

In the name of our ascended Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who has taken His seat at the right hand of the Father. Amen.

The word of God for our celebration of our Lord's ascension is found in the Gospel of Luke 24:44-53.

"Then He said to them, "These *are* the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and *the* Prophets and *the* Psalms concerning Me." 45 And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. 46 Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, 47 "and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. 48 "And you are witnesses of these things. 49 "Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high." 50 And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. 51 Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven. 52 And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, 53 and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God. Amen."

So far our text. Dear fellow redeemed of God.

Sometimes things need to end before other things can begin. Often times though we focus on the ending of the thing verses the things which we will have. The disciples of our Lord suffered from the same problem. They tended to focus on the loss instead of the gain.

It's hard for us to relate to the disciples loss. Our relationship with Jesus has always been one of Him being invisible to us. The apostles had to suffer the loss of Jesus' companionship as well. Jesus readies the apostles with comforting words. He reminds the disciples and ourselves that, **"It was necessary that Jesus ascend."** It was necessary that Jesus ascend for several reasons. 1. That the word of God would go into the world. 2. That the Holy Spirit be given. 3. That we would have confidence in our own ascension. 3. That we may have continued joy in this life.

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Jesus here for the sake of His disciples provides a reminder of how important it was that Jesus ascend to the Father. He reminds them that all things must be fulfilled. Jesus' ascension is one of those things. But in order for the rest to take place this first must happen.

The first thing is that the word of the Lord would go into the entire world. If Jesus wouldn't have ascended into heaven taking His rightful seat at the right hand of the Father it is very possible that we would never have heard the Gospel message.

The focus would've been on some kind of earthly kingdom that the Jews were so hoping for. Jesus taking Himself out of our view helped put the focus onto His word. It helped the disciples of Jesus begin to look out into the world and not focus on a man standing in front of them. It helped them focus on the message of that God Man.

Jesus even restated to the disciples what they should go out to preach. The forgiveness of sins through the Son of God as found in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms. Preach the entire word of God which had been written up to this point.

It was necessary that Jesus open their minds to these Scriptures. Not only because they've struggled with the idea of what the true Messiah would be. But also in the fact that they still carried with them the old man so then only through the working of the Holy Spirit could man understand.

And that message was and is today that Jesus Christ came to die and rise again. And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached to the entire world. Not to Jews only, but also to us Gentiles.

"It was necessary that Jesus ascend" so that the gifts of the Holy Spirit would be given in aiding them in spreading the Gospel message of Jesus Christ. **"Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high."**

Those who received this message were not lacking the Holy Spirit. They wouldn't have believed that the God Man standing before them was the Messiah any other way. But God before the foundation of the world planned to send the Holy Spirit to them in a very special way. A way in which they would receive the ability to speak the languages of the world in aiding them to spread the Gospel message of Jesus Christ.

The Lord wanted His word to be spread. And He wanted it to be spread quickly. For the followers of Jesus to spend a considerable amount of time learning the languages of the world in order to preach the Gospel didn't make sense. The Gospel message was too important. So Jesus sent the Comforter to them so that they might begin the work of spreading the Good News to the world.

What better news could be spread? We might think that an upturn in the economy would be good news. We might think that the cure for all illness had been found would be good news. But true Good News is the Gospel of God. The news that every single one of your sins is forgiven in Christ.

And what would this Good News be for us if we didn't have the confidence in our own ascension?

"And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. 51 Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven."

What an amazing scene that must've been. Majestic and glorious. Once the Son of Man was lifted up on a cross. Now the Son of Man was lifted up to take His rightful place at the right hand of the Father. The work of Jesus wasn't coming to an end, it was continuing.

In Jesus ascending to the Father we see the Father approving of the Son as He did in His resurrection. But **"It was necessary that Jesus ascend"** so that we would have confidence in our own ascension.

1 Thess. 4:16-18 **"For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words."**

This earth is not our home. Like is the hymn so rightly states, *"I'm but a stranger here, Heaven is my home."* With the promise that came to us through the Holy Spirit in 1 Thess. which states that we will meet the Lord in the air, it is just as vital that the Lord ascend so we may confidence in our own ascension into His kingdom.

Although a Christian finds contentment in Christ here on earth, we look forward to the new heavens and the new earth where we will see God face to face and live with Him forever.

And finally **"It was necessary that Jesus ascend"** that we may have joy in this lifetime. **"And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, 53 and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God. Amen."**

I pray that the ascension of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to the right hand of God the Father gives you great joy. Yet another sign to us that Jesus the Nazarene is truly the One attested to by the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.

He is the One who is worthy of praise and thanksgiving because He came and did all that the Father expected of Him. He lived that perfect life, died that perfect death and rose again from the grave. And today we celebrate like the disciples in the house of God praising and blessing Him **"...for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."** Acts 4:12b