



**DAILY BREAD
LECTIONARY DEVOTIONS
ASCENSION —YEAR A**

INVOCATION

L: In the name of the Father
and of the Son +
and of the Holy Spirit.

G: Amen

PSALM OF THE DAY: PSALM 47

**A: Let the people praise you, O God.
Let all the people praise you.**

L: Clap your hands, all you nations;

G: shout to God with cries of joy.

L: How awesome is the LORD Most High,

G: the great King over all the earth!

L: God reigns over the nations;

G: God is seated on his holy throne.

L: God has ascended amid shouts of joy,

G: the LORD amid the sounding of trumpets.

L: Sing praises to God, sing praises;

G: sing praises to our King, sing praises.

L: For God is the King of all the earth;

G: sing to him a psalm of praise.

**A: Let the people praise you, O God.
Let all the people praise you.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

L: Lord Jesus, King of glory, on this day you ascended far above the heavens and at God's right hand you rule the nations. Leave us not alone, we pray, but grant us the Spirit of truth that at your command and by your power we may be your witnesses in all the world; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

READING & MEDITATION *see next page*

PRAYER

LORD'S PRAYER

**A: Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom
and the power and the glory
forever and ever. Amen.**

VERSE OF THE DAY

**A: Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!
Alleluia. Surely I will be with you always, to
the very end of the age. (Matthew 28:20b)**

BENEDICTION

L: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ
and the love of God
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with you all.

A: Amen

READING AND MEDITATION:

Ascension: Christ rules all things for his Church. In the early 700s AD, there lived an English churchman known to history as the Venerable Bede. He was the great teacher of the middle ages, the man who divided history into AD and BC, the first great historian of the English language and a devout man of God. On May 25, 735 AD, on the great Ascension Vigil, Bede finished his translation of the Gospel of St. John into Old English. Then, on that day of Ascension, he died. From his deathbed, the Teacher of the Middle Ages spoke the words that have become the Prayer of the Day on Ascension. This beautiful prayer sets the tone for the day, beginning with a note of triumph and ending with a supplication for the Spirit and his work.

As you study this week, seek to find the connecting theme in all the lessons by using Luther's Four Big Barber Questions to ponder and discuss each individual reading:

1. *What is God saying to me in this lesson?*
2. *For what does this lesson lead me to give thanks?*
3. *What sins does this lesson lead me to confess?*
4. *For what does this lesson lead me to pray?*

THE GOSPEL: LUKE 24:44-53

Ascension marks the coronation of our Prophet-Priest as King. Today we see his enthronement in glory and power to rule all things for the Church. Even at this late date, the disciples failed to understand Jesus' mission. So Christ opened the Scriptures to them to show once more that this was the Christ as prophesied. He told them, "This was the way it had to be! And you, you are now well-informed witnesses of the fact that I am both Lord and Christ." Finally, his disciples understood: *Christus est Deus*. There was no more doubting, no more fearing, no more worry. Christ is God. They worshipped the God-Man and watched him depart with his hands raised in unending blessing. No wonder they went home rejoicing! No longer would they hide behind locked doors; no longer would they cower; no longer would they fear the Sanhedrin. Instead they would fill the temple with public praise, because *Christus est Deus*! Their rabbi, their friend, their brother...he was God and ruled all things for his Church.

My takeaways:

FIRST LESSON: ACTS 1:1-11

The weeks of Easter had been filled with breathless joy in the presence of their living Savior. For forty days the disciples listened to Christ speak about the kingdom of God. All that kingdom talk whetted their appetite for power and authority. They had seen their Savior suffer; now they were ready to see him win. Jesus offered them the tantalizing promise of something greater than John's baptism, whom he had called the greatest man even born. What could it be? What heights of power and authority were waiting now that Jesus reigned as God and Lord? And so, *oöv*, because of that, they asked him a question that makes us marvel. Verse 6 displays the depth of their culturally ingrained misunderstanding of Messiah: they certainly had spiritual hopes for Jesus, but even at this late date they could not divorce them from their expectations of an earthly kingdom. Christ's answer gives direction for the Church of all time. They would get power, but not for an earthly kingdom. Rather, they would receive Spirit-power to be heralds of the impending kingdom of heaven.

My takeaways:

SECOND LESSON: EPHESIANS 1:16-23

The post-ascension disciples no longer had their teacher with them walking the roads of Israel as before. We end time disciples do not have Jesus' visible presence with us either. Yet there is no ascension sadness, because the Church knows exactly where Christ is. He has taken up his power and has begun to reign with might that knows no limit and glory that knows no bounds. With a head like that, what foe have we to fear?

My takeaways:

SUPPLEMENTAL FIRST LESSON: ESTHER 6

Esther is unique among Biblical books: it makes no mention of God at all. Yet the book clearly shows the sovereignty of God throughout. The account of Haman and Mordecai shows that our Lord rules all things for his Church—often in ways unseen. History does not happen by coincidence or accident, but the book of Esther shows the hand of God ruling over the nations with quiet acts of providence. No matter the evil plans and purposes of men, God’s providential care for his Church cannot be thwarted.

My takeaways:

SUPPLEMENTAL SECOND LESSON: COLOSSIANS 3:1-4

On the mount of Ascension the angels asked, “Why do you stand here looking into the sky?” The Church must be about its appointed work in the post-ascension world; we cannot merely stare after our ascended Lord. Yet while our eyes turn back to this world and the work in front of us, our hearts never cease their upward gaze, longing to see him come again, just as he went. With hearts and minds set on things above, and with eyes and hands and mouths busy with the work he has given us, the Church journeys on in confidence and hope that cannot be shaken, no matter what befalls us here on earth. Our Gospel is not one of health and wealth, but of a life hidden from this world—hidden with Christ in God...for now, but not forever.

My takeaways:

What major theme(s) connect(s) all the lessons?