

FEARLESS

FOLLOWING



THE GOSPEL OF
LUKE
FOLLOWING JESUS



"FEARLESS FOLLOWING: PARTICIPATING IN
JESUS' ASCENSION - LUKE 24"

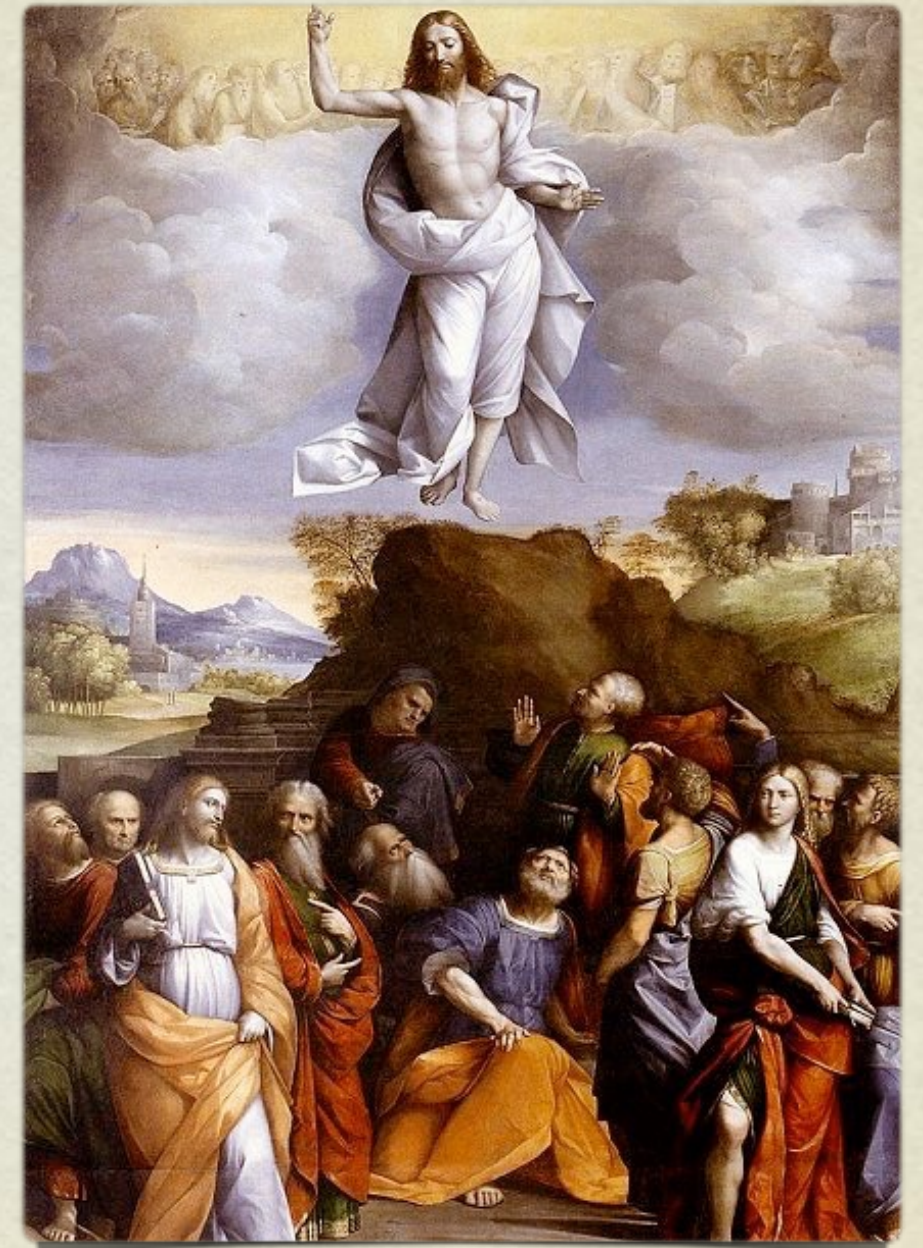
WHAT...? SO WHAT...? YA, BUT...?



1. Jesus ascended bodily into the heavenly realms to sit at the Father's right hand as our great high priest forever, still fully God and man.

Luke 24:50-53

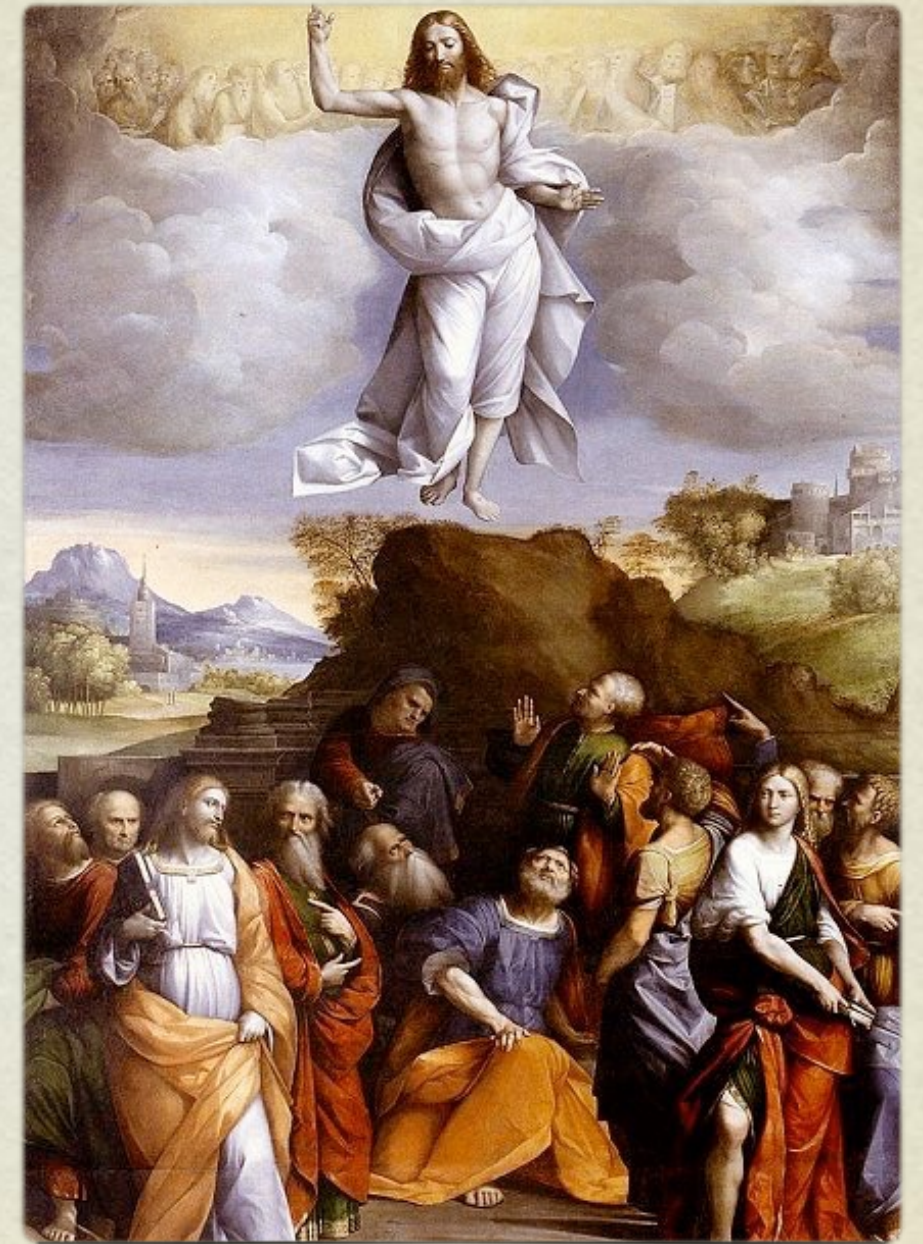
50 When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. **51** While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven. **52** Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. **53** And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God.



1. Jesus ascended bodily into the heavenly realms to sit at the Father's right hand as our great high priest forever, still fully God and man.

Acts 1:1-11 (MSG)

...I wrote on everything that Jesus began to do and teach until the day he said good-bye to the apostles, the ones he had chosen through the Holy Spirit, and was taken up to heaven. After his death, he presented himself alive to them in many different settings over a period of forty days. In face-to-face meetings, he talked to them about things concerning the kingdom of God. As they met and ate meals together, he told them that they were on no account to leave Jerusalem but “must wait for what the Father promised: the promise you heard from me. John baptized in water; you will be baptized in the Holy Spirit. And soon...”

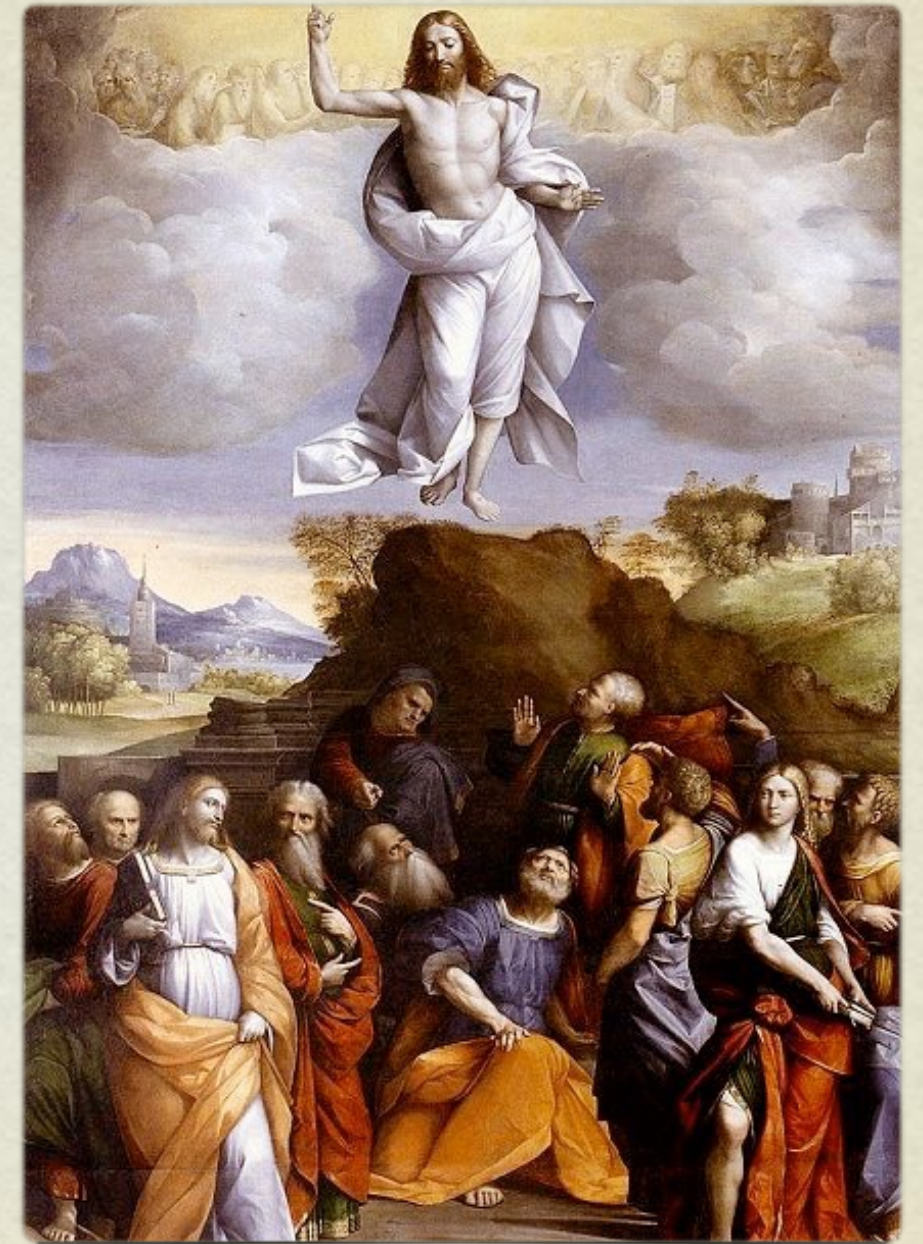


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Acts 1:1-11 (cont)

...What you'll get is the Holy Spirit. And when the Holy Spirit comes on you, you will be able to be my witnesses in Jerusalem, all over Judea and Samaria, even to the ends of the world."

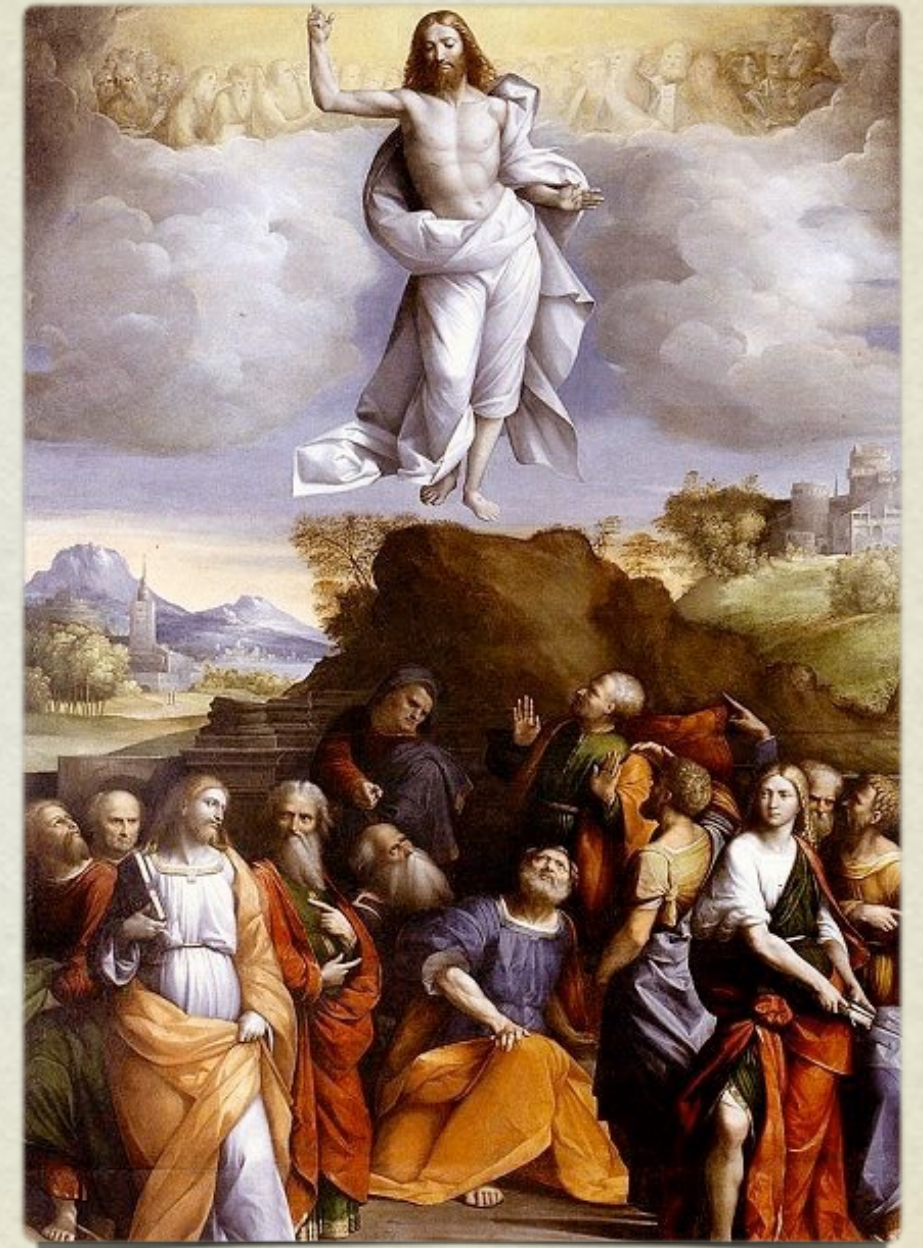
9-11 These were his last words. As they watched, he was taken up and disappeared in a cloud. They stood there, staring into the empty sky. Suddenly two men appeared—in white robes! They said, "You Galileans!—why do you just stand here looking up at an empty sky? This very Jesus who was taken up from among you to heaven will come as certainly—and mysteriously—as he left."



1. Jesus ascended bodily into the heavenly realms to sit at the Father's right hand as our great high priest forever, still fully God and man.

NB: Jesus physical, bodily resurrection AND ascension

He's NOT a ghost. Note the details in Luke 24 about the disciples touching Jesus and eating a piece of fish and meals. Same elsewhere in the gospels in his post-resurrection accounts. Jesus has a new, glorified body that can do extraordinary things, but it has substance and is physical. And he didn't lay aside his humanity when he ascended into the heavenly realms. His divine nature and human nature were forever joined as one when the Word became flesh.



Setting the Context: The “Great Dance” of Father, Son and Holy Spirit:

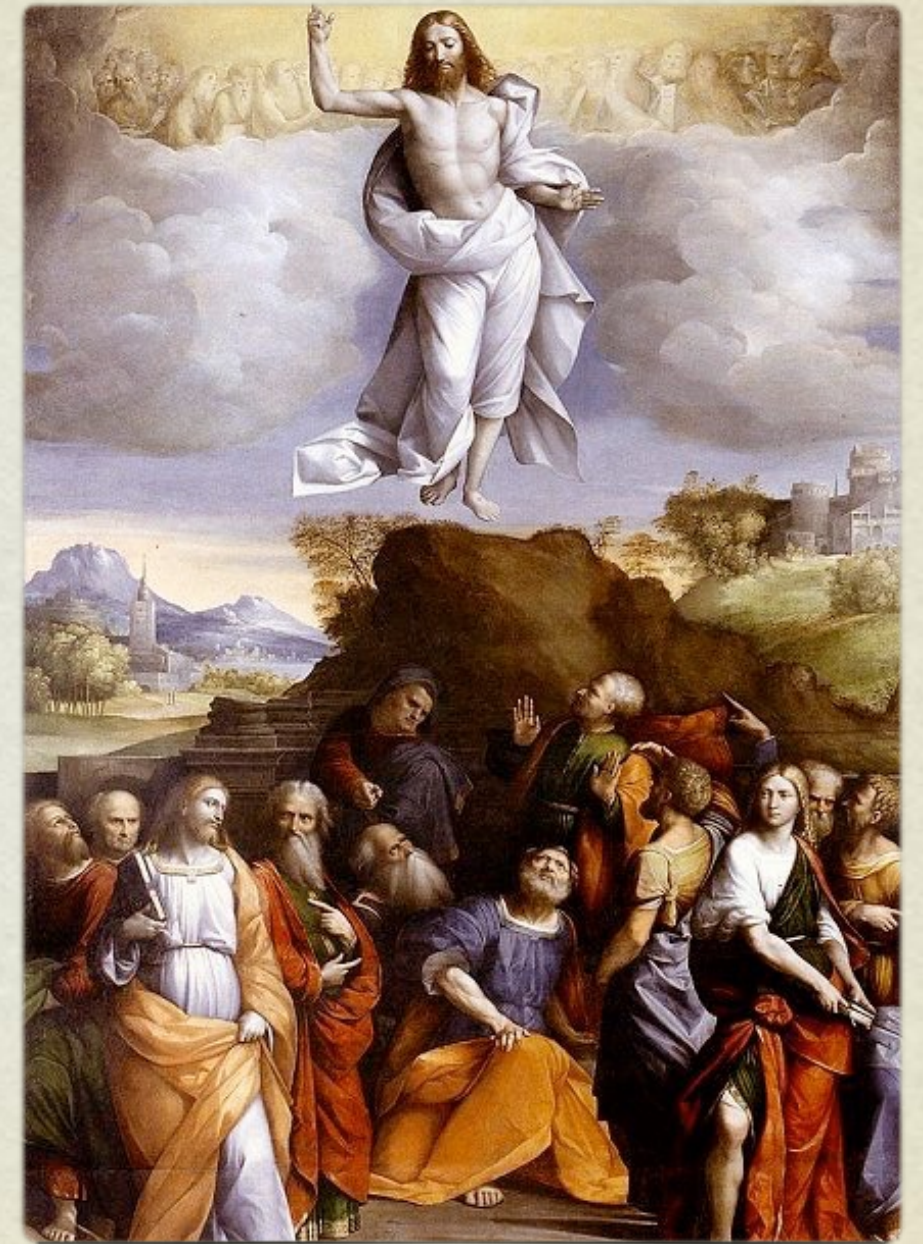
“Before the universe came to be, before the heavens were called forth with stars and moons, before the earth was carved in infinite beauty and human life was fashioned with style and grace and glory, before there was anything, there was the true River of life, a great dance of life shared by the Father, Son and Spirit.

In staggering and lavish love, this God determined to open the circle and share the Trinitarian life with others.

As an act of mind-boggling and astounding philanthropy, the Father, Son and Spirit chose to create human beings and share the great dance with them.” - C. Baxter Kruger

1. Jesus ascended bodily into the heavenly realms to sit at the Father's right hand as our great high priest forever, still fully God and man.

Jesus' Ascension is an essential part of a seamless redemptive symphony, envisioned from before the world began, that flows from the passion of Father, Son and Holy Spirit to share their eternal communion of mutual love and abounding life with us and all of creation. A gloriously orchestrated recovery unfolds through the movements of Jesus' Incarnation, death, resurrection, and ascension, followed by the outpouring of the Spirit – and ultimately, the recreation of the cosmos. All that was lost in the Fall is restored and so much more.



2. Jesus' Ascension means an empathetic, glorified human being, now and forever, has continuous, intimate access to the fellowship of the Trinity, sharing all that they are and have with us, and all that we are with them.

When Jesus died, we died in him.

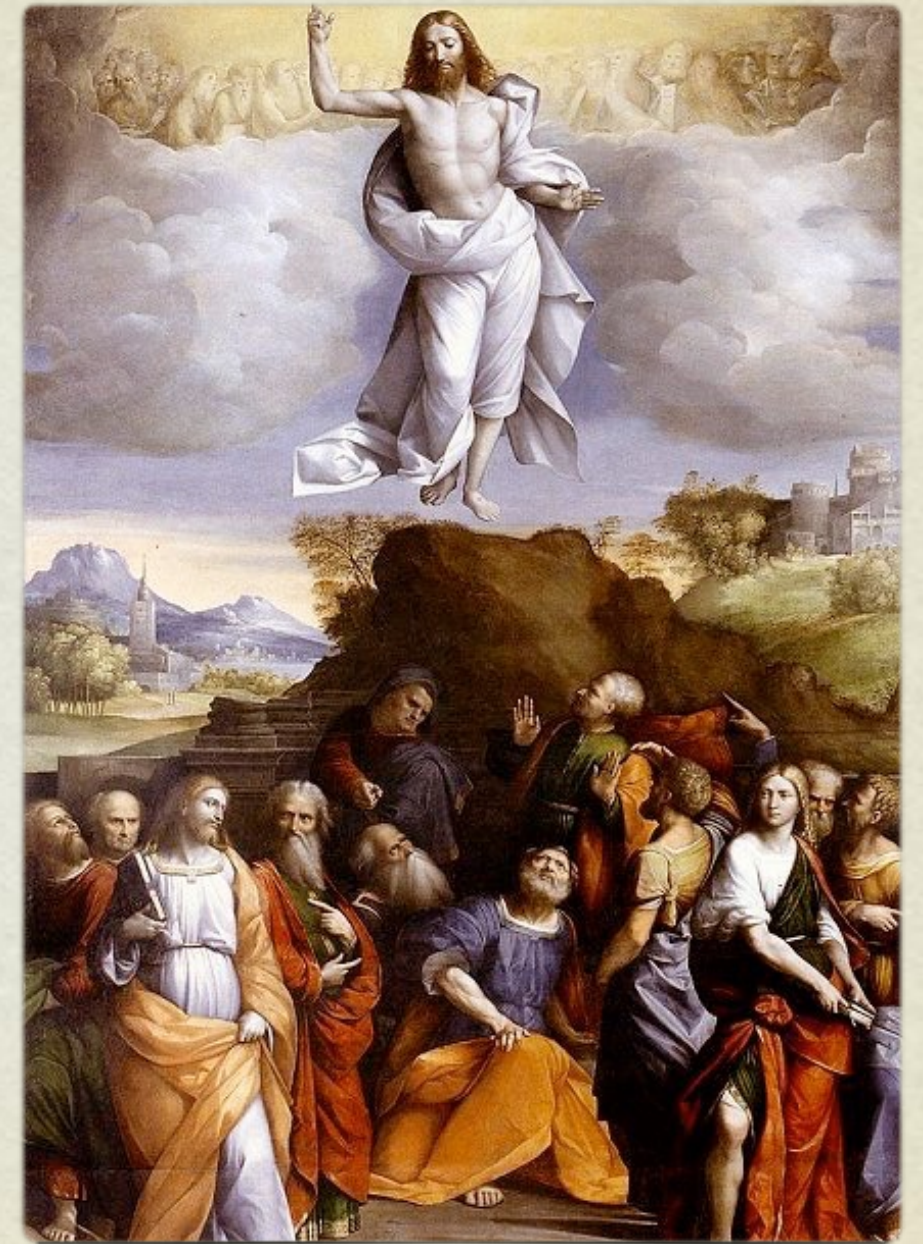
(2Cor 5:14; Gal 2:14)

When Jesus rose again, we rose with him.

(Rom 6:1-10)

When Jesus ascended, we ascended with him.

(Eph 2:4-7)



Eph 2:4-7

But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5 made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. 6 And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, 7 in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

MSG: "... Now God has us where he wants us, with all the time in this world and the next to shower grace and kindness upon us in Christ Jesus. Saving is all his idea, and all his work. All we do is trust him enough to let him do it."

Heb 6:18-20 (MSG)

We who have run for our very lives to God have every reason to **grab the promised hope with both hands and never let go**. It's an unbreakable spiritual lifeline, **reaching past all appearances right to the very presence of God where Jesus, running on ahead of us, has taken up his permanent post as high priest for us, in the order of Melchizedek.**

Heb 7:18-19 (MSG)

The former way of doing things, a system of commandments that never worked out the way it was supposed to, was set aside; the law brought nothing to maturity. Another way—Jesus!—a way that *does* work, **that brings us right into the presence of God**, is put in its place.

Heb 10:19-21 (MSG)

So, friends, we can now—without hesitation—walk right up to God, into “the Holy Place.” Jesus has cleared the way by the blood of his sacrifice, acting as our priest before God. **The “curtain” into God’s presence is his body.**

2. Jesus' Ascension means an empathetic, glorified human being, now and forever, has continuous, intimate access to the fellowship of the Trinity, sharing all that they are and have with us, and all that we are with them.

John 1:14 (THE MESSAGE)

“The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighbourhood.

We saw the glory with our own eyes, the one-of-a-kind glory, like Father, like Son, generous inside and out, true from start to finish.”



2. JESUS' ASCENSION MEANS AN EMPATHETIC, GLORIFIED HUMAN BEING, NOW AND FOREVER, HAS CONTINUOUS, INTIMATE ACCESS TO THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE TRINITY, SHARING ALL THAT THEY ARE AND HAVE WITH US, AND ALL THAT WE ARE WITH THEM.

In other words, “what is the triune God really like when given a glimpse behind the veil, inside the holy of holies, what do you see?? An indescribably beautiful community of persons who continually embody other centred, self-giving love, completely free of any hint of insecurity or shame or fear, competition, ... “

...And THAT'S the glory that Jesus came to reveal as the Incarnate Word of God by moving right into our neighbourhood, inside our broken humanity...



Jn 17:24-26 (MSG)

**“Father, I want those you gave me
To be with me, right where I am,
So they can see my glory, the splendor you gave me,
Having loved me
Long before there ever was a world...
...I have made your very being known to them—
Who you are and what you do—
And continue to make it known,
So that your love for me
Might be in them
Exactly as I am in them.**

The Good News of Christ's Coming

The real “good news” at the heart of the Christian story is that we can now know and understand what God is really like. His essential nature is fully revealed in the face and person of Jesus, who was made like us in every way.

Moreover, through his Incarnation, Jesus authentically experienced our humanity such that

GOD NOW KNOWS WHAT ITS REALLY LIKE TO BE YOU!!

IN JESUS, GOD HAS TAKEN UPON HIMSELF OUR BROKEN HUMANITY

**Dr. Cherith Fee Nordling,
theologian and ministry leader for
church-based theology education
and ministry training at Antioch
Leadership Network of Grand
Rapids, Michigan.**

[[Go to Interview Clip](#)]



Hebrews 2 (The Message)

14-15 Since the children are made of flesh and blood, it's logical that the Savior took on flesh and blood in order to rescue them by his death. By embracing death, taking it into himself, he destroyed the Devil's hold on death and freed all who cower through life, scared to death of death.

16-18 It's obvious, of course, that he didn't go to all this trouble for angels. It was for people like us, children of Abraham. That's why he had to enter into every detail of human life. Then, when he came before God as high priest to get rid of the people's sins, he would have already experienced it all himself—all the pain, all the testing—and would be able to help where help was needed.



GOD ENTERS FULLY INTO OUR STORY

Do you believe in the real humanity of the Second Adam?

3. The Holy Spirit is committed to overcoming your blindness and brokenness, your fears and faithlessness, and enabling you to participate fully in Jesus' loving, intimate relationship with the Father.



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Jn 14:15, 18-20, 25 (MSG)

“I will talk to the Father, and he'll provide you another Friend so that you will always have someone with you... I will not leave you orphaned... At that moment you will know absolutely that I'm in my Father, and you're in me, and I'm in you... The Friend, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send at my request, will make everything plain to you. He will remind you of all the things I have told you.



“The hope of the world, the hope of your life and mine is the Spirit of adoption, ...and that he has an everlasting passion that we experience the great dance. Therefore he comes to us to strive with us and our wrongheadedness, to invade our confusion, our legends, our inventions, to lead us to proper believing, to train us to see through the darkness. He comes to teach us how to detect the whispering lie, how to discern good and evil, how to stand up to “I am not” and speak “Yes, I am” back to it, and how to walk and live in its freedom. He comes to lead us to discover the truth, to acknowledge it, and to reckon on it as true.” - C. Baxter Kruger

[set up clip from “The Help”]

(Constantine as an illustration of the Holy Spirit in “The Help”)

Constantine sat down next to me... She pressed her thumb hard in the palm of my hand, something we both knew meant ‘Listen. Listen to me... Ever morning, until you dead in the ground, you gonna have to make this decision... You gonna have to ask yourself,

Am I gone believe what them fools say about me today?’ She kept her thumb pressed hard in my hand... All my life I'd been told what to believe about politics, coloureds, being a girl. But with Constantine's thumb pressed in my hand, I realized I actually had a choice in what I could believe.”

— Kathryn Stockett, *The Help*



3. The Holy Spirit is committed to overcoming your blindness and brokenness, your fears and faithlessness, and enabling you to participate fully in Jesus' loving, intimate relationship with the Father.

Through Jesus' ongoing vicarious life as fully God and full human forever, he continually carries (or "uploads") our unique, everyday human experiences into the Trinitarian fellowship of the Father and the Spirit, and simultaneously shares (or "downloads") their overflowing life of love and joy and beauty and abounding life into our real-world lives every day.



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2. Jesus' Ascension means an empathetic, glorified human being, now and forever, has continuous, intimate access to the fellowship of the Trinity, sharing all that they are and have with us, and all that we are with them.

3. The Holy Spirit is committed to overcoming your blindness and brokenness, your fears and faithlessness, and enabling you to participate fully in Jesus' loving, intimate relationship with the Father.

"Fearless Following: Participating in Jesus' Ascension"

Heb 4:14-16 (MSG)

**Now that we know what we have—
Jesus, this great High Priest with ready
access to God — let's not let it slip
through our fingers. We don't have a
priest who is out of touch with our
reality. He's been through weakness
and testing, experienced it all
— all but the sin.**

**So let's walk right up to him and get
what he is so ready to give.**

Take the mercy, accept the help.



Closing Prayer Response Time:

Jamie and Michael led congregation in pastoral prayer to access the priestly friendship of Jesus (see handout), inviting Him to share in their own unique human experiences, both their joys and sorrows, to meet them as they are with their needs and longings, their disappointments and fears, their brokenness and woundedness, and to enable them to see what He sees, to hear what He hears, and know what He knows to be true from His own communion with His Father...

AND... to allow Jesus to share in the joy and wonder and beauty of your daily life, even the little stuff, to consciously invite him into your family celebrations, to marvel together at the glories of creation, the pleasure of a great meal or good cup or tea or great bottle of wine, the fun of playing sports and recreational activities, the passion of creating art, enjoying a great movie, doing your job well in spite of its endless demands and difficult working conditions...



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