

BIBLE STORY: THE ASCENSION OF OUR LORD

Acts 1:4-14

Central Thoughts

- God the Father exalted Jesus in the Ascension because Jesus faithfully suffered and died for our sins out of love for His Father and us.
- The Holy Spirit, called “the Promise of the Father,” was given to the Apostles, so that they might faithfully bear witness to Jesus in their preaching and in the Apostolic Scriptures of the New Testament.
- Jesus is still present with His Church wherever His Gospel is preached and His Sacraments are administered.

Discussion Questions

Why did Jesus assemble the Apostles together?

To command them to wait for the coming of the Holy Spirit, so that they could faithfully bear witness to Jesus’ death and resurrection for the salvation of the world.

What did God promise them in the water of their Baptism?

The gift of the Holy Spirit

What were the apostles told to do in Jerusalem?

To wait for the Holy Spirit to come upon them so that they could be His faithful witnesses.

What did the apostles want to know?

When Jesus would restore the kingdom to Israel

What kind of kingdom were the apostles thinking of?

An earthly kingdom

How does Jesus answer them?

The Father alone would know “times and seasons” for establishing His kingdom.

What kingdom is Jesus speaking of?

The kingdom of God, or the Church.

How does God’s kingdom come?

See the Catechism under the Second Petition of the Lord’s Prayer: “When our heavenly Father gives us His Holy Spirit, so that by His grace we believe His holy Word and lead godly lives here in time and there in eternity.”

What were the apostles told to do after the Holy Spirit would come upon them?

Be witnesses to Jesus in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the end of the earth.

How do the apostles continue to bear witness to Jesus today?

Through the apostolic Scriptures of the New Testament that are preached and taught in the Church throughout the world.

What happened to Jesus after He had spoken to the apostles?

He was taken up into heaven and a cloud received Him out of their sight.

What does the cloud remind us of from the Old Testament?

The glory cloud that hovered over the tabernacle and that led the children of Israel through the wilderness to the Promised Land

Who were the two men that appeared to the apostles in white apparel?

Angels, who were messengers reflecting the glory of the resurrected and ascended Lord.

What was the message of the angels?

Jesus will come again in glory, even as He ascended into heaven in glory.

Did Jesus leave us when He ascended into heaven?

No. He is with us always, “even to the end of the age,” as He promised. (See Matthew 28:20).

How does Jesus continue to be present among us?

By His Holy Spirit through the preaching of the Gospel and the celebration of the Sacraments

Meditation on the Bible Story

Jesus' ascension into heaven marks His exaltation by God the Father for having redeemed us from sin, death, and the power of Satan. Through His humiliating suffering and death upon the cross, Jesus accomplished our salvation, opened the gates of heaven for us by the forgiveness of all our sins, and reconciled us to God the Father. Jesus humbled Himself for our salvation. He was obedient to the Father, even to the point of suffering the punishment that we deserved for our sins. He is risen from the dead and, in His ascension, is exalted by God the Father because His death satisfied God's wrath and the condemnation of the Law against sinful man. Since His death won forgiveness of sins, He had to rise from the dead. It was impossible for death to hold Him in the grave. As the catechism teaches, "Where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation."

The Father received Jesus' sacrifice for our salvation, and in the Ascension the Father exalted Jesus to His right hand for having finished His work. Jesus received from God the Father all the glory and power He had set aside in His humiliation. His ascension should not be thought of as a journey to a faraway place, but rather as the King who is now ascending His throne after having triumphed over His enemies. Now our Lord continues to rule all things for the sake of His Church. His Church and every Christian is seated with Jesus in victory at the Father's right hand. All the enemies of sin, death, Satan, and hell are under our feet. Jesus is "King of kings" and "Lord of lords." He has not gone away to some far-off place. He reigns in our hearts by the Holy Spirit and faith, He rules in the Church by His Word, and He establishes His kingdom wherever His Gospel is preached and His Sacraments are administered according to the apostolic and prophetic Scriptures. Though He has ascended into the heavenly realm, Jesus is still present with us by the Holy Spirit through preaching and sacraments. As the disciples gazed into heaven at His ascension, so His Church looks forward to His Second Coming in glory when He will raise us up from the dead to share fully in the glory of His resurrection and ascension in the life everlasting.

Prayer on the Bible Story

O Lord Jesus, You are the King of kings and the Lord of Lords because You defeated sin, death and the power of the devil and are now seated in glory at God the Father's right hand. Send us Your Holy Spirit, as You have promised, that through the preaching of the Holy Gospel and the gift of the Blessed Sacraments, You might abide with us and we with You until You come again in glory; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.



Jesus' Ascension into Heaven
Acts 1:4-14