

Ascension of the Lord

Year C

Reading 1

Citation: Acts, Chap. 1, Verses 1-11
Acts 1: 1-11

Luke's description of the Ascension is an attempt to lay the basis for Jesus' mission for the Apostles (and to reject the political-military ideas of militant Israelites of the day. It is intended to "set the record straight" as opposed to rallying the disciples. Be passionate yet objective. Demonstrate the depth of your belief in Jesus and His (and our) mission to lead humanity to full maturity by your own tone, intensity, and insistence.

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

In the first book,
Theophilus,
I dealt with all that Jesus did and taught until the day he was taken up,
after giving instructions
through the Holy Spirit
to the apostles whom he had chosen.

(parenthetical)

“

(short pause)

He presented himself alive to them
by many proofs
after he had suffered,
appearing to them during forty days
and speaking about the kingdom of God.

(you're a biased narrator)

(excited?)

(short pause)

While meeting with them,
he enjoined them not to depart from Jerusalem,
but to wait for
"the promise of the Father about which you have heard me speak;
for John baptized with water,
but in a few days
you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

(change voice tone

(it's Jesus speaking

“

“ (pause)

When they had gathered together they asked him,
"Lord,
are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"

(genuine curiosity)

He answered them,
"It is not for you to know the times or seasons
that the Father has established by his own authority.
But you will receive power
when the Holy Spirit comes upon you,
and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem,
throughout Judea and Samaria,
and to the ends of the earth."

(patiently insistent)

(Jesus is the wise advisor)

(very short pause)

When he had said this,
as they were looking on,
he was lifted up,
Proclaim the Word!

(parenthetical?)

Proclamation Format

and a cloud took him from their sight.

(short pause)

While they were looking intently at the sky as he was going,
suddenly
two men dressed in white garments stood beside them.

(almost shock!)

They said,
"Men of Galilee,
why are you standing there looking at the sky?
This Jesus
who has been taken up from you into heaven
will return
in the same way as you have seen him going into heaven."

(the angels are mystified by the apostles, too!)

(be gently, warmly firm)

(parenthetical)

(assuring)

("into" explains it!)

The word of the Lord.

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Reading 2

Citation: Ephesians, Chap. 1, Verses 17-23
Ephesians 1: 17-23

Paul is asking his community members to be open to Christ's working within them, that they be aware of how they are growing in awareness of His presence among them. The purpose of this awareness is to be a source of conviction they develop as to who Christ is and the role of God the Father plays in their (and Christ's) lives.

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Ephesians

Brothers and sisters:

May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the Father of glory,
give you a Spirit of wisdom and revelation
resulting in knowledge of him.

(similar to the start of a blessing)
(almost parenthetical)

(short pause)

May the eyes of your hearts be enlightened,
that you may know
what is the hope that belongs to his call,
what are the riches of glory in his inheritance among the holy ones,
and what is the surpassing greatness of his power
for us who believe,
in accord with the exercise of his great might:
which he worked in Christ,
raising him from the dead
and seating him at his right hand in the heavens,
far above every principality,
authority,
power, and dominion,
and every name that is named
not only in this age
but also in the one to come.

(3 separate qualities of this knowledge)

(insisting)
(parenthetical) (very short pause)
(firm assurance!)

(evidence of this "firm assurance")
" (very short pause)
(pride! conviction!)

"

"

"

(parenthetical)
(confident!) (very short pause)

And he put all things beneath his feet
and gave him as head over all things to the church,
which is his body,
the fullness of the one who fills all things
in every way.

(a quiet excitement!)

(parenthetical)
(absolute confidence)

The word of the Lord.

Ascension of the Lord

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Reading 2
OPTION #2

Citation: Hebrews, Chap. 9, Verses 24-28; Chap. 10, Verses 19-23
Hebrews 9: 24-28; 10: 19-23

Paul's argument that Jesus is the true High Priest of mankind. He uses the Jewish understanding & practice to set up his audience and then hammers in the concept of salvation from the effects of sin in life and living. He expects his listeners to act on their understanding of this concept with confidence. Be that insistent!

A reading from the Letter to the Hebrews

Christ did not enter into a sanctuary made by hands,
a copy of the true one,
but heaven itself,
that he might now appear before God on our behalf.

(somewhat argumentative?)

(insisting!) (very short pause)

Not that he might offer himself repeatedly,
as the high priest enters each year into the sanctuary
with blood that is not his own;
if that were so,
he would have had to suffer repeatedly
from the foundation of the world.

(again, somewhat argumentative)

(parenthetical)

(disbelief?) (very short pause)

But now
once
for all

(pacing is key, here)

he has appeared at the end of the ages
to take away sin by his sacrifice.

(voice gets firmer to the end of this sentence)

(very short pause)

Just as it is appointed that men and women die once,
and after this the judgment,
so also Christ,
offered once to take away the sins of many,
will appear a second time,
not to take away sin
but to bring salvation to those who eagerly await him.

(parenthetical)

(almost shaking your head!)

(complete assurance!) (short pause)

Therefore,
brothers and sisters,
since through the blood of Jesus
we have confidence of entrance into the sanctuary
by the new and living way he opened for us through the veil,
that is, his flesh,
and since we have "a great priest over the house of God,"
let us approach with a sincere heart
and in absolute trust,
with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience
and our bodies washed in pure water.

(parenthetical)

(continue parenthetical)

(change voice tone on quote)

(very confident)

(softer voice)

(continue softer voice) (short pause)

Proclaim the Word!

Proclamation Format

Let us hold unwaveringly to our confession that gives us hope,
for he who made the promise is trustworthy.

(very short pause)
(increasingly emphatic!)

The word of the Lord.

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GOSPEL

Citation: Luke, Chap. 24, Verses 46-53
Luke 24: 46-53

By implication, Luke paints a picture of complete conviction among the disciples of Christ's divinity and His place at God the Father's right hand. He is convinced that they will carry on Jesus' mission because of Jesus promises. The disciples' behavior (continually in the temple praising God) demonstrates this. Be as insistent as Luke!

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

Jesus said to his disciples:

"Thus it is written
that the Christ would suffer
and rise from the dead on the third day

and that repentance,
for the forgiveness of sins,
would be preached in his name to all the nations,
beginning from Jerusalem.

(parenthetical)

You are witnesses of these things.

(insisting that this be accepted)

And behold
I am sending the promise of my Father upon you;
but stay in the city
until you are clothed with power from on high."

(an assuring promise)

(cautionary)

(short pause)

Then he led them out as far as Bethany,
raised his hands,
and blessed them.

(slower pace)

"
"

As he blessed them
he parted from them and was taken up to heaven.

(very short pause)

They did him homage
and then returned to Jerusalem with great joy,

(treat comma as a period)

and they were continually in the temple praising God.

(a separate sentence)

The Gospel of the Lord.