

## THE KING OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

Our homily for the Festival of the Ascension of our Lord is taken from our inspired Psalm. Hear the Word of the Lord:

*Says YHWH to my Lord, "Sit to My Right  
until I make Your enemies  
a stool for Your feet."<sup>1</sup>*

**Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ**

Tonight we celebrate one of the three greatest and oldest festivals of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. What are the other two?

They are:

1. The Resurrection of our Lord, and,
2. Pentecost.

The greatest Feast, Easter, is still remembered in many congregations of many confessions of the Faith. The third Feast, Pentecost, is celebrated in congregations which still follow some form of the ancient orders of the Lord's Service. The Festival of the Ascension however, is truly overlooked by many congregations. If you took time to look up through Facebook, where Ascension of our Lord services are in Tucson for today, you would have found our bulletin cover and an announcement for this Festival Service. If you searched the Arizona "Daily Star," through azstarnet, you would have discovered nothing about this Feast this year. In the religion link in the calendar, just two events are listed:<sup>2</sup>

 [Community Interfaith Church](#)

[Group Study of Reflections on Heaven and Hell / The Afterlife](#)

The second event is self-explanatory. The first event, is intriguing. When one follows the link, this is what their May 29, Thursday is all about:

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<sup>1</sup> *Psalm 110:1.*

<sup>2</sup> Internet. <http://dynamic.azstarnet.com/calendar/> accessed, May 29, 2014.

Want to experience a uniquely uplifting, inspiring, and empowering church service where you are welcome and accepted as you are, as an unfolding expression of the Divine? <sup>3</sup>

Hmmm, that could mean something about the Ascension of our Lord.

Perhaps their “What we Believe” statements will help us understand more clearly what they may be celebrating tonight?... No. This is as close as they get to defining the meaning of that which they will celebrate tonight in their public statement of belief:

We believe that all creation is connected through our relationship with the One Power, the One Cosmic Reality. Therefore all creation is one with God and one with each other since all creation is the One Cosmic Reality expressing as that creation. [and]

We believe in the continuation of life, in some form, after the experience referred to as death. [and]

We believe that all religions are legitimate pathways to God.

Hmmm, our website says we at CLC believe:

All religions attempt to worship the One God in Three Persons, but that the only true worship is that which God has revealed. [and]

Blessed everlasting life is only received through the forgiveness of sins, a free gift of God to all mankind given through the death of Jesus. [and]

That Jesus, born of Mary, is both true God and true Man.

That this same Jesus as God/Man died; descended into Hell; rose from the dead; ascended into heaven; will return openly on the Last Day to judge the living and the dead.

That is quite a contrast. Maybe we ought to figure out how to get the Ascension Feast for next year out into the public eye through a community events calendar? Some one of you (not Jean) may wish to find out what it takes to get listed. Then we can get out the Word of what this Feast Day is all about beyond the Lutheran confessors God has assembled here tonight. Just sayin’ ...

It is a sign of our era wherein the fulfillment of all the things written about Jesus in the *Law of Moses, and the prophets, and Psalms* finds not even a passing correct mention in our local media community calendars. I doubt that the news outlets even sell group Church Services listings for the Ascension of Our Lord as they do for Easter and Christmas.

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<sup>3</sup> Internet. <http://dynamic.azstarnet.com/calendar/index.php?lang=en&view=41804&date=2014-05-29>, accessed May 29, 2014.

Yet, this is the day in the year when Christ's ascension to place our our flesh above all rulers and powers and authorities on heaven, earth and under the earth is to be celebrated! This is the second of the three great Feasts of Christendom! It was around long before the Feasts of the Nativity and Epiphany were widely celebrated in Christian congregations. This text declares one of the central reasons the early Christian Church chose to annually remember Jesus on the 40th day after His resurrection:

*YHWH has sworn and (will) not be sorry:  
"You (are a) Priest unto forever,  
unto the manner of (the) King of Righteousness."<sup>4</sup>*

This Day is all about the Lord of David, his Greater Son. In that Son, both King and Priest are combined in an eternal reality. What a truth to neglect by failing to host the Feast of the Ascension on the 40th day of the resurrection.

A reason for this Feast's neglect is perhaps a lack of such teaching, over the past five or more decades, of its relevance to Christians. That happened in part because of the historical realities which influenced and infected our Confession of the Faith beginning in the 17th century AD. Those teachings, now entrenched in the teaching of the Church, seem to have led some of our brothers and sisters to the point today wherein they are more concerned about the Church's being "relevant" to those outside the Church, than relating them to the biblical Jesus. He is declared in words such as these:

*"The scepter of Your might  
sends forth YHWH from Zion,  
rule in (the) midst of Your foes."<sup>5</sup>*

Those are power words. They declare the God Who rules through His Word. The Psalm declares that David's Son, the Son of the Promise rules in the midst of His enemies.

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<sup>4</sup> Psalm 110:4.

<sup>5</sup> Psalm 110:2.

The 110<sup>th</sup> Psalm speaks of the Christ now as He is depicted in the banner hanging to the right of the Chancel cross. He is the incarnate, crucified, risen and ascended Lord of all the fallen and holy in His creation. Our Head is raised up. As part of His Body we Christians rule with Him. We were attached to Him through His Word of Baptism. We remaining connected to Him through His Word of Holy Absolution (forgiveness). We feed on Him, the body consuming the Body and Blood without destroying Him. In that we, you, receive forgiveness and strengthening to eternal blessed life in the Sacrament of the Altar. This Ascension Day declares the Lord Jesus Who to whom you are connected through His means of grace, He Who,

*ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead. And, ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father. And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead, whose kingdom will have no end. And, ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father, God Almighty, from whence He will come to judge the living and the dead. And, You sit at the right hand of God in the glory of the Father. We believe that You will come to be our judge.<sup>6</sup>*

That is what is really happening now. On the other hand, if Lutherans want to be part of the post-post-modern Church of “what’s happening now,” we ought to just chuck all the major feasts, the weekly Sunday life-of-Jesus emphases, and never mention the minor feasts. To do that, we need to remove all the ancient creeds from the Lord’s Services to us. That way we can have “genuinely loving and sensitive” worship wherein we come to offer our praise and service to God, because we have begun to believe He needs those things to be happy with us.

Then we head to where a part of mainline Christianity in this country is – to a worship of the Love God Who lets all into the afterlife, except *really* bad people, maybe. We, in love for everyone, can create for ourselves the Jesus of our own desires.

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<sup>6</sup> LCMS Commission on Worship. *Lutheran Service Book*, “Apostle’s Creed,” “Nicene Creed,” “Athanasian Creed,” “Te Deum,” St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2006, 158 – 159; 320; 224.

We can live in real human love for one another. Peace will reign in our hearts and we will get along with all people. To that, the Word of God says:

*“Your people will present themselves as (a) freewill offering in (the) Day of Your strength,  
in holy splendor,  
from (the) womb (of the) morning,  
for You (as) dew (will be) Your youth.”<sup>7</sup>*

Those words declare the Christian’s response to God’s becoming One with us. We own the Psalm because it declares that God first fulfills His Promises, then, and only then, do His people offer Him anything. The Word for the offering is what we translate “freewill.” Such are not, nor ever were, the people’s sacrifices for their sins.

Rather, the right, biblical Christian response to that which God is doing is to give freely without the Law’s compulsion. The ancient Israelite freewill offerings were part of the peace offerings. With these, they could give back to God from that which He had given to them. Freewill offerings appear to have been part of the people’s response the joy they had in fellowship with one another before the Lord. Such were presented to express general thankfulness toward God.

So, the Psalm declares that God’s people, in the Day of His rule—begun as you know, on the Cross—Jesus rule in His Ascension, will bring His people coming forth in thankfulness. They will be clothed in holy garments—the white robes of Holy Baptism. They will serve alongside His heavenly hosts in the fight over evil—as kingdom priests—warring on earth with the foes under Christ’s feet with the sacrifices of the New Covenant: prayer, praise, and thanksgiving (there is your tie to the Rogation Days we heard about Sunday and Wednesday). They, you, me, and all who rightly confess the Jesus of the Scriptures, are as the dew of the morning—beautiful, glorious, numberless. Each new day, each generation of the faithful will glisten for a while on this earth in the spiritual battle, and when their last hours are through will be with

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<sup>7</sup> Psalm 110:3.

Jesus. That is, until the Last Day, when they, we, will witness the final fulfillment of these words:

*Adonai, upon Your right,  
will shatter kings in (the) Day of His wrath;  
He will execute judgment in (the) nations.<sup>8</sup>*

For those of you who are following the Church calendar, those words just went beyond the text for Epiphany III, this past January 26. They begin to declare that which you and I and all the faithful will see with our own eyes when Jesus returns as He ascended, on the clouds. Christians have sure and certain hope in the resurrection of the dead. You who live and fight the good fight of the Faith, giving yourselves as has been declared, will live with Him in righteousness, blessedness and purity.

There is so much more to this Psalm. But, our time is over. You are free to study the remaining verses keeping Christ as the central focal point.

Christ is risen and ascended!

**The peace which passes all understanding guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus**

The Feast of the Ascension of Our Lord

Psalm 110; II Kings 2:5-15; Acts 1:1-11; Luke 24:44-53

May 29, 2014

*Pastor Michael A. Mercheuse*

***Soli Deo Gloria***

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<sup>8</sup> Psalm 110:5.

We believe that there is One God, One Power, One Presence that we call the One Cosmic Reality. This One expresses in, through, and as all creation. This One is omnipresent, omnipotent, and omniscient.

We believe that all creation is connected through our relationship with the One Power, the One Cosmic Reality. Therefore all creation is one with God and one with each other since all creation is the One Cosmic Reality expressing as that creation.

We believe that our consciousness creates our reality. Hence, our physical experiences are an out-picturing of our inward beliefs.

We believe that it is possible to change our physical experiences at any time by changing our beliefs.

We believe in the power of prayer to heal the body and sustain the mind of the one who believes.

We believe that we can and will achieve peace on earth through the development of human consciousness.

We believe in the continuation of life, in some form, after the experience referred to as death.

We believe that God, the One Cosmic Reality is Love, therefore love is our basic nature.

We believe that there is only One Power, God, the One Cosmic Reality; therefore anything appearing to be the opposite, or evil, is not an entity, but merely a misunderstanding, a misuse of the One Power.

We believe that all religions are legitimate pathways to God.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Internet. [http://communityinterfaithchurch.com/Page\\_2.html](http://communityinterfaithchurch.com/Page_2.html), Accessed May 29, 2014.