling, and the sanctifying process are involved in setting us apart more and more to the image of Christ.”

II. Present Ministry

A. Head of His Body

“By His resurrection and ascension our Lord was positioned in the place of honor at the right hand of the Father to be Head over the church His body (Eph. 1:20-23). This involves a number of specific ministries He performs in relation to the body.”

1. **He formed the body** – “He formed the body by sending the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost to baptize believers into the body (Acts 1:5; 2:33; 1 Cor. 12:13).” The effect of this new position is a disassociation from the old life and a change to a new life! Rom. 6:4-5
2. **He cares for the body** – “He sanctifies it (Eph. 5:26), a reference to the entire process of sanctification that begins at conversion and continues until we are presented perfect in His presence in heaven.” In Eph. 5:29 Christ’s work in His body the church is described. “nourisheth” – bring to maturity by training (Eph. 6:4) “cherisheth” – lit. to keep warm, other words to love and care for them
3. **He gives gifts to the body** – Eph. 4:7-13 “Christ conquered sin and death during His ministry on earth; now He gives gifts to His followers during His ministry in heaven.” Jesus determines the gift and the “measure” of that gift in our life! These gifts are not for our own consumption and pride, but ultimately to help build the body of Christ whether in evangelism or discipleship!
4. **He empowers the body** – John 15:1-10 “This well-known illustration of the Vine and branches makes clear that without the power of the living Christ flowing through us we can do nothing.” Our part in this equation is abiding in Christ! This is based on our obeying His commandments. John 15:10; I John 3:24

Eph. 5:22-32 comparison of Christ as the head of the church and the Marriage relationship.

B. Priest for His People

“As a faithful Priest our Lord intercedes for His people (Heb. 7:25). The writer linked this ministry to the fact that this Priest, unlike Old Testament priests, is not subject to death anymore but abides a Priest forever and lives forever to intercede for His people.” The book of Hebrews is based on this principle, Christ is our greater High Priest! When talking on the phone about this subject my dad said, “Remember, not only is Christ the High Priest that offers the sacrifice, but He was the sacrifice!”

- As a faithful Priest our ascended Lord sympathizes, aids and supports in times of trouble, and gives grace to His people. Heb. 2:17-18; 4:14-16
- As a faithful Priest Christ intercedes for His people. Heb. 7:25-27 To keep us from evil - as with Peter in Luke 22:32. To bring us out of evil – I John 2:1-2
- As a faithful Priest Christ is our anchor and forerunner of our soul. Heb. 6:17-20 We are safely anchored in Christ who serves securely in heaven and as He is there already, we will be with Him.

C. Preparer of a Place for Us

“Part of His present work today is preparing these residences for His own.” John 14:1-3, 6, 23 As a bridegroom prepares the home he and his wife will share, Jesus is preparing a home for us! And like an expected groom, He will come to catch His bride away! Remember, it’s the time of finally being together not that abode that Jesus is focused!

III. Future Ministry

A. Raise the Dead

“In the future all people will hear the voice of Christ raising them from the dead (John 5:28-29). Some will be called to eternal life and others to condemnation.” The raising from the dead will happen at different times but it will always be the voice of Christ that will awaken them from death.

- Church Age believers – Rapture (I Thess. 4:16)
- Old Testament saints – Second Coming (Dan. 12:2)
- Unbelieving dead – After the Millennium (Rev. 20:5)

B. Reward All People

“As with the resurrection, judgment for all will not take place at the same time, but Christ will judge all.” John 5:22, 27 Most believe that God the Father will judge man, but the Lord said that all judgment has been delegated to Christ. (John 5:22, 27)

- Believers – Judgement Seat of Christ after the Rapture of the church (I Cor. 3:11-15; 2 Cor. 5:10)
- Unbelievers – Great White Throne at the conclusion of the millennial kingdom (Rev. 20:11-15)

C. Rule This World

“When our Lord returns, He will take the reins of government and rule the nations of this world as a benevolent dictator (Rev. 19:15).” It will be then the world will enjoy righteousness, justice, peace, social welfare, economic prosperity, and spiritual knowledge. We will rule with Him and stand amazed at the wonder of His Person!

Jesus is coming again! The thought made the disciples glad when they returned to Jerusalem from the Mt. of Olives that Ascension Day! They watched for Jesus' return and actually expected Him in their lifetime. Yet, more than 2000 years later, we continue to wait, live godly, pray, and serve Him faithfully. Let's not get distracted by the pull of this world, let's not get sidetracked by religious activity or empty ambitions, Let's stay focused on what is the heart of our dear Jesus---the Good News to the world, making disciples, and in doing so, bringing Him glory! Titus 2:11-15; Col. 3:1-4; 2 Peter 3