



■ † Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ

**“Prepare yourself a repository for
that treasure, which is a pure heart...”***

Acts of the Apostles (Acts 1:1-12)

*In the former treatise, O Theophilus, I have given an account of all that Jesus began both to do and teach until the day in which He was taken up, after He had given commandments through the Holy Spirit unto the apostles, whom He had chosen. To these also He showed Himself alive after His passion by many infal-
lible proofs, being seen by them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God. And being assembled together with them, He commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, “which,” saith He, “ye have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence.” When they therefore had come together, they asked of Him, saying, “Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?” And He said unto them, “It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in His own power. But ye shall receive power after the Holy Spirit is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” And when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said,*

“Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into Heaven.” Then they returned unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a Sabbath day’s journey.

Gospel

(St Luke 24: 36-53)

At that time, Jesus having risen from the dead, He stood in the midst of His disciples and said unto them: “Peace be unto you.” But they were terrified and afraid, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And He said unto them, “Why are ye troubled, and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me to have.” And when He had thus spoken, He showed them His hands and His feet. And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, He said unto them, “Have ye here any meat?” And they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and of a honeycomb. And He took it and ate before them. And He said unto them, “These are the words which I spoke unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and in the Prophets and in the Psalms concerning Me.” Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures, and said unto them, “Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you; but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high.” And He led them out as far as to Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. And it came to pass, while He blessed them, He was parted from them and carried up into Heaven. And they worshiped Him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen.

The Holy Apostle Paul expresses the power of the Lord's Ascension in this way: “When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men” (Ephesians 4:8).

Having fulfilled the righteousness of God, the Lord opened for us all the treasures of His goodness. This is indeed a capturing or taking of spoils after victory.

The beginning of the distribution of these spoils to people is the descent of the Holy Spirit, Who, having descended, ever abides in the Church and bestows upon each one what he need, receiving all from that captive captivity (cf. Ephesians 4:8).

Let everyone come and receive. But prepare for yourself a repository for that treasure, which is a pure heart; have hands with which to take it, which is unswerving faith.

Then set forth, seeking with hope and unceasing prayer.



(*) St. Theophan the Recluse, *Thoughts for Each Day of the Year According to the Daily Church Readings from the Word of God.*

