

Open The Eyes Of My Heart
By Paul Baloché

See print copy for words.



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Ascension Sunday
Seventh Sunday of Easter

And God placed all things
under Christ's feet and
gave him as head over all things
to the church....

Ephesians 1:22

Old Orchard Church
May 20, 2012 — 10:15 to 11:50 a.m.

Celebrating the Immortal Jesus as the Resurrection Community of Hope and Longing

You have raised our human nature
On the clouds to God's right hand.
There we sit in heav'nly places,
There with you in glory stand.
Jesus reigns adored by angels;
Man with God is on the throne;
Mighty Lord, in your ascension,
We by faith behold our own.

—Christopher Wordsworth (1862)



Scripture Readings

New Testament Lesson: Romans 5:1-5; 8:18-21

Old Testament Lesson: Psalm 71

Sermon

“Who is This Jesus?”

Hebrews 4:14

Mark Robertson, Director of Ministry to Youth & Families

Heaven and Earth Reunited

After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes,
and a cloud hid him from their sight. Acts 1:9

In the beginning, there was blessed fellowship between God and man, between heaven and earth. Although God and His creation were separate, they were united without being identified. But our fall into sin disrupted all that. Separateness became separation. The alienation of sin brought dis fellowship into creation. Man alienated himself from God; people became alienated from one another, and from the creation. Life in creation was subjected to the principle of self-existence, independence and isolation. But the glorious purpose—and result!—of Christ's work was the re-union of heaven and earth, of God and His people. Redemption, which was intended and provided in terms of the original creation, aims at the restoration of fellowship. The principle of self-existence was overcome, in redemption, by the greater principle of reconciliation.

That's what Christ's ascension is about: reunion, fellowship restored, oneness between heaven and earth brought about by our Savior's entrance into the Father's presence.

So much about our Savior's ascension is unique. There were no Christmas angels, no Golgotha darkness, no Easter earthquake. No brightly lit sky or rending of the veil or rolling stone. No singing.

The event is reported in utter simplicity: *he was taken up.*

Ah, but notice the *timing* of Christ's departure: ‘**when he had spoken these things.**’ What things? You may recall that the disciples had asked Jesus a question, a good question, actually: ‘**Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?**’ The Savior's answer came immediately, in word and in deed. The word was this: you don't need to know the times or season in the Father's hand; but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you and you will be my witnesses around the world. ‘**Now,**’ writes Luke, ‘**when he had spoken these things...he was taken up.**’

And what, do you suppose, is the meaning of his divine act-as-answer? It is this: the restoration of God's rule requires the reunion of the Son with the Father. The Son of God, who is the Second Adam, carries His flesh (and ours), His sacrifice (for us), and His obedience into heaven, there to receive the Father's approval and reward. The kingdom of God is restored on the basis of atonement and reconciliation. *The ascension belongs to Christ's reconciling work for His sheep.*

—N.D. Kloosterman (1992)

