

The Meaning of Ascension

References:

Ascension, Fr. Matthias F. Wahba

Notes for Servants:

Objectives:

General: The meaning and nature of ascension.

Specific: Christ ascended to prepare for us a place in Heaven.

Instructions:

Review last week's lesson.

Give a brief description about the church occasion(s) for the coming week.

Bible Verse:

“Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.”

(Acts 1:11)

Lesson:

The Meaning of Ascension

Our salvation has been accomplished, not only by the death and Resurrection of our Lord Christ, but also by His Ascension. On the 40th day after His Resurrection, He took the Disciples to Bethany, lifted His hands and blessed them and was parted from them and was carried up to Heaven. Two angels appeared to them and assured them of His Second Coming from Heaven also on the clouds

The Nature of Ascension:

When God was manifested in the flesh, He was not limited by it nor, while present in the body, was He absent elsewhere. Therefore, Christ ascended to Heaven in His flesh, while in His divinity, He fills all, Heaven and Earth. He endured death in the body for our behalf, He raised us with Him and through His Ascension, He opened to us the gates of Heaven and is preparing for us a place in Heaven (John 14:2).

What does thy Ascension mean to us?

In His Ascension, He carried up all mankind in His flesh, and placed them, through Him, at the right hand of the Father (Ephesians 2:6). In His body, the Lord becomes our way to His Father and to the Kingdom of Heaven, for He said “*I am the way*” and “*I am the door*” and “*through Me all must enter*”.

Christ’s Ascension in the flesh is proof of His Parousia (Second Coming) as the angels said and as Christ Himself has promised:

***“If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself;
that where I am, there ye may be also.”***

(John 14:3).

Ascension Exalted Mankind:

The Ascension of Christ is an exaltation to all mankind. The angels and archangels in Heaven, who were ever glorifying God, are now worshipping Him in the Name of Jesus. This is our grace and high exaltation, that even when He became man, the Son of God is worshipped, and the heavenly powers will not be astonished by seeing all of us, who are one body with Him, introduced into their realms.

Inasmuch as we were strangers before the Ascension, we are now fellow citizens with the saints and are called children of the Heavenly Jerusalem of which the temple of the Old Testament was a type. Therefore also, our worship of the New Testament is a type of the joy above. As we are invited to the Eucharist, the heavenly banquet, let us not celebrate the Divine liturgy in an earthly manner but as keeping a festival in Heaven with the angels. Let us glorify the Lord by chastity and righteousness. Let us rejoice, not in ourselves, but in the Lord, that we may be heirs with the saints.

What should we do to honour the Ascension?

We ought to follow Him in deeds as Saint Paul says “*Seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of the God, Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth ... Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth: fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry*” (Colossians 3:1,2,5).

“*Our conversation is in heaven*”, says Saint Paul, “*from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ*” (Phillipians 3:20); “*For here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come*” (Hebrews 13:14), “*the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the Firstborn who are registered in heaven*” (Hebrews 12:22,23).

Conclusion: