

**Jesus Ascends into Heaven  
(Year C)**

**Acts 1:1-11—The Ascension of Jesus into Heaven**

1. “Forty days”: a time of transition and purification (Gen 7:4, 17; Exod 34:28; Deut 8:2)
2. “Lifted up” in a “cloud”: Why a cloud? A sign of Jesus’ divinity
  - a. Not fire, like Elijah (2 Kings 1)
  - b. But “a cloud”: “a symbol of Heaven” (John Chrysostom, *Acts*, 2)
  - c. “The LORD” rides on “a swift cloud” (*Isa 19:1*; cf. Psalm 104:2-3)
  - d. John Chrysostom: “no other Power is seen to appear on a cloud” (*Acts 2*).
3. Taken “into Heaven”:
  - a. First Definition: the *visible* heaven (=the sky)
  - b. Second Definition: the *invisible realm* where God dwells
4. Second Coming: foretaste; Jesus will return “in the same way”

**Psalm 47—The Enthronement of God in Heaven**

1. Royal Enthronement Psalm: The LORD is “king over all the earth” (v. 2)
3. “God” has “*gone up*”; he “sits on his holy throne” (v. 5, 8)

**Hebrews 9:24-28; 10:19-23—Christ Ascends into the Heavenly Temple**

1. Heavenly Tabernacle: Christ has entered into “a sanctuary not made with hands” (9:24)
2. High Priest: he is “a great priest” over “the house of God” (10:21)

**Luke 24:46-53—Jesus Ascends into Heaven**

1. Scripture: “thus it is written...” (24:46)
  - a. Passion: “Christ should suffer...”
  - b. Resurrection: “On the third day rise from the dead”
2. Evangelization:
  - a. Repentance: “repentance” (Greek *metanoia*)
  - b. Forgiveness of Sins: preached “in his name...”
  - c. Universal: “to all nations” (24:47)
  - d. Martyrs: “you are witnesses (Greek *martyres*)...”
3. Pentecost: until “you are clothed with power from on high...”
4. Jesus the High Priest:

Then *Aaron lifted up his hands toward the people and blessed them*; and he came down from offering the sin offering and the burnt offering and the peace offerings. (Lev 9:22)

**The Catechism on the Mystery of the Ascension**

1. Final: the “irreversible entry of his humanity into divine glory” (CCC 659)
2. Historical Event: a “historical” and “transcendent” event (CCC 660)

## The Mass Readings Explained

3. Unprecedented: “*No one has ascended into heaven* but he who descended” (John 3:13)
4. High Priest: in heaven, “Christ permanently exercises his priesthood” (CCC 662)
5. Bodily: Christ is “seated bodily” at the right hand of the Father (CCC 663)
5. Our Destiny: “we too shall go where he, our Head... has preceded us” (CCC 661)

### Questions for Discussion and Reflection (Ascension of the Lord, Year C)

1. Many Christians reflection on the role of Jesus’ passion, death, and resurrection? What role, if any, does the mystery of his Ascension play in your spiritual life?

---

---

---

2. Why does Jesus ascend into heaven? Why doesn’t he stay on earth?

---

---

---

3. What are the parallels between Jesus’ final action before Ascending and the high priestly blessing of Aaron in the Old Testament?

---

---

---

### For Further Study

1. CCC 659-664: the Church’s official teaching on the mystery of the Ascension.
2. Christoph Cardinal Schönborn, *From Death to Life: The Christian Journey* (Ignatius Press, 2016). Contains an excellent chapter on the mystery of the Church as a heavenly reality and how Christ’s ascension fits into the overall plan of salvation.
3. Gerrit Dawson, *Jesus Ascended: the Meaning of Christ’s Continual Incarnation* (London: T. & T. Clark, 2004). A rich theological study by a Protestant scholar on the mystery of the Ascension. Draws heavily on Scripture and tradition.