

The Ascension of our Lord – 2013

On Christ's Ascension I Now Build!

Lutheran Service Book: 492

Thursday, May 9 at 7:00 PM

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ, the Son of God **+**came from heaven, **+**received the name of Jesus, **+**lived and died as our perfect substitute, **+**rose victorious, and **+**ascended back into heaven. Now **♦***His finished work* and **♦***our God-given relationship with Him* are making a **wonderful difference for us both now and forever!**

Today we consider the **→**words, **→**meaning, and **→**application of **LBS 492**: “On Christ’s Ascension I Now Build”

1. **Stanza 1: Jesus Will Return to Take Us Home:**

**On Christ's ascension I now build
The hope of my ascension;**

Even though Jesus died, and all hope was gone, *He rose and ascended!* Therefore, even though I will die someday and that will seem to be my end, *my soul will immediately be with God!* Then, *when Jesus returns,* He will **♦**raise my body, **♦**unite it with my soul, and **♦**take me to His Father’s house!

**This hope alone has always stilled
All doubt and apprehension;**

Harm, trouble, wrong, pain, unhappiness, and death – they all seem powerful to destroy, *but God is MORE POWERFUL to rescue and to save!* May our hope ever be in God's never-failing promises!

**For where the Head is, there as well
I know His members are to dwell
When Christ will come and call them.**

Remember, Jesus is the head of *His Body—the Church*, which includes all who trust in Him as their Savior! Jesus, *our head*, has gone to heaven to prepare a place for us; then, *when the time is just right*, He will come and take us home! Jesus prayed: “**Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory...**” (John 17:24 ESV) *That blessed day is coming quickly!*

2. **Stanza 2: Jesus Rose and is Reigning:**

**Since Christ returned to claim His throne,
Great gifts for me obtaining,**

Jesus said: “**...lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal...**” (Mat 6:20 NAS) Jesus has purchased our forgiveness, spiritual life, and eternal salvation! ***We are so blessed!*** Now, as we live here, *let us lay up treasures in heaven by sharing Jesus with others!*

**My heart will rest in Him alone,
No other rest remaining;**

Paul was inspired to write: “**...the form of this world is passing away.**” (1Co 7:31 NAS) Therefore, he also wrote:

“Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.” (Col 3:2 NAS) *God help us!*

**For where my treasure went before,
There all my thoughts will ever soar
To still their deepest yearning.**

Jesus said: “...for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” (Mat 6:21 NAS) So where is yours?
Some treasure ♦their house, ♦their car, ♦their job, ♦their family. Those are great blessings; however, *they are all temporary*. The only one that has any prospect of being eternal is family, *but that will be true only when such family members treasure Jesus, the Christ above every earthly thing!* Jesus pointed to the eternal life we have through Him with these words: “The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid; and from joy over it he goes and sells all that he has, and buys that field.” (Mat 13:44 NAS) Is Jesus that important to you?

3. **Stanza 3: Freely Redeemed, We Faithfully Serve:**

**O grant, dear Lord, this grace to me,
Recalling Your ascension,**

Many today wander through life with ☹no thought of Jesus, ☹no word of thanksgiving, and ☹no true hope for a wonderful eternity. *But we are called to be different* – to **see** God’s love, to **rejoice** in Jesus our Savior, and to **live** with thanksgiving!

**That I may serve You faithfully
In thanks for my redemption;**

God moved Paul to write these words about Jesus: “He died for all, that they who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.” (2Co 5:15 NAS) So, alive in Christ, *we live for Christ!* We serve faithfully *in thanksgiving for God’s awesome act of rescue!* Zechariah, the father of John the Baptizer, spoke these words of prophecy about our salvation and our service in God’s kingdom: “...that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, Might serve Him without fear,⁷⁵ In holiness and righteousness before Him all our days.” (Luke 1:73 NAS)

**And then, when all my days will cease,
Let me depart in joy and peace
In answer to my pleading.**

Those words bring to mind Luther’s explanation of the seventh petition of the Lord’s Prayer: “We pray in this petition, in summary, that our Father in heaven would rescue us from every evil of body and soul, possessions and reputation, and finally, when our last hour comes, give us a blessed end [*let us die in Jesus*], **and graciously take us from this valley of sorrow to Himself in heaven.**”

Conclusion: Now, more *aware of* and *trusting in* Jesus’ birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension, **let us live with joy:** *Our sins are forgiven!* And **let us be at peace:** *The broken relationship between us and God has been restored!*

And all God’s people said: **Amen!**

This and other sermons are available on Bethlehem’s website: www.blc7500.com

Please share them with your family, friends, neighbors, and coworkers!

Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 7500 State Rd., Parma, Ohio 44134, 440-845-2230