



New Heights

CHRISTIAN CHURCH

New Heights Christian Church, Kent, WA
Ascension Day Service, 7:00 PM, Thursday, May 25, 2017

Introduction:

Jesus' ascension is often the most overlooked part of His ministry. This is unfortunate since He didn't stop His ministry when He returned to Heaven. Jesus is still at work praying for us and drawing people from all over the world to Himself!

We can summarize Jesus' ministry in six steps between Heaven, Earth, and Under the Earth:

1. *Pre-existence: Jesus has always been God*
2. *Incarnation: Jesus took on flesh as a man*
3. *Death: Jesus died to save us*
4. *Resurrection: Jesus rose again to give us life*
5. *Ascension: Jesus returned to Heaven to reign*
6. *Return: Jesus will return to earth as King to judge*

This service is designed as a time of worship of our Triune God for all the blessings we receive because of Jesus' ascension:

- *It's a time of worship of Jesus Christ our King!*
- *It's a time of gratitude to God our Father for exalting Jesus.*
 - *It's a time of gratitude to the Holy Spirit who we have received from God the Father through Jesus.*
- *It's a time of reminder for us of how Jesus' ascension is motivation for prayer and evangelism.*

Our service will include scripture readings, responsive readings, prayer prompts, and worship songs.

After we read the story of the ascension from Acts 1, most of our other scripture readings will be from the Apostle John's reflections on Jesus' ascension from the Gospel of John, the Letter of 1 John, and the Book of Revelation.

After Jesus' resurrection, Jesus explained that His Ascension and the Holy Spirit's Arrival at Pentecost are connected. By ascending, Jesus prepared His disciples to serve Him by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Reader 1: Acts 1:1-11 (NIV84)

1 In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach ² until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. ³ After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. ⁴ On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. ⁵ For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

⁶ So when they met together, they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"

⁷ He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

⁹ After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

¹⁰ They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. ¹¹ "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

I'll read the bold text. Please join in reading the responses.

Responsive Reading 1

By David Bryant

Jesus, You said in the great commission that all authority in Heaven and on earth already has been given to You.

You have fulfilled the vision of Psalm 110 that speaks of the wondrous day when the Father invited You to sit at His right hand in order to transform Your enemies into Your footstool.

From there You rule in the midst of Your Church and among all nations, in this, Your appointed season of battle.

Jesus, Your earliest followers reported that after You had spoken to them in Your resurrection brilliance You were taken up into heaven and sat at the right hand of God the Father.

As Your disciples went out and preached everywhere You continued to meet them where You sent them, as You ruled over them and worked with them by Your Holy Spirit, to sovereignly confirm their message about You by Your signs that accompanied them.

The Nicene Creed is an early summary of what Christians believe. It highlights Christ's ascension as one of the most important things that all Christians believe about Jesus. Let's read it together.

The Nicene Creed

[<https://www.ccel.org/creeds/nicene.creed.html>](https://www.ccel.org/creeds/nicene.creed.html)

- 1. I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.**
2. And [I believe] in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds; God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made.
- 3. Who, for us men for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man.**
4. And was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried.
- 5. And the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures.**
6. And ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of the Father.
- 7. And He shall come again, with glory, to judge the [living] and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.**
8. And I believe in the [Holy Spirit], the Lord and Giver of Life; who proceeds from the Father [and the Son]; who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets.
- 9. And I believe one holy [universal] and apostolic Church.**

10. I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins.

11. And I look for the resurrection of the dead.

12. And the life of the world to come. Amen.

Crown Him with many crowns

Words and Music by George Job Elvey, Godfrey Thring, and Matthew Bridges 1851, Public Domain. CCLI License #256413

1. Crown Him with many crowns,
The Lamb upon His throne;
Hark! How the heav'nly anthem drowns
All music but its own!
Awake, my soul and sing
Of Him Who died for thee,
And hail Him as thy matchless King
Through all eternity.

2. Crown Him the Lord of love!
Behold His hands and side—
Rich wounds, yet visible above,
In beauty glorified.
No angel in the sky
Can fully bear that sight,
But downward bends His wond'ring eye
At mysteries so bright.

3. Crown Him the Lord of life!
Who triumphed o'er the grave,
Who rose victorious in the strife
For those He came to save.
His glories now we sing,
Who died, and rose on high,
Who died eternal life to bring,
And lives that death may die.

4. Crown Him the Lord of heav'n!
One with the Father known,
One with the Spirit through Him giv'n
From yonder glorious throne,
To Thee be endless praise,
For Thou for us hast died;
Be Thou, O Lord, through endless days

Adored and magnified.

***The night before Jesus was crucified,
He explained how His death, resurrection, and ascension
would open the way to God the Father and would
lead to blessing the church with the Holy Spirit.***

Reader 1: John 14:1-14 (NIV84)

Jesus Comforts His Disciples

14 “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. ² In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. ⁴ You know the way to the place where I am going.”

***Jesus revealed God the Father’s glory while He was on earth.
Jesus enables us to go to God the Father in prayer in Jesus’ name
now that He is back in heaven.***

Jesus the Way to the Father

⁵ Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?”

⁶ Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷ If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.”

⁸ Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.”

⁹ Jesus answered: “Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? ¹⁰ Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. ¹¹ Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves. ¹² I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. ¹³ And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. ¹⁴ You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

Christ's ascension means that Jesus can live in us by His Spirit.

(Watch for what Jesus wants to give us and do through us.)

Reader 2: John 14:15-31 (NIV84)

Jesus Promises the Holy Spirit

¹⁵ “If you love me, you will obey what I command. ¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever— ¹⁷ the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. ¹⁸ I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. ¹⁹ Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. ²⁰ On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. ²¹ Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him.”

²² Then Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said, “But, Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?”

²³ Jesus replied, “If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. ²⁴ He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.

²⁵ “All this I have spoken while still with you. ²⁶ But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. ²⁷ Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

²⁸ “You heard me say, ‘I am going away and I am coming back to you.’ If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. ²⁹ I have told you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe. ³⁰ I will not speak with you much longer, for the prince of this world is coming. He has no hold on me, ³¹ but the world must learn that I love the Father and that I do exactly what my Father has commanded me.

“Come now; let us leave.

Please pray short and loud so we can participate in prayer together.

Prayer prompt 1

- Ask God for help by His Spirit, in doing what Jesus wants for us.

***Christ's ascension means that Jesus can live in us by His Spirit,
but it also means that we can live in Him.***

(Watch for what Jesus wants for us.)

Reader 3: John 15:1-17 (NIV84)

The Vine and the Branches

15 “I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. ² He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. ³ You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. ⁴ Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

⁵ “I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶ If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. ⁷ If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. ⁸ This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

⁹ “As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. ¹⁰ If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father’s commands and remain in his love. ¹¹ I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. ¹² My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. ¹³ Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. ¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command. ¹⁵ I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. ¹⁶ You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. ¹⁷ This is my command: Love each other.

Please pray short and loud so we can participate in prayer together.

Prayer prompt 2

- Ask God for help by His Spirit, in doing what Jesus wants for us.
We are set apart from the world by being in Jesus through the Holy Spirit that Jesus sent from God the Father after His ascension.
(Watch for what Jesus warns us about.)

Reader 4: John 15:18-16:4 (NIV84)

The World Hates the Disciples

¹⁸ “If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. ¹⁹ If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. ²⁰ Remember the words I spoke to you: ‘No servant is greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also. ²¹ They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the One who sent me. ²² If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin. Now, however, they have no excuse for their sin. ²³ He who hates me hates my Father as well. ²⁴ If I had not done among them what no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin. But now they have seen these miracles, and yet they have hated both me and my Father. ²⁵ But this is to fulfill what is written in their Law: ‘They hated me without reason.’

²⁶ “When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me. ²⁷ And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning.

16 “All this I have told you so that you will not go astray. ² They will put you out of the synagogue; in fact, a time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering a service to God. ³ They will do such things because they have not known the Father or me. ⁴ I have told you this, so that when the time comes you will remember that I warned you. I did not tell you this at first because I was with you.

Please pray short and loud so we can participate in prayer together.

Prayer prompt 3

- Ask God for help by His Spirit in facing the hard things Jesus warned us about.

*Christ's ascension means that Jesus can
convict the world of sin by His Spirit.*

*It also means that Jesus was able to communicate the truth of the
gospel to His disciples in a way they never understood before.*

(Watch for what Jesus promises us.)

Reader 1: John 16:5-16 (NIV84)

The Work of the Holy Spirit

⁵ “Now I am going to him who sent me, yet none of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’ ⁶ Because I have said these things, you are filled with grief. ⁷ But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. ⁸ When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: ⁹ in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; ¹⁰ in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; ¹¹ and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.

¹² “I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. ¹³ But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. ¹⁴ He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. ¹⁵ All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you.

¹⁶ “In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me.”

Please pray short and loud so we can participate in prayer together.

Prayer prompt 4

- Thank God for one of the promises Jesus made us about the Holy Spirit.

Jesus' Death and His Ascension

were both for our good, but both were confusing to Jesus' disciples.

Reader 2: John 16:17-33 (NIV84)

The Disciples' Grief Will Turn to Joy

¹⁷ Some of his disciples said to one another, "What does he mean by saying, 'In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me,' and 'Because I am going to the Father'?"
¹⁸ They kept asking, "What does he mean by 'a little while'? We don't understand what he is saying."

¹⁹ Jesus saw that they wanted to ask him about this, so he said to them, "Are you asking one another what I meant when I said, 'In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me'?"
²⁰ I tell you the truth, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy.
²¹ A woman giving birth to a child has pain because her time has come; but when her baby is born she forgets the anguish because of her joy that a child is born into the world.
²² So with you: Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy.
²³ In that day you will no longer ask me anything. I tell you the truth, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.
²⁴ Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.

²⁵ "Though I have been speaking figuratively, a time is coming when I will no longer use this kind of language but will tell you plainly about my Father.
²⁶ In that day you will ask in my name. I am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf.
²⁷ No, the Father himself loves you because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God.
²⁸ I came from the Father and entered the world; now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father."

²⁹ Then Jesus' disciples said, "Now you are speaking clearly and without figures of speech.
³⁰ Now we can see that you know all things and that you do not even need to have anyone ask you questions. This makes us believe that you came from God."

³¹ "You believe at last!" Jesus answered.
³² "But a time is coming, and has come, when you will be scattered, each to his own home. You will leave me all alone. Yet I am not alone, for my Father is with me.

³³ "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

Jesus' ministry in Heaven includes praying for us.

Reader 3: John 17:1-19 (NIV84)

Jesus Prays for Himself

17 After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed:

“Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. ² For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. ³ Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. ⁴ I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. ⁵ And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.

Here's an example of what Jesus prays for His disciples.

Jesus Prays for His Disciples

⁶ “I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. ⁷ Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. ⁸ For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me. ⁹ I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours. ¹⁰ All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them. ¹¹ I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name—the name you gave me—so that they may be one as we are one. ¹² While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled.

¹³ “I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. ¹⁴ I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. ¹⁵ My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. ¹⁶ They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. ¹⁷ Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. ¹⁸ As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. ¹⁹ For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.

Jesus is still praying for us too, not only His original disciples.

Reader 4: John 17:20-26 (NIV84)

Jesus Prays for All Believers

²⁰ “My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, ²¹ that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²² I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: ²³ I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

²⁴ “Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.

²⁵ “Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. ²⁶ I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.”

Let’s read the prayer together that Jesus taught His disciples to pray.

(Watch for what Jesus taught His disciples to pray for).

The Lord’s Prayer

Matthew 6:9b-13 (NIV84) [NKJV]

⁹ ... “***‘Our Father in heaven,***
hallowed be your name,
¹⁰ *your kingdom come,*
your will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.

¹¹ ***Give us today our daily bread.***

¹² ***Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.***

¹³ ***And lead us not into temptation,*
*but deliver us from the evil one.’***

***[For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.
Amen.]***

Please pray short and loud so we can participate in prayer together.

Prayer prompt 5

- Ask God to honor His name, advance His Kingdom, and do His will on earth as it is in heaven.
- Praise God for providing for our daily physical needs.
- Praise God for the forgiveness of sin we have in Jesus.
- Ask for God's protection from temptation and the devil.

All hail the power of Jesus' Name

Words and Music by Edward Perronet 1780, Public Domain. CCLI License #256413

1. All hail the power of Jesus' Name, Let angels prostrate fall
Bring forth the royal diadem, And crown Him Lord of all
Bring forth the royal diadem, And crown Him Lord of all
2. Ye chosen seed of Israel's race, Ye ransomed from the fall
Hail Him who saves you by His grace and crown Him Lord of all
Hail Him who saves you by His grace and crown Him Lord of all
3. Let every kindred, every tribe, On this terrestrial ball
To Him all majesty ascribe, And crown Him Lord of all
To Him all majesty ascribe, And crown Him Lord of all

4. O that with yonder sacred throng We at His feet may fall
We'll join the everlasting song, And crown Him Lord of all
We'll join the everlasting song, And crown Him Lord of all

*John saw the triumph of Jesus' death and resurrection as
Jesus was revealed as the Lamb of God worthy to open the scroll
and reign on the throne of heaven!*

Reader 1: Revelation 4:1-5:14 (NIV84)

4 After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this."² At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it.³ And the one who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian. A rainbow, resembling an emerald, encircled the throne.⁴ Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones, and seated on them were twenty-four elders. They were dressed in white and had crowns of gold on their heads.⁵ From the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder. Before the throne, seven lamps were blazing. These are the seven spirits of God.⁶ Also before the throne there was what looked like a sea of glass, clear as crystal.

In the center, around the throne, were four living creatures, and they were covered with eyes, in front and in back.⁷ The first living creature was like a lion, the second was like an ox, the third had a face like a man, the fourth was like a flying eagle.⁸ Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under his wings. Day and night they never stop saying:

"Holy, holy, holy
is the Lord God Almighty,
who was, and is, and is to come."

⁹ Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever,¹⁰ the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne, and worship him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say:

¹¹ "You are worthy, our Lord and God,
to receive glory and honor and power,
for you created all things,
and by your will they were created
and have their being."

Reader 2: Revelation 5:1-14 (NIV84)

5 Then I saw in the right hand of him who sat on the throne a scroll with writing on both sides and sealed with seven seals. ² And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, “Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?” ³ But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth could open the scroll or even look inside it. ⁴ I wept and wept because no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside. ⁵ Then one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals.”

⁶ Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. He had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. ⁷ He came and took the scroll from the right hand of him who sat on the throne. ⁸ And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. ⁹ And they sang a new song:

“You are worthy to take the scroll
and to open its seals,
because you were slain,
and with your blood you purchased men for God
from every tribe and language and people and nation.

¹⁰ You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our
God,
and they will reign on the earth.”

¹¹ Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. ¹² In a loud voice they sang:

“Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain,
to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength
and honor and glory and praise!”

¹³ Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing:

“To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb
be praise and honor and glory and power,
for ever and ever!”

¹⁴ The four living creatures said, “Amen,” and the elders fell down and worshiped.

I'll read the bold text. Please join in reading the responses.

Responsive Reading 2

By David Bryant

Jesus, because You have ascended into heaven to reign, even angels, authorities and powers are in submission to You at this very moment!

You have crushed Satan under Your heel!

You alone are the ruler of the kings of the earth!

You and no other!

You alone are destined to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, because the Kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our God and of You, His Christ, and You will reign for ever and

Jesus, In You has come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ!

Just as the ancient prophet Isaiah foretold, God's government rests upon Your shoulders so that its increase *OVER* us will have no end.

You continue to implement Your Kingdom ways, establishing them and upholding them among the nations, with justice and righteousness forevermore!

Salvation Belongs to our God

*Words and Music by Adrian Howard, Pat Turner ©1985 Restoration Music Ltd.
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Salvation belongs to our God
To Him who sits upon the throne
And unto the Lamb Praise and glory, wisdom and thanks
Honor and power and strength
Be to our God, forever and ever, Be to our God, forever and ever
Be to our God, forever and ever, Amen.

And then the redeemed shall be strong In purpose and in unity
Declaring aloud Praise and glory, wisdom and thanks
Honor and power and strength.
Be to our God, forever and ever, Be to our God, forever and ever
Be to our God, forever and ever, Amen.

As a young man, the Apostle John walked with Jesus during His earthly ministry for three years. But, John lived to be an old man and walked with Jesus in Heaven for most of his life as we do. John tells us how we can walk in the presence of Jesus the exalted Son of God, the Light and Word of Life.

Reader 3: 1 John 1:1-2:2 (NIV84)

1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. ² The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. ³ We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. ⁴ We write this to make our joy complete.

⁵ This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. ⁶ If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. ⁷ But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

⁸ If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰ If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.

2 My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. ² He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

Pause to silently confess your sin to God and ask for forgiveness.

Please pray short and loud so we can participate in prayer together.

Prayer prompt 6

- Praise and thank God for the forgiveness of sin we have in Jesus.

- Ask for God’s protection from sin.

John concludes his letter by reminding His readers that the victory that overcomes the world is found in Jesus.

Keeping our faith in the exalted Son of God is the way to have life.

Reader 4: 1 John 5:1-15 (NIV84)

5 Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well. ² This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. ³ This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, ⁴ for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. ⁵ Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

⁶ This is the one who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ. He did not come by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. ⁷ For there are three that testify: ⁸ the Spirit, the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement. ⁹ We accept man’s testimony, but God’s testimony is greater because it is the testimony of God, which he has given about his Son. ¹⁰ Anyone who believes in the Son of God has this testimony in his heart. Anyone who does not believe God has made him out to be a liar, because he has not believed the testimony God has given about his Son. ¹¹ And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. ¹² He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

¹³ I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life. ¹⁴ This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. ¹⁵ And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.

Pause to silently affirm your faith in Jesus as the Son of God.

Please pray short and loud so we can participate in prayer together.

Prayer prompt 7

- Praise and thank or God our Father for the love and life He has given us by faith in His Son Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior!

I'll read the bold text. Please join in reading the responses.

Responsive Reading 3

By David Bryant

Jesus, when the Father placed all things under Your feet, appointing You the head over everything, ultimately He did so for the sake of Your subjects, the Church.

You are Head over the Redeemed in heaven and earth; we have become Your body.

Jesus, As You rule over us You continue to saturate us with even more of the fullness of Yourself by which You are saturating everything, in every way.

When You ascended on high You took Your people captive – to You and with You alone.

Even now You inhabit the whole universe with Your supremacy and Your activity.

You are also pervading and filling Your Body with that same supremacy and activity, bringing us to unity in the faith and in the knowledge of You as the Son of God.

Jesus, because You are our head *OVER* us, our destiny together is to attain to the whole measure of Your magnificence as the Christ, that we might grow up into You as our head.

This is our hope because of who You are *OVER* us, prevailing with the same incomparable authority by which You are ruling *OVER* the entire cosmos.

No wonder You said that calling You Lord and obeying You as Lord, would place our lives on an unshakeable foundation.

Before the Throne of God Above

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1. Before the throne of God above
I have a strong and perfect plea –
A great High Priest whose name is Love,
Whoever lives and pleads for me.
 My name is graven on His hands;
 My name is written on His heart.
 I know that while in heav'n He stands,
 No tongue can bid me thence depart,
 No tongue can bid me thence depart.

2. When Satan tempts me to despair
and tells me of the guilt within,
upward I look and see Him there
Who made an end of all my sin.
 Because the sinless Savior died,
 my sinful soul is counted free,
 for God, the Just, is satisfied
 to look on Him and pardon me.
 to look on Him and pardon me.

Conclusion:

Our prayer is that you remember that after Jesus provided purification for our sin, He ascended and sat down at the right hand of the majesty in Heaven to rule over us and pray for us (Heb. 1:3).

- *Remembering who Jesus is as our king and advocate should encourage us to worship Him for His glory and goodness!*
- *Remembering where Jesus is and what He is doing should encourage us to pray and witness boldly!*