

It appears that the Apostles and Disciples had not been able to fully understand the Words of Jesus until this moment. There are a number of theories as to why this occurred. For whatever reason, "He opened their minds," to the entire meaning of the Old Testament that was fulfilled in His person and life. I suppose it was alike to the times when you have struggled to make sense of a situation and then suddenly it all seems so very clear. Jesus repeated the promise of the sending of the Holy Spirit and gave them (Luke's version) of the "Great Commission." People often wonder why we have multiple Gospel accounts. It seems that by getting the four different perspectives (along with the Epistles) we are able to be given a full load of the wonder of the understanding of Jesus.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

© O Lord God, our Father, You are our Strength and Song. You have prepared a well spring of salvation in Jesus Christ Your Son. Through the Eternal Spirit, You made Jesus an offering for the sins of the world. We thank You for Your great mercy.

Accept our thanks for the mighty works and merciful deeds of Jesus. Help us by these signs to see, surely and certainly, that in You we live and move and have our being. By Your Spirit enable us to trust in Jesus for the gift of eternal life. Grant, as we celebrate with joy the Ascension of our Lord, that even as You raised Him to the right hand of Your power and majesty in Heaven, that we ever exalt and praise Him in adoration and prayer, and find in Him gladness and devotion.

As Jesus was taken into Heaven and will come again in like manner as He Ascended, let our hearts rise to Heaven in gratitude and love. Help us look for His appearing again when He will receive us to Himself. Prepare us in watchfulness and prayer for His return.

Establish Christ's kingdom in every nation, and from the four corners of the Earth turn the hearts of men to His faith and obedience, so that every knee may bow and every tongue confess that He is Lord.

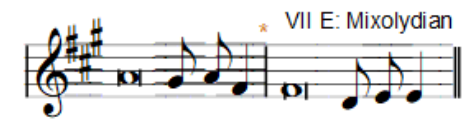
Maintain our land in righteousness and peace. Let our rulers ever be people who love and honor You. Give unto all our schools the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him. Bless all institutions of mercy, and uphold and further all good works. Deliver us from war and pestilence, and spare us from greed, rebellion, and lawlessness. Give our people a sincere love of piety and peace.

Hear us as we bring to You our private petitions. (Time of silent prayer.) Be with all those who cry to you in illness of body mind or spirit. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ our Savior.

© Amen.

ASCENSION DAY

Chant Tone



Introit God has gone up with a shout,* the Lord with the sound of a — trumpet. The Lord says to my Lord: "Sit at My right hand,* until I make Your enemies Your — footstool." The Lord has sworn and will not change His mind,* "You are a priest forever after the order of Mel chizedek."	The Lord is at your right hand;* He will shatter kings on the day of His wrath. Glory be to the Father and to the Son* and to the Holy — Spirit; as it was in the be — ginning,* is now, and will be forever. — Amen. God has gone up with a shout,* the Lord with the sound of a — trumpet. <i>(Antiphon, Psalm 47:5; Psalm 110:1, 4-5)</i>
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Collect of the Day

Almighty God, as Your only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, ascended into the heavens, so may we also ascend in heart and mind and continually dwell there with Him, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, One God, now and forever.

Gradual

Christ has risen | from the dead*
[God the Father] has crowned Him with glory and — honor,
You have given Him dominion over the works | of Your hands,*
You have put all things un | der His feet.

(Adapted from Matthew 28:7; Hebrews 2:7; Psalm 8:6)

ENTRANCE PRAYER: O Lord Jesus Christ, exalted far above all principalities, power, might and dominion, at Whose name every knee should bow, not only in this world but also in the world to come, accept our praise and adoration. As the Ascended Head of the Church, O Lord, You are aware of the many problems confronting the Church today. We do not ask that our work be made easier, but only for Your power to help us cope with the problems we have. Help us to be Your feet, running errands of mercy. Help us be your hands, doing deeds of kindness. Help us be Your mouth, witnessing to Your love and salvation. Amen (So be it, Lord.)

THE CHURCH HAS CHOSEN TO CELEBRATE THE EVENT OF THE ASCENSION OF CHRIST 40 DAYS AFTER HIS RESURRECTION.

The words of Acts 1:3 are: "He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God." The church counted off forty days and established that Thursday as the Day of the Ascension. We have gathered to be one with the church throughout the world, and throughout all time in our celebration of our Ascended Christ. Jesus went to the Right Hand of the Majesty on High. (Hebrews 1:3) This has established the pouring out of the Holy Spirit, making everyone worthy to hear the Word of God, making everyone the world worthy to hear the presentation of the Gospel. Since the Ascension of Jesus, we now watch. We watch for Him to return as He went, knowing that we live in the Messianic kingdom of God, and the Reign of Christ now, and waiting for the complete fulfillment when Christ comes again to take us to live in the Mansion He has prepared for us.

THEME OF THE DAY:

Ascension of Christ

INTROIT—(Antiphon: Psalm 47:5;) Psalm 110:1, 4-5

Psalm 47 doesn't state the author. Verse 5 likely refers to Christ's Ascension. Psalm 110 was written by David and is clearly speaking about the glory given to the Messiah, his work and person. It also explain how it is that Jesus can be considered a Priest even though He is not of the tribe of Levi. (Being a Priest was necessary because He sacrificed Himself.)

COLLECT

It is not perfectly obvious as to why Jesus had to leave us. Our weak sinful mind assumes that it would easier for everyone to believe if Jesus was somewhere, here on Earth, so we could go to find Him. The truth is that Jesus traveled in a very wide area, and people refused to believe. We pray, therefore, that as He ascended, we ask that we would be allowed to concentrate on the wonder of Heaven as we struggle through our life here on Earth.

FIRST LESSON—Acts 1:1-11

Luke expands on the information we have concerning the Ascension of Jesus back to Heaven. We will read the little bit he gave us in the Gospel. As an introduction to the book of Acts, the verse, "you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the Earth," establishes the entire theme of Acts as the Apostles (especially Paul,) take the message of the Gospel to the ends of the Earth. The information about the cloud that took Jesus out of their sight and that men in white robes is only found here in Acts.

GRADUAL—(adapted from) Matthew 28:7; Hebrews 2:7, Psalm 8:6

This Gradual always makes me smile because is technically made up of three different verses from three different books of the Bible. As a matter of fact, Hebrews 2:7 is quoting Psalm 8, so we could have used the one verse from Matthew and two from Hebrews. It is an especially poignant statement especially for Ascension Day because it shows us the reality of the Resurrection and the necessity of the Ascension, Jesus now rules from Heaven with the authority to bring us to Him.

EPISTLE LESSON—Ephesians 1:15-23

The alternate theme for the day would be: God put all things under the feet of the Christ. All of these lessons were chosen during our first round of creating a three year cycle of readings. They are the same every year.

GOSPEL LESSON—Luke 24:44-53

We have match up the end of Luke with the beginning of the next book he wrote, Acts. This is all the information we have about the Ascension.