

The Ascension of Our Lord  
Year of the Lord 2019  
Luke 24

**“Holy Spirit, Light Divine, shine upon this heart of mine;  
Chase the shades of night away; turn the darkness into day!”  
“Let me see my Savior’s face; let me all HIS beauties trace!  
Show those glorious truths to me which are only known to  
Thee!”**

**Luke 24:44–53** 44 Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” 45 Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, 46 and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, 47 and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. 48 You are witnesses of these things. 49 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.”

50 Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them. 51 While he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven. **52 And they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy,** 53 and were continually in the temple blessing God.

In the Name of Jesus:

Great joy was with ME the day THAT hymn stanza finally splashed through: ‘Show those glorious truths to me, which are only known to Thee—the Holy Spirit of God.’

I can stop ‘god-ding’! You too; and all the children of God! We—all—the world!—have been RELIEVED of that burden, that fear:

<sup>10</sup> And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of **great joy** that will be for all the people. <sup>11</sup> For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Lk 2:10–11). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

And when God ascended—AS...A...MAN, the Crucified and Risen David, Savior, Christ, Lord—what was left but that for which God IS God and He has made us: joy, abounding, GREAT!

And/and/and, my dear saints! The Spirit has even whispered away ANY wisp of fear about that joy too! ‘Better see some smiles here—or ELSE!’

As with all the great words of salvation, joy—like love, forgiveness and peace—HIS joy passes our control, our grasp—we...are...FREED...from manufacturing ANY of it!

Joy is with me when I hear old Forrest Gump in his movie; he calls himself a ‘go-zillionaire,’ and reported, ‘So, didn’t hafta worry about MONEY any more. That’s good; one less thing!’

The rich and powerful who make the films are aware of what an idol is the power of riches. But there is one idol more dangerous than stuff and stuff-grabbing, stuff-hoarding, stuff-fear: ‘Is THIS MAN here, inside of ME, God-ish enough; lined up with heaven’s will sufficient? ‘WHY is HEAVEN not MORE APPARENT...IN...MEEEEEEEEEEEE?!!!!’

‘They returned to Jerusalem, worshiping Jesus, and with great joy,’ as the herald angel proclaimed the day that Jesus was born, wrapped in swaddling cloths, and laid in a manger.

Saint Luke tells in the Acts of the apostles that a ‘cloud’ hid Jesus from their sight. Our joy has no bounds!

When that cloud o’ershadowed Peter, James and John on the Mount of Transfiguration—it was if the Babe of Bethlehem had ne’er been born! They were afraid.

But now, THAT CLOUD is clearly satisfied that One Man is God. And now, with Forrest Gump, we can say in faith, at peace, filled with the Holy Spirit and joy: ‘Don’t hafta be GOD no more. That’s good! One less thing!’

One less thing. My dear ones: our entire to-do list, agenda, calendar has been wiped clean; the cloud has made the heavens bright and clear and a source of joy!

Dear sister Arlene is in palliative care. We rejoiced together yesterday how often we commiserated in our Thursday Bible Class over our readiness to lose our religion! Drivers; false friends; our lords and masters in power. Argghhh! Thank God for the Spirit, His Baptism, His Pledge and Guarantee of Christ!

So, after endless planes and buses and ferries and cabbies, there remained one last flight to get your poor pastor here where he belongs. One...last...flight. The Lord has doused the flames mostly in me—I have been baptized!—so that, press you as much as you want, I am NOT going to badmouth by name the airline I suffered. In good Greek mode still, I refuse to tell you if it was airline Alpha, Beta, Gamma or even DELTA!

I checked the boarding pass; and the flight was NOT numbered 666, as I had conjectured.

Long and short: a very old child of God was having a serious medical episode during boarding; but instead of getting the dear lady medical help, our lords and masters of the plane were hoisting and tossing her this way and that, trying to reason with someone with even less coherence than Paul Anderson after 26 hours of travel.

My friends, where is my religion?, I wondered. In ME; evident on my face, in my words, controlling my sighs and eyes. And I lost whatever faithfulness to God I was fooled into thinking I had banked.

And then, the Lord reminded me that it was Ascension Day, on which I was going through the flight from the Abyss. And Christ, our Joy, was ruling at Peace the heavens, the earth, and even ALL American air-carriers!

So, I hid in my seat, and prayed that the good Lord would not let those people FORCE that poor old woman to fly during her distress. And as we pulled away from the gate and the captain was announcing that they had handled all things well and the woman was good to go, she leapt from her seat and did her best to get through the double window at her seat. And the plane rolled back and my prayers were answered.

The worst part of the thing, for me, was that question: ‘Why is patient endurance, faithfulness, NOT my FIRST option?’ And what I was asking myself was, ‘Why am I not more like God?!’

Happy Ascension Celebration, dear children of God! God’s already GOT a Man that is God! And That Man has endured ALL the pain and anguish of the gap the lying devil says maintains still between you and your Father above, between heaven and earth.

In the Acts of the Apostles, the word joy keeps popping up. It’s a favorite of Paul and Luke. And when Gentiles—senseless folk like you and me, non-Jews—when THEY received the Holy Spirit and joy, there was great joy all around, among ALL God’s children.

ANNNNNDDDD....when the apostles were beaten for their preaching, they rejoiced at their worthiness. And when a town drove out Paul and Barnabas, they shook the dust off their sandals, and moved along with great joy.

Beloved: we are not COMMANDED to find some twisted height of emotion during distress, OVER the evil of this world. The apostles did not take joy AT the evil. But the Joyful Spirit lived in them IN the evil, DESPITE the evil; despite the devil, the world, and even themselves.

Before He ascended, the Lord left His men with His Word, His Church, and the call to repentance along with the forgiveness of sins. Great JOY follows that, Luke records!

For our repentance, may I offer to you the question: are your knives sharpened to a fine edge, when it is time to deal with another child of God? Are there people in your orbit, with your DNA, with your name, who—to ready yourself to meet up with them, some kind of ammo must be loaded? I can only hope, with joy, that you can admit to that. There are song lyrics: ‘All I ever learned from love, was how to shoot at someone who outdrew you.’ That’s close to confession, repentance; the joy of forgiveness is missing though. I will let you guess at the singer’s religion.

But you, I, the Church, Jews AND Gentiles now—we have been baptized! CALLED clean by the Spirit of Jesus, no matter what evidence, what ammo shot—no matter how they may outdraw us in a fight: the devil, the world, or the old, twisted fear-er inside us.

See how free?! FEEL the joy, that surpasses our FEELINGS!

Even GOD doesn’t worry about JUSTIFYING Himself to any court of opinion: man or devil. And so, that’s one less thing for us to worry about.

When we’re asking why we are not more like God, we USUALLY got GOD all wrong to begin with!

Man with God is on the throne! Might King in Thine Ascension  
WE by faith behold our OWN!

Let God worry about straightening out what's crooked. You just worry about trying to do good, with the confidence of your Baptism; and when your PROVE that Jesus' job is to SAVE you, then take the great JOY of admitting who you are, what you are, to God, to those you harm, to your fellow Christian. While we have her, sister Arlene is a great resource to lift up a sad soul from losing a religion we never needed to grasp; and to take great joy and what a Savior Jesus is!

Joy to you, my dear ones. What you are, freed and unburdened and baptized and fed with the Bread and Wine, the Body and Blood of Joy. He will come back from heaven in the same way THEY saw Him go into heaven: covering the whole 'God-thing' for us all! Great Joy to you in the Name of Jesus. Amen!