

Devotion for Easter 6 and Ascension

Psalm 47

**Clap your hands, all you nations; shout to God with cries of joy.
How awesome is the Lord Most High, the great King over all the earth!**

He subdued nations under us, peoples under our feet.

He chose our inheritance for us, the pride of Jacob, whom He loved.

God has ascended amid shouts of joy, the Lord amid the sounding of trumpets.

Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises to our King, sing praises.

For God is the King of all the earth; sing to Him a psalm of praise.

God reigns over the nations; God is seated on His holy throne.

The nobles of the nations assemble as the people of the God of Abraham,
for the kings of the earth belong to God; He is greatly exalted.

*Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
As it was in the beginning, is now and will be forever. Amen*

Acts 1:1-26

Jesus ascends, the Church awaits the outpouring of the Spirit

What do Jesus' parting words say about how He wants us to wait for His return?

Why does Luke not give an exact number of the size of the church in Jerusalem?

Matthias was chosen by lot to replace Judas. Why don't we cast lots to choose ministers?

Luke 24:1-53

Jesus appears to the disciples and ascends to heaven

Why did the disciples not understand the Christ had to die and rise?

Why do we need the scriptures to understand Jesus?

How was the disciples' disbelief upon seeing Jesus different from the disbelief of those who rejected Him?

Out of Sight, but not Gone Away

On the 40th day of His resurrection, Jesus withdrew His physical presence from the disciples and was carried into heaven. Imagine their thoughts and feelings as they watched Him pass into the clouds and out of their sight. It must have been a sight! People don't lift off the earth and rise into the air every day. Furthermore, in the days before human flight, they had no experience by which they could process what they had seen. They only experience through which they could try to comprehend Jesus' uplifting was the ascension of Elijah, who was lifted up to heaven by a whirl wind. That event both astounded and confounded his disciples. They searched the surrounding country side for several days, in case the whirl wind that lifted him up had dropped Him on the ground somewhere.

To their credit Jesus' disciples didn't express such misgivings about His ascension. They returned to Jerusalem as He told them and waited to be clothed with power from on high. They would be witnesses of His resurrection to Jew and Gentile. They would be blessed to be the first to speak the gospel of salvation: the good news that everyone who calls on Jesus' name will be saved.

Jesus has withdrawn His visible presence from the church, but He remains with us by the Spirit whom He has put into our hearts through baptism. He speaks to us through the scriptures. He is present in a special way when two or three are gathered in His Name for worship, study and prayer. He is present in the fellowship we have as believers. He is present in the holy sacrament of His body and His blood; given and shed for the forgiveness of sin. He has gone out of sight, but He has not gone away.

Jesus has ascended high above all things that He might fill all things; especially the body of believers, the church on earth. He fills us and all believers that He might empower us by His Spirit to understand the scriptures; especially that the Christ had to suffer and die for our sins and rise on the third day for our salvation. He empowers us by His Spirit, so we believe the truth of His word. He pours His Spirit upon us so we would join the disciples and the church of all ages and proclaim repentance and forgiveness to all people and every nation through faith in His name.

Jesus Shall Reign (Public Domain)

**Jesus shall reign where 'er the sun, does its successive journeys run;
His kingdom stretch from shore to shore, Till moons shall wax and want no more.**

**To him shall endless prayer be made, And praises throng to crown his head;
His name like sweet perfume shall rise, with every morning sacrifice.**

**People and realms of every tongue, dwell on his love with sweetest song;
And infant voices shall proclaim, their early blessings on his name.**

**Blessings abound where'er he reigns: The prisoners leap to lose their chains,
The weary find eternal rest, And all who suffer want are blest.**

**Let every creature rise and bring, honours peculiar to our King;
Angels descend with songs again, And earth repeat the loud amen.**

Prayer

Dearest Jesus you have ascended high above all things and resumed the full expression of your divine glory. Ascended on high you fill all things as God from eternity and now, as man born of Mary. You dwell within us through the Spirit, given to us in baptism. You speak to us through your word. You refresh our spirits and forgive our sins with your body and blood, under the forms of bread and wine. Bless us to fulfill the responsibilities you have given us to our family, friends, congregation and community. Open our lips to speak your praise and proclaim your salvation. Abide within us and among us, until the day you descend from the heavens and reveal yourself as King and Lord of all. In your name we pray. Amen

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven. Hallowed be Thy name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, Forever and ever. Amen

The Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen

Benediction

Matthew 28:20

"And behold, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age."

Bible Knowledge Quiz

How many days did Elijah's disciples search after he was taken up?

How did Elisha know he had received a double portion of Elijah's spirit after he had been taken up?

How many days did the believers wait in Jerusalem before the outpouring of the Holy Spirit?

Answers to last week's quiz

In a whirl wind. 2 Kings 2:11

He made it float with a stick of wood. 2 Kings 6:6

He put flour in the stew and there was no harm. 2 Kings 4:41