

Historic Scripture Lessons for ☪ the Ascension of our Lord Old Testament


Genesis 5:21-24 NIV When Enoch had lived 65 years, he became the father of Methuselah. ²² And after he became the father of Methuselah, Enoch walked with God 300 years and had other sons and daughters. ²³ Altogether, Enoch lived 365 years. ²⁴ Enoch walked with God; then he was no more, because God took him away.

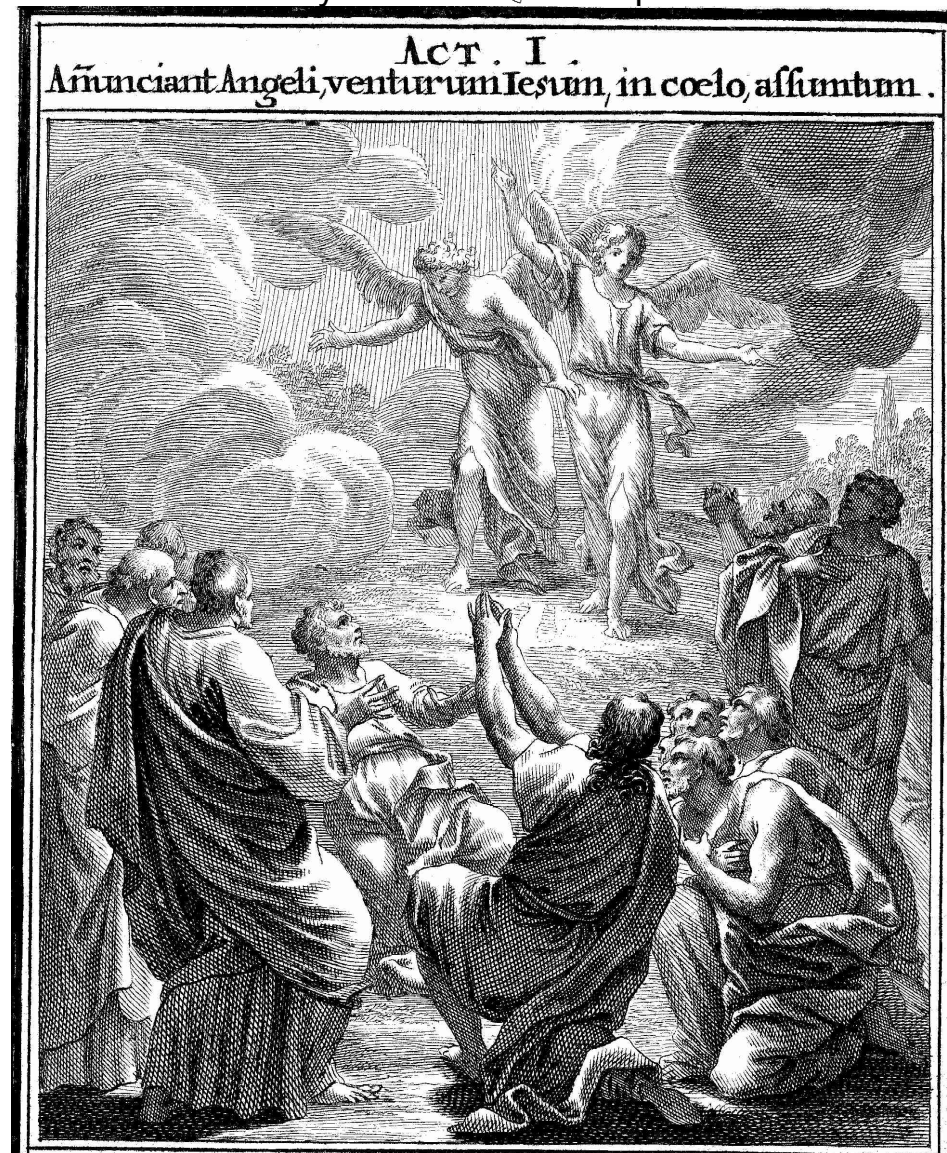
Epistle

Acts 1:1-11 In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach 2 until the day He was taken up to Heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles He had chosen. 3 After His suffering, He showed Himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that He was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the Kingdom of God. 4 On one occasion, while He was eating with them, He gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift My Father promised, which you have heard Me speak about. 5 For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit." 6 So when they met together, they asked Him, "LORD, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" 7 He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by His own authority. 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." 9 After He said this, He was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid Him from their sight. 10 They were looking intently up into the sky as He was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. 11 "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into Heaven will come back in the same way you have seen Him go into Heaven."

Gospel

Mark 16:14-20 Later Jesus appeared to the Eleven as they were eating; He rebuked them for their lack of faith and their stubborn refusal to believe those who had seen Him after he had Risen. 15 He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the Good News to all creation. 16 Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. 17 And these signs will accompany those who believe: In My name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; 18 they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well." 19 After the LORD Jesus had spoken to them, He was taken up into Heaven and He sat at the Right Hand of God. 20 Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the LORD worked with them and confirmed His Word by the signs that accompanied it.

OSL Our Savior & Peace Lutheran of Lakeland 
(40 days after Easter) ✦ (Eve of) The Ascension of Christ
May 4th, 2016 🕒 7:00 pm



Woodcut illustration from a 1695 Bible – Acts 1:1-11
Following Jesus' Ascension into heaven two angels appear from heaven to inform the disciples of the Second Coming of Christ.

Image courtesy of the Digital Image Archive, Pitts Theology Library, Candler School of Theology, Emory University
<http://www.pitts.emory.edu/dia/detail.cfm?ID=8185>

OSL OUR SAVIOR LUTHERAN CHURCH OSL

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BIBLE CLASS 8:30 AM WORSHIP 9:30 AM FELLOWSHIP 10:45 AM

* Rev. Randy VanMehren, PLL 647-2531 * Organ: Burmeister 430-5859

May 4th, 2016 * The Ascension of Our LORD

WELCOME to Our Savior! We are so happy to have you worship with us today. If you are visiting us for the first time (or in a long time), we ask that that you please fill out a visitor card found in the pew cardholder and place it in the offering plate. Come and worship with us again! **God bless you.**

PERSONAL PRAYERS FOR BEFORE WORSHIP & COMMUNION: ELH p. 40
OUR ORDER OF WORSHIP Printed here and in (black ELH) Hymnary **p.120**

Service		
Invocation Hymn	389 (7v)	vv.1,3,5,7 A Hymn of Glory Let Us Sing
Hymn of the Day	309 (6v)	A Wondrous Mystery Is Here
Canticle Hymn	356 (3v)	Day of Christ's Ascension(/Resurrection)
Closing Hymn	55 (5v)	Crown Him With Many Crowns

PROPERs for ASCENSION DAY ☼ ✠ ☼ ✠ ☼ **MAY 4TH, 2016**

INTROIT Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? Alleluia! This same Jesus who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven. Alleluia! Alleluia! Oh, clap your hands all you peoples! Shout to God with the voice of triumph! ...from **Acts 1**

COLLECT Grant, we beseech You, Almighty God, that just as we do believe Your Only-Begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, to have Ascended into the Heavens, so may we also in heart and mind to heaven ascend, and continually dwell with Him Who lives, and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one true God, now and forever.
C: A--men.

GRADUAL C: Alleluia! Alleluia! God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet. Alleluia! You have ascended on high. You have led captivity captive. Alleluia! ...from **Psalm 68**

SCRIPTURE LESSONS (printed on the outside back page of the bulletin)

O.T. **Genesis 5:21-24** Enoch is (one of 2 men) taken directly up to Heaven.

Epi. **Acts 1:1-11** Jesus is taken up to Heaven in His Ascension.

Gos. **Mark 16:14-20** Jesus commissions His disciples to preach the Gospel.

SERMON THEME "ASCENSION OF THE LORD AND THE LORD'S SUPPER" PR.RVM



ILCW Years A B & C Lessons for Ascension of our Lord

First Lesson

Acts 1:1-11 NIV In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach 2 until the day He was taken up to Heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles He had chosen. 3 After His suffering, He showed Himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that He was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the Kingdom of God. 4 On one occasion, while He was eating with them, He gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift My Father promised, which you have heard Me speak about. 5 For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit." 6 So when they met together, they asked Him, "LORD, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" 7 He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by His own authority. 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." 9 After He said this, He was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid Him from their sight. 10 They were looking intently up into the sky as He was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. 11 "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into Heaven will come back in the same way you have seen Him go into Heaven."

Epistle

Ephesians 1:16-23 I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. 17 I keep asking that the God of our LORD Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. 18 I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which He has called you, the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints, 19 and His incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of His mighty strength, 20 which He exerted in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at his Right Hand in the Heavenly realms, 21 far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. 22 And God placed all things under His feet and appointed Him to be Head over everything for the Church, 23 which is His Body, the fullness of Him who fills everything in every way.

Gospel

Luke 24:44-53 He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about Me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms." 45 Then He opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. 46 He told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and Rise from the dead on the Third Day, 47 and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in His Name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. 48 You are witnesses of these things. 49 I am going to send you what My Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high." 50 When He had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, He lifted up His hands and blessed them. 51 While He was blessing them, He left them and was taken up into Heaven. 52 Then they worshiped Him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. 53 And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God.

The (Evening) COLLECT (Pastor prays, Congregation Amen)

P: O GOD, from whom all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works do proceed: Give unto Your servants that peace which the world cannot give; that both our hearts may be set to obey Your Commandments, and also that we being defended by You from the fear of our enemies may pass our time in rest and quietness; through the merits of Jesus Christ our Savior, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, One True God now and forever. (OR,)

P: Abide with us, LORD, for it is toward evening and the day is far spent. Abide with us and with Your whole Church. Abide with us in the end of the day, in the end of our life, and in the end of the world. Abide with us with Your grace and goodness, with Your holy Word and Sacrament, with Your strength and blessing. Abide with us when the night of affliction and temptation comes upon us, the night of fear and despair when death shall come. Abide with us and with all the faithful through time and eternity.

C: ♪ A - -men.

The BENEDICAMUS *P: ♪ Let us bless the LORD. C: ♪ Thanks be to God.*

The BENEDICTION *P: ♪ The grace of our LORD Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.*

C: ♪ A - -men.



CLOSING HYMN *Crown Him With Many Crowns* ELH #55 (5 verses)

1. Crown Him with many crowns - The Lamb upon His throne;
Hark how the heavenly anthem drowns - All music but its own.
Awake, my soul, and sing - Of Him Who died for thee
And hail Him as thy matchless King - Through all eternity.
2. Crown Him the Virgin's Son, - The God Incarnate born,
Whose arm those crimson trophies won - Which now His brow adorn;
Fruit of the mystic rose, - As of that rose the stem;
The root whence mercy ever flows, - The Babe of Bethlehem.
3. Crown Him the LORD of Love. - Behold His hands and side,
Rich wounds, yet visible above, - In beauty glorified.
No angel in the sky - Can fully bear that sight,
But downward bends His wondering eye - At mysteries so bright!
4. Crown Him the LORD of Life - Who triumphed o'er the grave
And Rose victorious in the strife - For those He came to save.
His glories now we sing - Who died and rose on high,
Who died eternal life to bring - And lives that death may die.
5. Crown Him the LORD of Heav'n, - Enthroned in worlds above,
Crown Him the King to Whom is given - The wondrous Name of Love.
Crown Him with many crowns - As thrones before Him fall;
CROWN HIM, YE KINGS, WITH MANY CROWNS - FOR HE IS KING OF ALL! A-men.

Silent Prayer (Candles out.) You may be seated. FELLOWSHIP



I. The Service of Vespers ELH p.120



WELCOME 05/04/16 7:00 pm ASCENSION DAY (EVE) **JOINT WORSHIP**

INVOCATION Please *rise*.

P: In the Name of the Father, and of the Son ✠, and of the Holy Spirit. C: Amen.

THE CONFESSION OF SINS *P: Dearly beloved! We have come together in the presence of God our heavenly Father, to render thanks for the great benefits that we have received at His hand, to set forth His most worthy praise, to hear His holy Word, and to ask for ourselves and on behalf of others, those things that are necessary for our life and salvation. O come, let us worship Him! Let us kneel and bow down before Him. Let us confess our sins with penitent hearts, and obtain forgiveness by His infinite grace and mercy.*

C: Almighty and most merciful Father, we have strayed from Your ways like lost sheep. We have followed the devices and desires of our hearts. We have offended against Your holy Law. We have done those things which we should not have done, and we have not done those things which we should have done. Have mercy on us, O LORD! Spare us and restore us, according to the promises You have declared to us in Jesus Christ, our LORD. For His sake grant that we may live a godly, righteous and sober life, to the glory of Your holy Name.

THE ABSOLUTION

P: The almighty and merciful LORD has granted us pardon and forgiveness of all our sins, grace for true repentance and amendment of life, and the comfort of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The COLLECT for ASCENSION (Pastor prays, Congregation Amen)

C: Amen.

OPENING HYMN *A Hymn of Glory Let Us Sing* ELH #389 VENERABLE BEDE (ODD)

1. A Hymn of glory let us sing:
New songs throughout the world shall ring: - *Allelu-ia! Allelu-ia!*
Christ, by a road before untrod, - Ascendeth to the throne of God.
Allelu-ia! Allelu-ia! Allelu-ia! Allelu-ia! Allelu---ia!
3. To whom the angels, drawing nigh,
"Why stand and gaze upon the sky? - *Allelu-ia! Allelu-ia!*
This is the Savior!" thus they say, - "This is His noble Triumph-Day."
Allelu-ia! Allelu-ia! Allelu-ia! Allelu-ia! Allelu---ia!
5. Oh, grant us thitherward to tend - And with unwearied hearts ascend
Allelu-ia! Allelu-ia!
Unto Thy Kingdom's throne, where Thou, As is our faith, art seated now.
Allelu-ia! Allelu-ia! Allelu-ia! Allelu-ia! Allelu---ia!
7. O Risen Christ, ascended LORD, - All praise to Thee let earth accord,
ALLELU-IA! ALLELU-IA!
Who art, while endless ages run, - With Father and with Spirit One.
ALLELU-IA! ALLELU-IA! ALLELU-IA! ALLELU-IA! ALLELU---IA! A-men.

The VERSICLES ELH, p.120

P: ♪ O LORD, open my lips. C: ♪ And my mouth will show forth Your praise.

P: ♪ Make haste, O God, to deliver me. C: ♪ Make haste to help me, O LORD.

The GLORIA PATRI C: ♪ **Glory be to the Father, - and to the Son, - and to the Holy Ghost. - As it was in the beginning; is now, and ever shall be, for-ev-er-more. A-men. Al-le-lu—ia!**



The words to our Ascension **Psalm 47** Please READ responsively

P: Clap your hands, all you nations; shout to God with cries of joy.

C: How awesome is the LORD Most High, the great King over all the earth!

³ *He subdued nations under us, peoples under our feet.*

⁴ **He chose our inheritance for us, the pride of Jacob, whom He loved.**

⁵ *God has ascended amid shouts of joy, the LORD amid the sounding of trumpets.*

⁶ **Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises to our King, sing praises.**

⁷ *For God is the King of all the earth; sing to Him a Psalm of praise.*

⁸ **God reigns over the nations; God is seated on His holy throne.**

⁹ *The nobles of the nations assemble as the people of the God of Abraham,*

C: For the kings of the earth belong to God; He is greatly exalted.

(All) **Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost, one True God, now and forever. Amen.**



The LECTION: Readings for Ascension Festival

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON Genesis 5:21-24 Enoch is taken to Heaven.

EPISTLE Acts 1:1-11 Jesus is taken up to Heaven in His Ascension.

...Congregation please *Rise for the reading of the Holy Gospel.*

GOSPEL Mark 16:14-20 Jesus commissions disciples to preach the Gospel.

RESPONSORY *P: O LORD, have mercy upon us. C: ♪ Thanks be to You, O LORD!*

APOSTLES' CREED *(Confession of Faith)* All say together. **C:**

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 IS SEATED AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD THE FATHER ALMIGHTY,

From there He shall 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. (The Congregation may be seated for the next hymn.)

SERMON HYMN A Wondrous Mystery Is Here ELH #309 (6 verses) WAREHAM

1. A won-drous mystery- is here - To hold- in faith- and holy fear:

The Savior comes as Food Divine, - Concealed in earthly bread and wine.

2. This world is loveless, but above, - What wondrous boundlessness of love!
The King of Glory stoops to me - My spirit's life and strength to be.

3. In consecrated wine and bread - No eye perceives the myst'ry spread;
But Jesus' Words are strong and clear: - "My Body and My Blood are here."

4. How dull are all the pow'rs of sense - Employed on proofs of love immense!
The richest food lies hid from view, - The highest gifts we have below.

5. We have no greater boon on earth, - And faith alone discerns its worth,
The Word, not sense, must be our guide, - Christ's Words assure though sight's denied.

6. Lord, show us still the You are good, - And grant us evermore this food
To strengthen ev'ry humble soul - And make each wounded spirit whole.



SERMON Texts(Gospel&Acts) Luke 24:44-53, Acts 1:1-11 Ascension Accounts

THEME "ASCENSION OF THE LORD & THE LORD'S SUPPER" Thanks Pr. VanMehren

(After the SERMON)

The OFFERING

The VERSICLE *P: ♪ Let my prayers rise before You as incense:*

C: ♪ And the lifting up of my hands-- As the ev'ning sacrifice.

The CANTICLE *(In place of Canticle: Magnificat or Nunc Dimittis)* We Sing a

CANTICLE HYMN "The Day of Christ's Ascension(/Resurrection)" ELH #356

1. The Day of Christ's Ascension, - Earth, tell it out abroad,
The Passover of gladness. - The Passover of God.

From death to life eter-nal, - From this world to the sky-,
Our Christ hath brought us over - With hymns of Victory.

2. Our hearts be pure from evil - That we may see aright
The Lord in rays eternal - Of Resurrection Light
And, list'ning to His ac-cents, - May hear, so calm and plain-,
His own "All hail!" and, hearing, - May raise the victor strain.

3. Now let the heavens be joyful, - Let earth her song begin,
Let all the world keep triumph - And all that is therein.
Let all things, seen and un-seen, - Their notes of gladness blend-;
For Christ the Lord hath Risen,-- Our joy, that hath no end. A-men.

KYRIE ELEISON *(LORD Have Mercy)* **C: ♪ Lord, have mercy upon us.**
Christ, have mercy upon us. - Lord, have mercy upon us.

The LORD'S PRAYER *(Congregation pray, say together, ♪ Sung Amen.)*

C: 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, ♪A- -men.

ASCENSION of JESUS Mark 16:14-16 "CELEBRATE ASCENSION" 05.04.16

In the Name of the Lord Jesus who sits at the Right Hand of God the Father,
Dear Fellow Redeemed:

INTRODUCTION The last part of the Easter season in sermons, we returned to Jesus' farewell address. The night He instituted His Supper, the night He was betrayed, the night before He was crucified He said "Good Bye" to His followers. His address prepared them and us for the future. He prepared them for His death and His resurrection. He prepared them for that day He removed His visible presence from us. Thursday was Ascension Day.

T.V. and Radio Ministries preach a gospel of prosperity. They claim that by faith, we can live a life of ease in this world. By faith, we can have anything we want. They lie and we listen.

Jesus promised His disciples that night before His excruciating execution, they too would live under a cross. Their lives would be full of struggles and persecution. He promised we too would live under the cross. We would pass through much tribulation before we would come into His Kingdom of glory.

He also promised to take care us under the Cross. He would send His Spirit by means of God's word to call us to faith, to create faith in our hearts and to keep us in the faith. He readied us for life under the cross by empowering prayer. God would take care of us in every way as we follow His footsteps. God will answer all prayers prayed in Jesus' name.

Today we celebrate the ascension. We consider His last words before His removed His visible presence from us. We shall consider this thought as we celebrate His leaving.

WE HAVE JOY AS JESUS ASCENDS.

This is the day of Jesus' triumph. Our Savior runs the universe. Between Easter and Ascension Jesus appeared regularly to His disciples. Our text contains two different events. **Verse 14** probably took place Easter evening after Jesus' walk with the Emmaus disciples. We read:

Later He appeared to the eleven as they sat at the table; and He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen Him after He had risen.

Hear Him rebuke their...**unbelief and hardness of heart**. Don't let the significance of this verse escape you. They had been especially selected to be His pupils. They had been with Him throughout His ministry. He had given them private instruction. They had seen the glory of His divinity. And Jesus had to admonish them for their unbelief and hard hearts.

It is a warning. Sin turns us from the truth. We all sin. Not a one of us has a faith as strong as they had. We can't resist the perverting power of sin any better than they. Yet, we let Satan persuade us that we are strong. We are so strong, we think, we don't need to read our Bibles and hear His word. We don't need to join Bible class. We don't need worship regularly. Sin-filled pride turned them from Him to unbelief. He rebuked them.

It was a call to repentance. They had heard Him with their own ears. He promised to rise on the third day. They didn't believe. They hid in fear. When eye-witnesses, told them He had risen they still refused to believe. We are not stronger. We doubt Jesus, His power and promises. He rebuked them.

Witnesses testify and we doubt. Jesus rebuked them...**because they did not believe those who had seen Him after He had risen.**

With His rebuke He called them back. He calls us back by His word. Jesus is alive. He won. His Easter victory proves God has accepted His entire life as the payment for our salvation.

Jesus has fulfilled God's entire law for us. In Heb, we read: **For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.** Heb. 4:15

He was like us except He did no evil. Because of Easter, God considers us to be like Him without sin. Jesus did it for us because we could not. We get the credit for what He did.

He did more. He took our sins. God made Him sin with our sin. The perfect spotless Lamb took on Himself the sins of all people who ever walk this earth. He paid our penalty. We are God's beloved children. **St. Paul** proclaimed: **He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.** (Colossians 1:13-14)

This Bible truth has many witnesses. Those whose unbelief He rebuked, now proclaim Good News. Jesus lives and we will live. Their witness is filled with His promise: **He who believes and is baptized will be saved.** We hear the words and remember: These words are fact.

The promise is true but hard to believe. As He ascended, Jesus left them with us to hear again and again in order to bolster us in doubt. When Satan points out some particular evil we have committed, we hear the words again. At night, when our minds wander to days past and sins committed, again we hear. When we feel guilty and shameful, we hear them again.

Our hope is based on His promises empower by His Resurrection. Only unbelief can keep us from Him. Jesus said it too: **But he who does not believe will be condemned.**

We will not be condemned. We are God's children because Jesus said so. We have been baptized. God's Spirit created faith in our hearts. We do believe. We will be saved because He promised. They are His last words before He ascended. **He who believes and is baptized will be saved.** We receive the blessings of His work. The gates of hell shall not prevail against us. We are His own. We are His people.

He who "Left" sits at God's Right Hand. He rules all things in heaven and earth. He rules for us. He rules with us. It is so wonderful to know that the

One who rules the universe is the One who went to the cross for us. He sits at the Father's Right Hand. He is in control. And He promised: **He who believes and is baptized shall be saved.**

Jesus gives us the privilege of doing something significant with our lives. Born the least in the kingdom the ascending Lord sends us out with His word. We read in **Matthew: "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.**

We too are **spokespersons for God**. We proclaim His love. Through His Spirit, He goes with us. He guides and encourages. He gives us opportunity. He provides all we need. So He makes us ready. He rebukes our sin. He calls us to faith. He commissions us to spread the gospel. He promises to be with us to help us in the work and bring it success.

All this is from the One who rules the universe. We read: **So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the Right Hand of God.** In the presence of witnesses, Jesus went into heaven. He didn't have to go in this extraordinary way. He did it to give us a sign, to give us courage. An angel was there and said: **Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven. (Acts 1:11)** He will return. There is a deadline. He will return. When He returns, our work will be over and we shall ascend. Jesus told us that this too was a reason He ascended. He said: **In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. (John 14:2-3)** His Ascension is His promotion, a reward for a job well done. God has put all things under His feet. The disciples watched this with wonder. They reacted: **And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs.** St. Luke adds: **And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. (Luke 24:52)**

They went out with joy. His death, His Resurrection, His Ascension inspire us. St. **Paul** urged, (in **Colossians 3:1-4**): **If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.**

We live with eyes toward heaven. We look to where He ascended knowing we too shall be taken up. We work. We tell. We want others to join us. So, **we bring His love to the world. In (Our Ascended) Jesus' Name, Amen.** Soli Deo Gloria!

POSSIBLE Prayer of the Church Ascension Festival in Easter May 13

Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus, that those whom the Lord has marked as His own in Baptism and who believe in Him by the power of the Holy Spirit may walk worthy of their calling:

Almighty God, You have established Your Church through Your Son, Jesus Christ, and He has promised that He will remain with His Church forever. Keep us, we pray, from all harm and danger and finish within us Your new creation, that we may faithfully do the good works of Your kingdom, call many to know Jesus Christ by the proclamation of the Gospel and persevere to the end; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Let us pray for all pastors, missionaries and church workers and for those preparing for Your service:

Blessed Lord, You have given us Your Word and promised that Your Word shall not return to You empty but will accomplish Your purpose. Bless our Synod president; _____, our circuit visitor; _____, our pastor(s); and all those in full-time service to Your Church. Bless also those preparing for Your service at our colleges and seminaries. Give them all things needful so that their service may be fruitful, and bless us that we may fulfill our own baptismal calling of worship, witness, intercession and mercy work; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Let us pray for the world, for those who live in fear and terror, for the oppressed, the hungry and all people in their needs:

Gracious Father, Your good and gracious will is ever tried by evil men and evil power. Give to us and to all peoples of the world good and faithful leaders who will pursue paths of justice, protecting the weak and the unborn and using wisely all Your resources for the common good; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Let us pray for those who do not yet know Jesus Christ and for those who have fallen away from the truth, that they may hear the Word of God and believe it:

Mighty Lord, You do not desire the death of the sinner but that all would repent and live. Reclaim those who have fallen into error, renew those who have been absent from Your Word and Table, and rescue those who do not know Your mercy in Christ, that with us they may praise Your goodness and live in joyful response to Your favor; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Let us pray for our faithful use of all God's resources and for our stewardship of all His gifts, that we not squander what He entrusted to our care but use it well and for His glory:

Holy Lord, all things are Yours, and yet, in Your mercy, You place them into our care. Give us Your grace and guidance that all we have been given may honor You and that at the end of the day we may know the peace of a good conscience and rest without fear, knowing that You will not abandon us nor do You seek us any harm; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Let us pray for our fellowship, that we may know the comfort of God's presence, rejoice at the triumph of our Lord and His place at the Right Hand of the Father, and be kept holy and blameless to the day of His coming:

Heavenly Father, in the moments of our greatest fears, show forth Your presence that we may not be overcome. Hold forth the promise of Your return that when Christ comes to finish His new creation, we may be found faithful and worthy by His grace. Hear us now as we intercede for others, knowing that our Lord Jesus Christ pleads His blood for us, for all our needs and for a world still living in darkness, even as we pray: **Our Father, who art in heaven... Amen.**