

## Sermon on Seventh Sunday of Easter: “The Ascension Account”

- Acts 1:1-14 - Dr. Luke said that he had carefully written down all that Jesus Christ did and taught from the beginning of Jesus earthly ministry until the day when He was taken up.
  - Luke goes on to say that “after Jesus’ resurrection, He presented Himself alive to the Apostles.
    - v.3 - Jesus used the 40 days he stayed on earth after he was raised from the dead to speak and teach about the kingdom of God to his disciples.
- v.4 - Jesus told his disciples to stay in Jerusalem until they receive the promise he made of the Holy Spirit by the Father.
- v.5 - Those who wait will receive the Baptism of Holy Spirit.
- v.8 - Narrates that the power they are going to receive will equip or empower them to be Jesus witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea, in Samaria and to the ends of the earth.
- v.9 - After Jesus had instructed them about the coming of the Holy Spirit, He ascended into Heaven. The disciples started looking intently up into the sky as he was going.
- v.10b-11 - The disciples, and all Christians, find hope when two angels in white robes inform them: “Why do you stand looking into Heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up into Heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into Heaven”.
  - Have you ever been in a confused state of mind before? Is your mind telling you that you can’t make it in life? Are you in hopeless condition, sorrow or sickness? You don’t have to worry. The believer’s hope is this: We are not forgotten, rejected, or abandoned by God forever. The same Jesus who was physical on earth, who preached, who taught God’s word, who healed many sicknesses and cured diseases, promised to take his people to his Father’s kingdom. He is the One who died, who was buried, who rose from the dead, and he ascended into heaven. He will come again according to the reports of the two angles that appeared after Jesus ascension in Acts 1:10-11.

- Therefore, believers in Christ, be strong in your faith in God through Jesus Christ. You are not abandoned. God remembers you and will pick you up at the last day to His Heavenly kingdom.
- As Christians wait for the second coming of Christ, there may be trials awaiting. The Apostle Peter in 1 Peter 4:12- says that Christians should not see the tests and trials of faith that come their way as though something strange was happening to them, but should rejoice for sharing Christ's suffering. We may rejoice and be glad when His glory is revealed
- v. 12-13 - The Apostle Peter does not encourage Christians who suffer as a result of committing murder, or as a thief, evil doer or as a meddler. These may degrade a child of God. But if one suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed. Instead, let him glorify God in that name (1 Peter 4:15-16).
- 1 Peter 4:17-18 says *"Judgement is near, and if a righteous is scarcely saved what will become of the ungodly and the sinner"*.
  - The world is filled with much trouble. May God have mercy.
- In St. John's Gospel chapter 17:1-11 we read how Jesus prayed for himself his disciples. This account was before Jesus died, resurrected and ascended into Heaven. Jesus knowing that his time on earth was about to end, He prayed what the ESV Bible calls "The High Priest prayer": *Father, the hour has come, glorify your son who has glorified you.*
  - In what way or ways did Jesus glorify the Father? By humbly obeying God's commands and instructions even to the point of dying for sinners.
  - v.2 - God gave Jesus authority over all flesh to give the people he created eternal life.
    - Jesus Christ humbly, obediently and sacrificially accomplished this by His death on the cross.
    - Jesus desires that the whole world may know God and know him (Jesus), whom God had sent.

- v. 11, Jesus also prayed for his disciples, that they may be kept by God's name, and that they would be one even as Jesus and His Father are one.
- Psalm 68:1-20
  - v. 1-2 - speaks of the power and authority of God over his enemies, and the wicked. They are going to scatter and melt like wax before fire. Why?
  - v.3 - encourages the righteous they are going to be jubilated and joyous in God.
  - v.18 - may be a prophesy of Jesus' ascension to Heaven and his victory over Satan and his agents.
- Finally, is there any benefit in Jesus ascension? Yes, lots of benefits, these are few
  - (1) Without the Ascension, the Holy Spirit would not have come and indwelled the church of Christ, which some scholars call the "inauguration of the new age" John 16:7-16 (can help).
  - (2) The Ascension is reminding Christians of rapture during the last day.
    - 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 may be read. Rapture means the transporting of believers in Heaven at the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming of Jesus Christ. As Jesus died, rose, and ascended into Heaven, Christians who died will rise and meet the Lord in the sky. May our faith be strong in the Lord until that day, and may God give us grace to complete the work of God committed in our hands through Jesus Christ our Lord Amen.