

Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> May 2017

## Easter 7

White



### Collect

O God the King of glory, you have exalted your only Son Jesus Christ with great triumph to your kingdom in heaven: we beseech you, leave us not comfortless, but send your Holy Spirit to strengthen us and exalt us to the place where our Saviour Christ is gone before, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

**Acts 1:6-14** English Standard Version (ESV)

### The Ascension

<sup>1</sup> <sup>6</sup> So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” <sup>7</sup> He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. <sup>8</sup> But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” <sup>9</sup> And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. <sup>10</sup> And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, <sup>11</sup> and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”

### Matthias Chosen to Replace Judas

<sup>12</sup> Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day’s journey away. <sup>13</sup> And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James. <sup>14</sup> All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.<sup>[a]</sup>

**Footnotes:** a. or *brothers and sisters*. The plural Greek word *adelphoi* (translated “brothers”) refers to siblings in a family. In New Testament usage, depending on the context, *adelphoi* may refer either to men or to both men and women who are siblings (brothers and sisters) in God’s family, the church; also verse 15.

**COMMENT:** With Jesus gone from their midst and the promised kingdom of the Messiah not yet a reality, what was to happen next? Luke answered this question not only for that time, but for all time. This part of the passage had particular resonance today after the publicity about predictions by California Radio preacher Harold Egbert Camping (1921-2013) of the apocalypse and the end of the world on the 21st May 2011. This prediction Mr Camping revised to the 21st October 2011 with equal disappointment! In the reading, the small group spending their time at prayer in verses 13-14 may well have included many more than are named, as verse 15 notes that Peter stood up to preach to the assembled company of one hundred and twenty persons. The power of God that was at work in Jesus had now passed to the assembled community of men and women who followed him from Galilee to Jerusalem, had witnessed to his resurrection, and now formed a visible community of faith awaiting his return. The church is still that visible community of today.

**John 17:1-11** English Standard Version (ESV)

### **The High Priestly Prayer**

17 <sup>1</sup> When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, <sup>2</sup> since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. <sup>3</sup> And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. <sup>4</sup> I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. <sup>5</sup> And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed. <sup>6</sup> I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. <sup>7</sup> Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you. <sup>8</sup> For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. <sup>9</sup> I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. <sup>10</sup> All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. <sup>11</sup> And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one.”

**COMMENT:** It is most unlikely that these are word for word a prayer by Jesus himself. More probably they are a recollection in sentiment of Jesus' prayer overheard by his disciples. At the heart of this passage is the essential message of John's Gospel: Jesus has been fully revealed as the Messiah/Christ, the Son of God with all divine authority and power. As such he gives the eternal life of God to those who believe in his true nature now glorified by the resurrection.

**Psalm 68: 1-11, 33-36** *Exsurgat Deus* Grail Psalter

**℟ Kingdoms of the earth, sing to God.**

<sup>1</sup> *For the Choirmaster. Of David. A Psalm. A Song.*

<sup>2</sup> Let God arise, let his foes be scattered.  
Let those who hate him flee before him.

<sup>3</sup> As smoke is blown away so will they be blown away;  
like wax that melts before the fire,  
so the wicked shall perish at the presence of God. ℟

<sup>4</sup> But the just shall rejoice at the presence of God,  
they shall exult and dance for joy.

<sup>5</sup> O sing to the Lord, make music to his name;  
make a highway for him who rides on the clouds.  
Rejoice in the Lord, exult at his presence. ℟

<sup>6</sup> Father of the orphan, defender of the widow,  
such is God in his holy place.

<sup>7</sup> God gives the lonely a home to live in;  
he leads the prisoners forth into freedom:  
but rebels must dwell in a parched land. ℟

<sup>8</sup> When you went forth, O God, at the head of your people,  
when you marched across the desert, <sup>9</sup> the earth trembled:  
the heavens melted at the presence of God,  
at the presence of God, Israel's God. ℟

<sup>10</sup> You poured down, O God, a generous rain:  
when your people were starved you gave them new life.

<sup>11</sup> It was there that your people found a home,  
prepared in your goodness, O God, for the poor. ℟

<sup>33</sup> Kingdoms of the earth, sing to God, praise the Lord

<sup>34</sup> who rides on the heavens, the ancient heavens.

He thunders his voice, his mighty voice.

<sup>35</sup> Come, acknowledge the power of God. ℟

His glory is on Israel; his might is in the skies.

<sup>36</sup> God is to be feared in his holy place.

He is the Lord, Israel's God.

He gives strength and power to his people.

Blessed be God!

**℟ Kingdoms of the earth, sing to God.**

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son  
and to the Holy Spirit,**

**As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,  
world without end. Amen.**

**COMMENT:** Unique in the Psalter, this psalm has been described as a collection of short songs and fragments possibly used in a sacred procession at some festival. It celebrated the sovereignty and providence of God in Israel's past, present and future.

### **Short Preface**

But chiefly are we bound to praise you because you raised him gloriously from the dead. For he is the true paschal lamb who was offered for us, and has taken away the sin of the world. By his death he has destroyed death, and by his rising to life again he has restored to us everlasting life.

### **Post Communion**

Eternal God, giver of love and power, your Son Jesus Christ has sent us into all the world to preach the gospel of his kingdom: confirm us in this mission, and help us to live the good news we proclaim; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### **Blessing**

The God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the eternal covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you, and remain with you always. **Amen.**